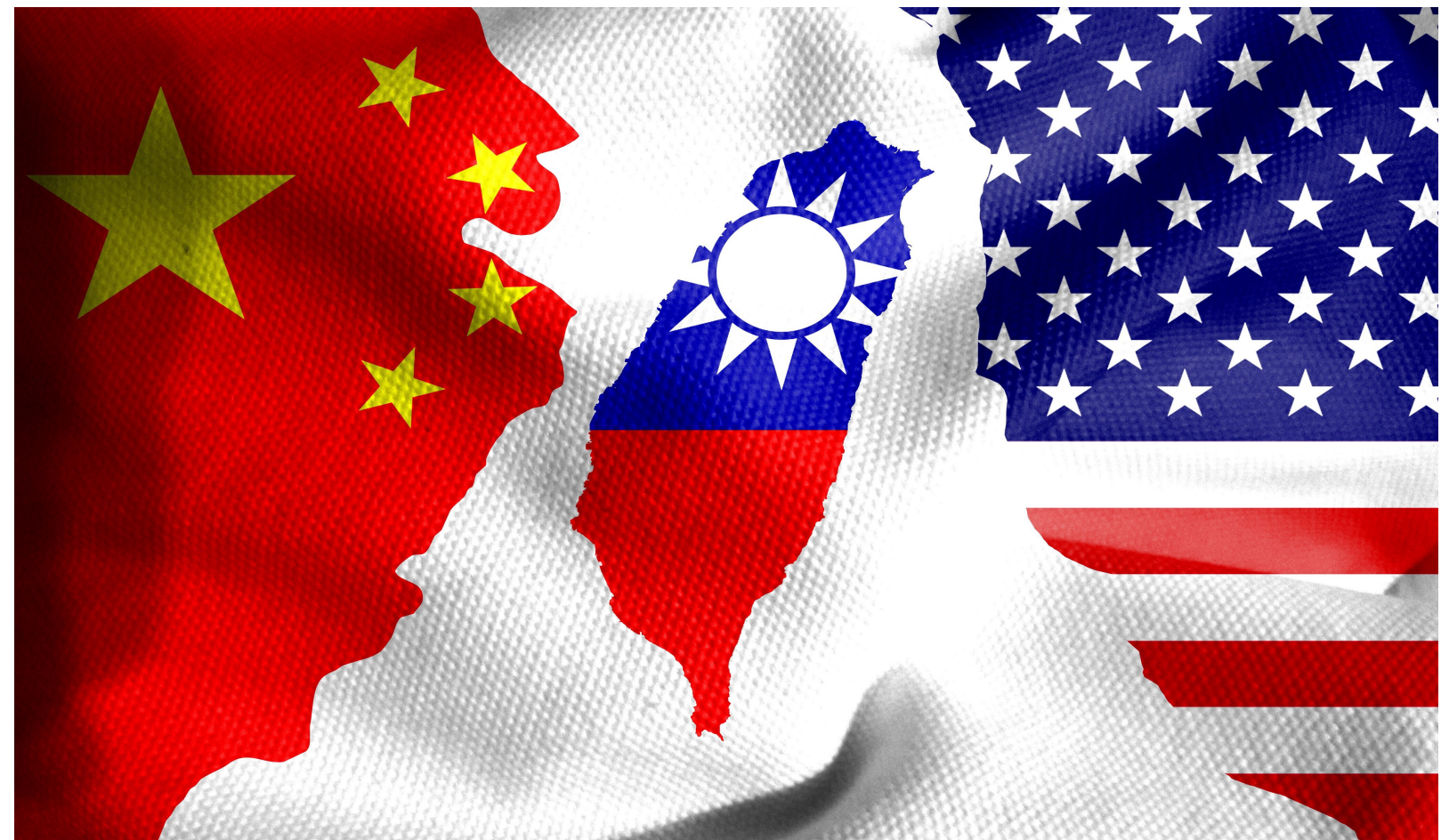


TASK FORCE

The Donald C. Hellmann Task Force Program

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Averting War: Taiwan and U.S.- China Relations

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Averting War: Taiwan and US-China Relations

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Introduction

Taiwan faces significant challenges. It has maintained self-governance, a robust economy, a vibrant, democratic society, and relative peace in the Taiwan Strait. Yet, the sensitive relationship between the United States (US), the People's Republic of China (China), and Taiwan (officially, the Republic of China) remains a focus of international concern. Thus, the need for well researched, informed, and nuanced policy is paramount now, especially considering the implications not just on the Indo-Pacific region but to the world. We must avoid conflict, especially war, in Taiwan.

China's actions to target Taiwan, based on a conviction of irredentism, have consisted of diplomatic pressure, gray zone attacks, and misinformation through social media, news, regional and international state partnerships, trade, and even military incursions. This report aims to identify and suggest policies to address these challenges. The report is broken down into understanding domestic politics, international relations, economics, trade, and defense. Identifying these areas reveals the intricacies of how Taiwan establishes and defends its de facto statehood while also revealing the potential to maintain a durable peace. We take a Taiwan-focused perspective. These recommendations aim to help Taiwanese people exercise agency to determine their own future.

Executive Summary

In response to escalating tensions and the looming specter of conflict with China, this Task Force report endeavors to provide recommendations aimed at the Taiwan government to mitigate the risk of war while safeguarding Taiwan's sovereignty and security. Recognizing the complexities of cross-strait relations and the imperative to navigate a delicate balance between maintaining ties with the United States and addressing China's assertiveness, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strengthening US-Taiwan Relations:** In light of the Biden administration's demonstrated commitment to Taiwan, it is imperative for the Taiwan government to foster deeper collaboration and cooperation with US officials and Congressional members. This entails actively engaging with US legislative entities to advocate for increased US legislation and preparedness on Taiwan's defense, ensuring adequate funding, and exerting pressure on the US Executive branch to respond effectively to potential PRC aggression.
2. **Promoting Civil Society and Soft Power Initiatives:** Recognizing the importance of Taiwan's civil society and soft power in shaping international perceptions and garnering support for its cause, the Taiwan government should prioritize initiatives aimed at enhancing its global influence. This includes leveraging Taiwan's vibrant democracy, respect for human rights, and cultural diversity to cultivate deeper ties with international partners and counter disinformation campaigns orchestrated by the PRC. By amplifying Taiwan's soft power assets and engaging with global civil society networks, Taiwan can strengthen its international standing and garner greater solidarity.

3. **Enhancing Regional and International Diplomacy:** Taiwan should expand its diplomatic outreach beyond the United States, focusing on cultivating deeper ties with regional partners such as the Philippines, Japan, and South Korea and with like-minded countries such as members of the European Union. Through parliamentary diplomacy and economic cooperation, Taiwan can expand its participation and presence in international affairs and garner support for its sovereignty while enhancing regional stability.
4. **Economic Resilience and Semiconductor Dominance:** Taiwan's economic resilience, particularly in the semiconductor industry, serves as a critical deterrent against PRC aggression. To further bolster economic stability and diplomatic leverage, Taiwan should continue efforts to reduce dependence on China, pursue trade agreements with the US, and invest in technological advancements to maintain its dominance in key sectors.
5. **Defense Preparedness and Gray Zone Warfare:** While Taiwan faces significant military challenges posed by the PRC's superior capabilities and gray zone tactics, proactive measures can be taken to enhance defense preparedness and deterrence. Close coordination with US allies, continuous monitoring of PRC activities, and strategic responses to gray zone provocations are essential in safeguarding Taiwan's security and deterring potential military escalation.

In conclusion, the recommendations outlined in this policy paper aim to equip the Taiwan government with actionable strategies to navigate the complexities of cross-strait relations, mitigate the risk of conflict with China, and uphold Taiwan's sovereignty and security in the face of evolving geopolitical dynamics.

Understanding US Relations with Taiwan and China

Introduction

This section will examine the history of the United States (US) policy on cross-strait relations and public opinion to make policy recommendations for the ROC to avert cross-strait conflict. With the objectives of maintaining a strong US alliance and a balanced approach to cross-strait relations, we recommend working with US Presidential administrations and the Executive branch to expand unofficial cooperation, support Taiwan's presence in international fora, and encourage increased cooperation between the US and ROC's legislative entities. These actions would signal substantive cooperation to the international community, increase Taiwan's significance to US Officials and Congressional members, hopefully, increase US legislation and preparedness on PRC deterrence, ensure adequate funding of Taiwan's defense and support, increase pressure on the US Executive branch for a full and adequate response in the case of PRC aggression, and relay the importance of US-Taiwan relations to American citizens while working to dispel notions of US skepticism in Taiwan.

Congress' and Administrations' Policy Approach

Since 1949, US Presidential administrations and Congresses across partisan lines have generally taken a strong stance on defending Taiwan from PRC aggression and encroachment.¹ The US approach to Taiwan relations is characterized by "strategic ambiguity," the "One China" policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, Three Communiques, and Six Assurances. Each of these will be addressed in this section. While the Executive branch plays a larger role in determining foreign policy, Congress understands the importance of legislating on Taiwan's "economic

¹ Zlatko Šabič and David Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan in Comparative Perspective: Against Isolation and Under-Representation* (Bristol University Press, 2021), 72, <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/345/monograph/chapter/2991023>.

interests, ideology, security, and membership in international organizations.”² However, the executive and legislative branches modulate their support based on domestic interests, PRC relations (with the US and Taiwan), and Taipei’s wishes. Though this conflict is over 70 years in the making, significantly different geopolitical realities are key to understanding its current form and how US and ROC officials should proceed.

Roosevelt to Carter Administrations

Pertinent US-ROC relations began with the 2nd Sino-Japanese War. The alliance was considerably strengthened with the US entry into World War 2, with expanded combat support and diplomatic cooperation towards defeating a common enemy.³ Roosevelt promised to hand over Taiwan to the ROC after the war’s end at the Cairo and Tehran Conferences.⁴ As the civil war between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chinese Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT) intensified post-WW2, the US sent General Marshall to mediate. Though this failed, the US continued to support the ROC with economic and military aid.⁵ After losing the mainland to the CCP, the ROC fled to Taiwan in December 1949 and set up its political structure.⁶

Political science scholar Dean P. Chen argues that strategic ambiguity, the practice of intentionally leaving US positions on Taiwan’s international legal status, potential military response to PRC aggression, and general operations policy ambiguous, was first applied to the cross-Strait conflict by Truman’s administration.⁷ Two days after Mao established the PRC,

² Šabič and Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan*, 72.

³ U. S. Mission China, “History of the US and China,” Government, US Embassy & Consulates in China, June 15, 2018, <https://china.usembassy-china.org.cn/history-of-the-u-s-and-china/>.

⁴ Ryan Hass, Bonnie Glaser, and Richard Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations: Will China’s Challenge Lead to a Crisis?* (Brookings Institution Press, 2023), 16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/jj.3919358.4>.

⁵ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 16.

⁶ Frank Chiang, *The One-China Policy: State, Sovereignty, and Taiwan’s International Legal Status*, Asian Studies (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2018), 132–33, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7152184/>.

⁷ Dean P. Chen, *US Taiwan Strait Policy: The Origins of Strategic Ambiguity* (Boulder, CO, UNITED STATES: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), ix, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/washington/detail.action?docID=3328993>.

Truman remarked that “we should be in no hurry whatsoever to recognize this regime.”⁸ Chen argues that by early 1950, the Truman administration exercised strategic ambiguity by shielding Taiwan from a PRC takeover and leaving Taiwan’s international status undefined.⁹ The US position strengthened after the Korean War began, with the Truman administration declaring that Taiwan’s “legal status had not yet been determined,” providing aid and stationing troops in Taiwan.¹⁰ A mutual defense agreement was signed in 1954 by the Eisenhower administration, which stood until 1979.¹¹ While far from strategically ambiguous, these clear defense positions were created by the underlying principle, which would continue to undergird US policy and come back into force after the treaty was dissolved. Criticism of strategic clarity will be expanded upon later in the paper.

The 1970s marked a significant change in the US approach to the cross-Strait conflict, yet it maintained its strategically ambiguous approach. In its communist containment efforts, Washington maintained support for the KMT regime throughout the first half of the Cold War, turning a blind eye to repressive actions like the 228 incident.¹² However, worldwide decolonization and increasing support for the PRC in the U.N. pressed the issue, leading to General Assembly Resolution 2578, which replaced the ROC with the PRC in China’s U.N. seat in 1971.¹³ Along with PRC U.N. recognition, the Nixon administration desired to capitalize on the Sino-Soviet split, which resulted in rapprochement with Beijing.¹⁴ In 1972, the Shanghai Communique between the PRC and the US furthered cooperation while sidestepping the Taiwan

⁸ Chen, *Strategic Ambiguity*, 4.

⁹ Chen, *Strategic Ambiguity*, 4.

¹⁰ Susan M Gordon, Michael G Mullen, and David Sacks, “US-Taiwan Relations in a New Era: Responding to a More Assertive China,” *Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force Report*, no. 81 (June 2023): 14.

¹¹ Gordon, Mullen, and Sacks, “US-Taiwan Relations,” 14.

¹² Gordon, Mullen, and Sacks, “US-Taiwan Relations,” 14.

¹³ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 18.

¹⁴ Gordon, Mullen, and Sacks, “US-Taiwan Relations,” 14.

issue, forming the basis of the US “One China” policy.¹⁵ The “One China” policy *acknowledged* PRC and ROC leaders’ belief that “there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China,” agreed not to challenge the PRC’s stance, and stated the US’ “interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves.” This policy accepted different interpretations through acknowledgment, but gave the PRC and ROC precedence in resolving the issue, and clearly stated interest in a peaceful resolution. It has since provided the foundation for US policy, action, and rhetoric on its Taiwan policy.

Negotiations lagged until the Carter administration, which released the Normalization Communique in December 1978.¹⁶ In it, the US terminated the US-Taiwan mutual defense treaty, agreed to remove its forces from the island, “recognized the government of the PRC as the sole legal government of China,” “announced that its relations with Taiwan would be on an unofficial basis,” and “acknowledged the Chinese position that... Taiwan is a part of China,” but “did not adopt that position as its own.” The Carter administration also stated that “that the differences between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait should be resolved peacefully... in an official, unilateral US statement released simultaneously with the Communique.”¹⁷ The Normalization Communique formalized Nixon’s prior work and the “One China” approach but represented a significant change in the US-Taiwan relationship, exchanging its security benefits for PRC cooperation.

The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) reaffirmed strategic ambiguity while setting guidelines for the US’ approach to Taiwan-related issues. Angered by Carter’s perceived weakness in Taiwan relations, the US Congress revised his congressional act attached to the Normalization Communique and put forward the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), signed by Carter on October 4th,

¹⁵ Gordon, Mullen, and Sacks, “US-Taiwan Relations,” 15.

¹⁶ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 19.

¹⁷ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 19.

1979.¹⁸ The TRA created the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) to conduct quasi-official relations on cultural, commercial, and unofficial grounds. The TRA importantly outlined the new US-Taiwan relationship, stating the US would:

declare that peace and stability in the area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States, and are matters of international concern; make clear that the United States' decision to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means; consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States; provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character; and maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.¹⁹

While the TRA was no replacement for the mutual defense agreement, it put the US regional security policy into law through its conditions of peaceful unification, broader peace, and security in the Western Pacific, aiming to achieve this by providing defensive arms to Taiwan and “maintaining the capacity” of the US to resist PRC coercion or aggression.²⁰ Because the TRA is US law, US officials are bound to its commitments, limiting their latitude in changing US-Taiwan policy.²¹ Though legally binding, the TRA still employed strategic ambiguity with its broad terminology, focused on the process of US-Taiwan relations and general principles rather than specific targets.²² This adaptability allows the US to accommodate changing relations, political conditions, and differing stances on strategic ambiguity, giving officials considerable longitude in determining an appropriate response to PRC actions.²³

¹⁸ Šabič and Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan*, 70–71.

¹⁹ Gordon, Mullen, and Sacks, “US-Taiwan Relations,” 16.

²⁰ Jacques deLisle, “The Taiwan Relations Act at 40: A Troubled but Durable Legal Framework for US Policy,” *Asia Policy* 14, no. 4 (2019): 35.

²¹ deLisle, “The Taiwan Relations Act,” 37.

²² deLisle, “The Taiwan Relations Act,” 38.

²³ deLisle, “The Taiwan Relations Act,” 38.

However, US officials have criticized the TRA for different reasons.²⁴ Some believe it negatively impacts US security interests, detracting from US-PRC relations while tying itself too closely to Taiwan. As US-PRC relations have declined, many believe it is too lenient and demand a stronger relationship with Taiwan as an asset against China. Regardless of viewpoint, the TRA was created to deter a weaker PRC, which has become stronger and bolder in asserting its interests.²⁵ Considering the modern PRC's increased power and economic influence over Taiwan, it can complicate what necessitates a US response, and if so, to what degree.²⁶ Finally, the TRA is predicated on the fact that the US can fulfill the law's promises, which could be complicated by changing domestic and international conditions. Even still, the TRA remains a strong yet adaptable piece of legislation that offers guidelines for cross-Strait relations and continues to inform US policy and will likely not be amended in the near future.

Reagan to Obama Administrations

The Reagan administration negotiated with PRC officials to assuage concerns over continuing US arms sales to Taiwan, leading to the creation of the Six Assurances. In August 1982, Beijing and Washington released a communique that agreed to cap, qualitatively and quantitatively, arms sales based on previous years since US-PRC normalization and expressed it "intends gradually to reduce" arms sales.²⁷ However, the administration reiterated its support for the ROC based on the TRA, with a secret cable to the AIT office in Taipei in July 1982.²⁸ These came to be known as the "Six Assurances," with a modified version released to the public, stating the US: "Has not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan; Has not agreed to consult with the PRC on arms sales to Taiwan; Will not play mediation role between Taipei and

²⁴ deLisle, "The Taiwan Relations Act," 39.

²⁵ deLisle, "The Taiwan Relations Act," 40.

²⁶ deLisle, "The Taiwan Relations Act," 41.

²⁷ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 24.

²⁸ AIT, "Declassified Cables: Taiwan Arms Sales & Six Assurances (1982)," American Institute in Taiwan, March 30, 2022, <https://www.ait.org.tw/declassified-cables-taiwan-arms-sales-six-assurances-1982/>.

Beijing; Has not agreed to revise the TRA; Has not altered its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan; Will not exert pressure on Taiwan to enter into negotiations with the PRC.”²⁹ As such, the Reagan Communique did not substantively affect the US “One China” policy, strategic ambiguity, or TRA approaches to Taiwan.

During the Reagan administration, the ROC started the process of democratization. The US supported the democratization effort, a broad policy goal which continued through George H. W. Bush’s administration.³⁰ However, democratization decreased the US’ ability to influence ROC political decisions and policy direction and set the stage for parties to assert stronger stances on independence, which complicated cross-Strait relations. For example, Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui’s Cornell visit spurred the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait crisis.³¹ The crisis climaxed with PRC missile tests in Taiwanese waters and a US Naval response while pressuring the ROC to minimize provocation. Clinton’s Secretary of State Warren Christopher delivered a speech stating that the PRC and ROC must recognize “the importance of avoiding provocative actions or unilateral measures that would alter the status quo or pose a threat to peaceful resolution of outstanding issues.” In a similar vein, the PRC saw Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian’s attempts to build his voter base ahead of the 2004 elections as threats to the status quo and went to the Bush administration for support.³² President Bush reiterated the symmetrical provocation policy started by the Clinton administration in December 2003, publicly stating, “we oppose any unilateral decision by either China or Taiwan to change the status quo.” Both administrations’ symmetrical US framing of the conflict placed more importance on the ROC’s

²⁹ AIT, “Declassified Cables.”

³⁰ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 29.

³¹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 33.

³² Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 40.

role in maintaining cross-Strait stability, spreading the burden amongst the parties, and reflecting the new political realities brought by democratic ROC governance.

Compared to Chen Shui-bian, President Ma Ying-jeou, elected in 2008, aligned more with US policy advocating restraint, the status quo, and neoliberal economic practices.³³ Bilateral relations were strong between the Ma and Obama administrations, characterized by “two large arms packages,” diplomatic niceties, and clear communication. Ma was also inclined to “resume dialogue between the two sides of the Strait,” mostly through economic means to better relations with the PRC.³⁴ As previously mentioned, US Congressional support through proposals and legislation creation depends on the status of relations and wishes of all three parties. When compared to Congress under Trump (59 proposals in one term), Congress under the Obama administration was relatively quiet (73 over two terms).³⁵ This can likely be attributed to a pro-PRC government in Taipei, support for economic cooperation with the PRC on the US front, as well as increasing conservative theories of non-intervention due to wars in the Middle East.³⁶

However, PRC-Taiwan relations fell apart towards the end of the Ma and Obama administrations. In March 2005, during Chen Shui-bian’s relatively anti-PRC tenure, Beijing enacted the Anti-Secession Law (ASL), which claimed the PRC was within its rights to engage in “non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” if “redlines” were crossed.³⁷ Like the TRA, this policy espoused ambiguous redlines cemented in domestic law rather than a policy commitment or statement, staging potential PRC intervention. Though PRC-ROC relations were trending positively from 2008 on, the US questioned the ROC’s low defense budget, pressuring Ma’s administration to increase it

³³ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 42.

³⁴ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 44.

³⁵ Šabič and Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan*, 77.

³⁶ Šabič and Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan*, 76–77.

³⁷ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 41.

considering the PRC's military buildup.³⁸ Most importantly, Ma's mainland policy came under fire in Taiwan due to inner party tensions and fear of economic cooperation reshaping Taiwanese politics.³⁹ These fears culminated in the Sunflower Movement, which was a political boon for the DPP, amounting in 2016 to a Presidential victory and Legislative Yuan majority, ousting Ma's rattled party from power.⁴⁰

Considering its increasing military power, absolute economic power, influence over Taiwan due to strong economic alignment, and new legislative posture mirrored the US' strategic ambiguity, the PRC had far more power to oppose independence after cooperation with Ma's administration failed. The PRC sought to set the tone early in President Tsai Ing-wen's administration, demanding she adhere to the 1992 consensus and the PRC's "One China" principle, which were politically impossible considering her voter base.⁴¹ Though Tsai attempted to address these concerns in her 2016 inaugural address, the PRC was unsatisfied and afterward cut off communication, with no indication it would restart communications with President Lai's administration.⁴² The new geopolitical realities that formed during Ma and Obama's tenures brought a bolder US' approach to countering the PRC while attempting to cross-strait relations.

Trump Administration

Some in Taiwan could consider the Trump administration to be "the strongest US president in recent memory."⁴³ The growing PRC-US competition and increased PRC pressure on the new Democratic People's Party (DPP) administration gave the US and Taiwan a clear avenue towards strengthening relations. Even though Trump was relatively volatile and, for the

³⁸ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 46.

³⁹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 47.

⁴⁰ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 48.

⁴¹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 54.

⁴² Susan V Lawrence, "Taiwan: Background and US Relations - IF10275" (Congressional Research Service, January 16, 2024), 2, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10275>.

⁴³ Šabič and Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan*, 77.

majority of his presidency, viewed Taiwan as a block to his trade talks with or a card to be played against the PRC, his administration was strong on Taiwan.⁴⁴ The administration expanded cooperation with Taiwan on international fronts with the creation of the US-Taiwan Consultations on Democratic Governance in the Indo-Pacific region, linked to its broader Free and Open Indo-Pacific framework.⁴⁵

US Congress was quite active on Taiwan-related bills during the Trump administration, reflecting the aforementioned trend of bipartisan congressional support in relation to geopolitical trends. The Taiwan Travel Act was signed into law in March 2018, allowing all US officials to meet their Taiwanese counterparts.⁴⁶ Multiple high-level visits and diplomatic exchanges between the US and Taiwan occurred during Trump's presidency, including high-level public defense cooperation between respective national security advisors, indicating strong cooperation and a desire to stand unified against the PRC threat.⁴⁷ Considering the PRC's initiative to undermine Taiwan's international relationships, Congress passed the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act in 2020.⁴⁸ The TAIPEI Act recommended increased engagement with pro-Taiwan countries and reconsidered those that "take serious or significant actions to undermine the security or prosperity of Taiwan." Though most Congressional actions did not majorly alter prior US policy or existing powers, they certainly showed support for Taiwan consistent with the administration and relayed the importance of US-Taiwan relations internationally.⁴⁹

However, blows to triangular diplomacy, an international relations theory between the US, China, and Taiwan, certainly occurred under the Trump administration. Though the Trump

⁴⁴ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 67.

⁴⁵ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 68.

⁴⁶ Šabič and Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan*, 77

⁴⁷ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 68.

⁴⁸ Šabič and Huang, *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan*, 78.

⁴⁹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 73–74.

administration bolstered economic cooperation, the US Trade Representative would not agree to a free trade agreement, which would significantly alter Taiwan's trade balance and economic prospects.⁵⁰ US sanctions and economic blocks on the PRC that started during the trade war were escalated further with Trump's response to COVID-19, PRC detention of Uyghurs, and PRC 2019-2020 crackdown in Hong Kong. The PRC's increasingly aggressive military posture only exacerbated the issue.⁵¹ As such, the Biden administration inherited strong ties to Taiwan and dismal ties with the PRC, which it has since worked to balance, though not at the expense of US-Taiwan ties.⁵²

Biden Administration

The Biden administration showed its commitment to Taiwan early on by inviting Representative Hsiao Bi-khim, then Taiwan's ambassador, to Biden's inauguration ceremony and with Secretary of State Antony Blinken strongly voicing his support for Taiwan during his confirmation ceremony.⁵³ The PRC levied military aggression soon after Biden was elected, flying into the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) of Taiwan. The US stated that a resolution to the cross-strait conflict had to be "with the wishes and best interests of the people on Taiwan."⁵⁴ This stronger rhetorical position ("best interests of the people on Taiwan") from the administration continued, aimed at countering an increasingly belligerent PRC. The Interim National Security Strategic Guidance statement, released in March 2021, reaffirmed US support for Taiwan, highlighting US interests in its effective sovereignty.⁵⁵ Biden maintained the bilateral relations mechanisms created by the Trump administration and launched new ones, like the

⁵⁰ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 69.

⁵¹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 78.

⁵² Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 79–80.

⁵³ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 80.

⁵⁴ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 81.

⁵⁵ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 81.

US-Taiwan Coast Guard Working Group, that increased cooperation against increasing PRC naval and civilian entries into Taiwan's waters.⁵⁶

The Biden administration has attempted to bolster ROC participation internationally, going on record criticizing the PRC for distorting UN Resolution 2758 to block Taiwan's participation in UN bodies.⁵⁷ The Biden administration tried to get Taiwan observer status in the World Health Assembly in 2021 and 2022, with the Secretary of State rallying countries to support Taiwan's role in the WHO.⁵⁸ Though the PRC blocked both of these efforts, it shows the US's resolve in supporting Taiwan's participation on the international stage. The US also attempted to stop Taiwan's alliances from being lost to the PRC through diplomatic tactics.⁵⁹ In joint statements from Australia, Korea, and Japan at the G7 Summit and US-EU Summit, there was language on the importance of preserving peace in the Taiwan strait to further deter mounting PRC aggression.⁶⁰ Further, the US has participated in joint military exercises with Canada, New Zealand, the UK, Japan, and the Netherlands, as well as numerous naval transits to display its strength in the region.⁶¹

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August 2022 to visit with President Tsai Ing-wen, the highest-ranking US official to do so in 25 years.⁶² A day before her visit, US National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby stated that Congress is independent, members have visited Taiwan before (including former Speakers of the House), reiterated that US policy on cross-strait relations was unchanged and that it would be inappropriate for Beijing to "increase aggressive military activity" to escalate and break from the

⁵⁶ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 82.

⁵⁷ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 83.

⁵⁸ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 84.

⁵⁹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 85.

⁶⁰ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 85.

⁶¹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 86.

⁶² China Briefing Team, "US-China Relations in the Biden-Era: A Timeline," China Briefing News, February 16, 2024, <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/us-china-relations-in-the-biden-era-a-timeline/>.

status quo.⁶³ Regardless, the visit prompted a robust PRC military response and statement that pinned escalation of cross-strait tensions on US actions.⁶⁴ 3 days later, the PRC Foreign Ministry suspended talks and areas of cooperation with the US on issues including immigration, criminal, counternarcotics, and climate change, as well as sanctioning Nancy Pelosi and family members.⁶⁵ The PRC response affirmed their new aggressive military posture towards Taiwan, escalating tensions and the importance of maintaining the status quo.⁶⁶

Despite significant economic disagreements, Biden administration officials have sought to “manage differences” between the US and PRC since 2022. Though tensions flared dramatically after the Pelosi visit, the Biden administration worked to strengthen relations with the PRC. Biden and Xi also used their meeting at the Bali G20 Summit to steer relations back on track.⁶⁷ On Taiwan, Biden gave his “five-noes,” stating that

the US does not seek to change China’s system, does not seek to start a cold war with China, does not seek to strengthen alliances against China, does not support “Taiwan independence,” “two Chinas,” or “One China, One Taiwan,” and has no intention of seeking conflict with China, and, does not intend to break off ties with China, impede China’s economic development, or contain China.

While the “five-noes” do not signal a major shift in US policy on Taiwan, they attempt to mitigate cross-Strait tensions, address contemporary concerns, and offer a US policy commitment to the PRC on relations. Xi and Biden met again a year later in San Francisco at the APEC Leaders’ Summit to establish new or reestablish areas of cooperation broken after the Pelosi visit, including AI governance, counternarcotics, defense, and educational and cultural

⁶³ The White House, “Press Briefing by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and National Security Council Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby,” The White House, August 1, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/08/01/press-briefing-by-press-secretary-karine-jean-pierre-and-national-security-council-coordinator-for-strategic-communications-john-kirby-2/>.

⁶⁴ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 93.

⁶⁵ China Briefing Team, “US-China Relations in the Biden-Era.”

⁶⁶ Norah Huang, “A Taiwan Perspective on What Is at Stake after Nancy Pelosi’s Visit to Taiwan,” Brookings, September 26, 2022,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/a-taiwan-perspective-on-what-is-at-stake-after-nancy-pelosis-visit-to-taiwan/>.

⁶⁷ China Briefing Team, “US-China Relations in the Biden-Era.”

ties.⁶⁸ The most recent public PRC-US cooperation (at the time of writing) was Wang Yi and Antony Blinkens' meeting at the Munich Security Conference in February 2024, where they agreed to maintain open communication and areas of cooperation, discussed cross-Strait relations, and discussed geopolitical issues including economic decoupling policies.⁶⁹

Strengthening US-PRC relations through communication and collaboration will hopefully decrease the chance of a catastrophic war spurred by cross-strait relations.

Strategic Ambiguity vs. Strategic Clarity

Though the Biden administration made headway in PRC relations and maintained support for Taiwan, it has not been perfectly disciplined, with Blinken twice referring to Taiwan as a country and Biden taking an agnostic stance on Taiwan's hypothetical decision to choose "freedom."⁷⁰ Most significantly, Biden has four times effectively stated that he would send US troops to Taiwan's aid if China invaded, most recently on *60 Minutes* in September 2022.⁷¹ The PRC Foreign Ministry responded, arguing that it sent an encouraging message to the Taiwanese independence forces.⁷² Though the White House walked back these statements, each time stating that US policy was unchanged, the ROC expressed gratitude for these statements, viewing them as strengthening the US commitment to PRC deterrence. These statements could reflect internal pressure to move towards strategic clarity and firmly assert US support for Taiwan against an increasingly belligerent PRC.

⁶⁸ Arendse Huld, "US-China Meeting: Xi and Biden Agree to Cooperation in Key Areas," China Briefing News, November 16, 2023,

<https://www.china-briefing.com/news/us-china-meeting-productive-talks-lead-to-cooperation-in-key-areas/>.

⁶⁹ Office of the Spokesperson, "Secretary Blinken's Meeting with People's Republic of China Director of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Foreign Affairs Commission and Foreign Minister Wang Yi," *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed February 26, 2024,

<https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-meeting-with-peoples-republic-of-china-director-of-the-chinese-communist-party-ccp-central-foreign-affairs-commission-and-foreign-minister-wang-yi-3/>.

⁷⁰ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 88.

⁷¹ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 87.

⁷² David Brunstrom and Trevor Hunnicutt, "Biden Says US Forces Would Defend Taiwan in the Event of a Chinese Invasion," *Reuters*, September 19, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.reuters.com/world/biden-says-us-forces-would-defend-taiwan-event-chinese-invasion-2022-09-18/>.

Strategic ambiguity came to define the US policy on Taiwan starting in 1950, giving administrations relative freedom while maintaining its China policy through the Cold War and beyond. However, strategic ambiguity is not without drawbacks. Tim Willasey-Wilsey of the Royal United Services Institute argues it fosters uncertainty in the US decision to defend Taiwan and what defense would entail, can be a hollow policy without “full assessment and planning,” may not be effective in deterrence based on the aforementioned claims, and, depending on the pace of PRC aggression, leaves the administration with little time to decide while considering pertinent domestic and economic factors.⁷³ Calls for strategic clarity on defending Taiwan have grown in recent years, starting in 2020.⁷⁴ Proponents argue the PRC’s relative military advantage in a potential conflict would negate ambiguous deterrence, seeing Xi Jinping’s order that the PLA be capable of seizing Taiwan by 2027 as a sign that conflict looms near. However, employing strategic clarity would likely cross the PRC’s redlines, could provoke a PRC attack, and might encourage an ROC leader to pursue independence. Further, the considerable economic drawbacks and disastrous war would run counter to the PRC’s broader interests.

As seen in White House statements and assertions by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, US policy on cross-Strait relations has not changed.⁷⁵ The Biden administration has relied on tried and true methods of improving Taiwan’s defense, bolstering unofficial relations, and increasing cooperation with the ROC. Even through Biden’s displays of support, Washington still exhibits a commitment to peaceful resolution of cross-Strait differences. In this context, strategic clarity should and likely will not be introduced. Elucidating the US position beyond

⁷³ Tim Willasey-Wilsey, “US Policy on Taiwan and the Perils of ‘Strategic Ambiguity,’” Think tank, Royal United Services Institute, February 20, 2024, <https://rusi.org><https://rusi.org>.

⁷⁴ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 89.

⁷⁵ David Cohen, “Biden Hasn’t Changed US Policy on China and Taiwan, Jake Sullivan Says,” POLITICO, June 4, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/06/04/china-taiwan-biden-sullivan-00100100>.

existing policy commitments and Congressional Acts would likely not significantly change China's mind on invasion.

Despite considerably different geopolitical conditions, modern US administrations have effectively maintained the US approach to cross-strait relations. The official US basis for the “One China” policy has remained the TRA, “Six Assurances,” and the three US-China Communiqués throughout administrations since Reagan, albeit being reordered depending upon the goals of each administration. Though the PRC has gained considerable power and influence on multiple fronts, it is more important than ever to adhere to the US’ balanced policy approach on cross-Strait relations and avoid strategic clarity to avoid provoking an increasingly powerful PRC. Considering this, it is more pertinent and reasonable to target the factors that could cause the US to stray from intervention or strong support for Taiwan than to pursue significant modifications to the US policy approach. Actionable policies to pursue this objective are included in the policy recommendation below.

Public Opinion

While high-level policy creation is relatively divorced from democratic participation, policymakers must consider, to some degree, prevailing societal forces and public opinion in creating foreign policy, or at least its delivery to the public. Even with the State Department’s relative autonomy, Congress and the Presidential Office must be concerned about public opinion, as it directly affects their re-election chances. A 2019 publication from the Cato Institute asserts that public opinion on US foreign policy has changed since the Cold War, citing younger generations' decreased international threat assessment, decreased support for military force, decreased interest in US global hegemony, the US’ decreased influence over increasing foreign

sovereign power, and recommends aligning US foreign policy with American public opinion.⁷⁶ Though cross-strait relations have wholly different considerations, US public opinion on the Israel campaign against Hamas has significantly damaged the Biden administration's support amongst young people and other interest groups, which will factor into Biden's re-election chances and affect relations between Israel and the US, exhibiting the importance of public opinion for foreign policy creation.⁷⁷

However, the US' long-running approach to cross-strait relations, shared governance and human rights values between the US and Taiwan, and the common cause of countering an increasingly belligerent PRC bolster the US public's support for Taiwan. According to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA), US public support for direct troop deployment in the event of a PRC invasion of Taiwan has more than doubled since 1982 to 2021, with dips in between.⁷⁸ While these numbers do not capture the full extent to which public support has changed over the past 75 years, they do indicate US citizens' positive perception of Taiwan, with the domestic security, political, cultural, and diplomatic elements that compose it. In 2023, the CCGA conducted further polls, asking US citizens whether "the US security relationship with (Taiwan)...strengthens US national security or weakens it.," with 65% saying it strengthened national security.⁷⁹ While only 39% responded, saying they would support direct intervention during this period, between 45% and 78% supported varying degrees of support below direct

⁷⁶ "Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy," Cato Institute, December 4, 2019, <https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/public-opinion-us-foreign-policy>.

⁷⁷ Jonathan Weisman, Ruth Igielnik, and Alyce McFadden, "Poll Finds Wide Disapproval of Biden on Gaza, and Little Room to Shift Gears," *The New York Times*, December 19, 2023, sec. US, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/19/us/politics/biden-israel-gaza-poll.html>.

⁷⁸ Russell Hsiao, "Recent Trendlines in American Public Opinion on the Defense of Taiwan," Research, Global Taiwan Institute, November 1, 2023, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/11/recent-trendlines-in-american-public-opinion-on-the-defense-of-taiwan/>.

⁷⁹ Craig Kafura, "Two-Thirds of Americans Think US-Taiwan Relations Bolster US Security," Research (The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, November 15, 2023), <https://globalaffairs.org/research/public-opinion-survey/two-thirds-americans-think-us-taiwan-relations-bolster-us-security>.

intervention, showing that most US citizens recognize the importance of the US relationship with Taiwan. Though public support for US foreign policy is increasingly fraught, this data indicates that the US-ROC relationship is not significantly affected and that the US will likely continue supporting Taiwan.

While US public opinion indicates support for US-Taiwan relations, it is more concerning in Taiwan. The Pew Research Center conducted a poll in 2019 after the passing of the TAIPEI Act indicating Taiwanese people's favorable US views and support for increased US economic and political ties versus China, 68% to China's 35%.⁸⁰ However, increasing narratives of US skepticism have resulted in theories that the US would abandon Taiwan in the case of a PRC invasion, based on perceived US weakness against the PRC and concerns about the US' political intentions.⁸¹ A Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation poll in April 2022 showed 53.8% of 20 years and older Taiwanese did not believe the US would directly defend against a PRC invasion, with 36.3% believing the US would.⁸² The Taiwan Information Environment Research Center (IORG) found that Taiwanese actors largely start these skepticism narratives but are significantly amplified by PRC actors as propaganda tactics to weaken Taiwan-US relations and achieve broader goals.⁸³ These claims decrease the perceived legitimacy of the Taiwan-US partnership, increase the status of the PRC in Taiwanese perspectives, and undermine ROC governance.

Taiwanese US skepticism narratives have injected doubt into US commitments and policy undermined US-ROC cooperation and challenged Taiwan's chosen policy direction of US cooperation in managing cross-strait relations. Despite these narratives increasing influence, the

⁸⁰ Kat Devlin and Christine Huang, "In Taiwan, Views of Mainland China Mostly Negative," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project* (blog), May 12, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/05/12/in-taiwan-views-of-mainland-china-mostly-negative/>.

⁸¹ Chihhao Yu, "US Skepticism Narratives and Where They Come From – 台灣資訊環境研究中心 IORG," Taiwan Information Environment Research Center (IORG), August 8, 2023, https://iorg.tw/_en/a/us-skepticism-238.

⁸² Paul Huang, "What Do The Taiwanese Think?," Inkstick, June 17, 2022, <https://inkstickmedia.com/what-do-the-taiwanese-think/>.

⁸³ Yu, "US Skepticism Narratives and Where They Come From – 台灣資訊環境研究中心 IORG."

US remains the most rational partner in managing, at the very least, Taiwan's security interests, considering the alternatives. The US' consistent policy on Taiwan, defense of its interests, and citizens' broadly positive public opinion should serve as tokens of affirmation against these narratives. However, it is clear that simply continuing US-Taiwan relations will not dispel US skepticism narratives, as they employ speculative arguments to critique the status quo. Further, concerns about US support for Taiwan will not change the US policy approach of strategic ambiguity due to the sensitive nature of cross-strait relations. However, these are serious concerns, and recommendations to dispel them will be elucidated below.

Policy Recommendations

The recommendations below serve to avert conflict between the US, Taiwan, and China by maintaining a balanced approach and strong alliance with the US:

1. Work with US Presidential administrations and the Executive branch to support Taiwan's alliances and presence in international fora:
 - a. The Biden administration's work to maintain Taiwan's alliances and encourage cooperation with International Government Organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international collaborations offers a strong avenue forward. Encourage US Presidential administrations and the Executive branch to protect Taiwan's alliances with the TAIPEI Act. Increased international participation would bolster Taiwan's substantive cooperation on international diplomatic fronts and likely increase PRC deterrence by generating support for Taiwan internationally.
2. Encourage continuing unofficial cooperation between US and ROC officials:

- a. Backed by the Taiwan Travel Act's decreased contact restrictions, continuing cooperation would strengthen the US-ROC stance against the PRC and could lead to increasingly substantive relations behind closed doors. This avenue would also (in conjunction with recommendation 3) combat critiques of strategic ambiguity and the perceived inadequacy of the TRA.
3. Encourage increased cooperation between the US and ROC's legislative entities:
 - a. Considering that presidential administrations have been consistent in their approach to cross-strait relations, it may be easier to influence Congressional action to cultivate continuing support from the US. This would support a continuing relationship between the US and Taiwan, elevate Taiwan's significance to US Officials and Congressional members, hopefully increasing US legislation and preparedness on Taiwan's defense, ensure adequate funding for Taiwan, and increase pressure on the US Executive branch and support for a full and adequate response in the event of PRC aggression. Increasing Legislative cooperation bolsters PRC deterrence while supporting Taiwan's key interests of maintaining democratic governance and distance from the mainland.
 4. Publicize US-ROC cooperation to strengthen public opinion
 - a. Publicizing increased international and legislative cooperation would increase Taiwan's significance to US citizens. Shared US-Taiwan values, like democracy, can be supported further in public statements on

international and legislative cooperation and hopefully strengthen support for Taiwan in US public opinion.

5. Dispel US Skepticism in US-Taiwan Cooperation Publications

- a. Generally, telegraphing US support and cooperation with statements is insufficient to dispel US skepticism. ROC public statements could address this issue by highlighting US support for Taiwan while explaining the US' policy approach and genuinely addressing US skepticism narratives by calling out inconsistencies and falsehoods to decrease their rhetorical power in Taiwanese public opinion.

China's Position on Taiwan

Introduction: Understanding the Implications of Chinese Nationalism

The CCP's use of Chinese nationalism to homogenize Taiwanese culture and history under a singular Chinese identity threatens Taiwan's diverse cultural heritage, which the Taiwanese policymakers must protect to preserve its cultural narratives. Therefore, by examining the past century of development and the significance of modern Chinese nationalism, we can comprehend how deeply intertwined the transformation of Chinese nationalism is with the historical events and political ideologies of the CCP. In addition, the PRC's diplomatic efforts to assert their One China principle domestically and internationally aim to isolate Taiwan's global presence. These challenging developments have put Taiwan in a difficult position where maintaining the status quo is the most appropriate action. Understanding the importance of nationalism to the Chinese will best equip Taiwan's policymakers on how to combat Chinese nationalism.

The CCP has asserted its legitimacy over Taiwan based on Chinese historical records and previous agreements made by the then representatives of China (the KMT), such as the 1944 Cairo Declaration and the 1945 Potsdam Proclamation.⁸⁴ Later, the UN's decision in 1971 recognized the PRC as "the only lawful representatives of China" and expelled "representatives of Chiang Kai-shek."⁸⁵ The PRC views these agreements as proof of the legitimacy of China's claims of Taiwan, and that unification is inevitable.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ "White Paper: The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era_Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, August 10, 2022, http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202208/t20220810_10740168.htm.

⁸⁵ "Restoration of the Lawful Rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations." (UN General Assembly, 1971), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/192054>.

⁸⁶ Cong, Peiwu. 2023. "Op-Ed | How to Properly View the Taiwan Question." The Canada Files. October 13, 2023. <https://www.thecanadafilms.com/articles/op-ed-how-to-properly-view-the-taiwan-question>.

As emphasized by the PRC Embassy in the US in their August 2022 White Paper, the “DPP authorities have adopted a separatist stance and colluded with external forces in successive provocative actions designed to divide the country.”⁸⁷ The PRC’s perspective is that the DPP is a separatist force “endangering peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits.”⁸⁸ Meanwhile, the external force is hinted to be the United States. China, throughout the White Paper, depicts the DPP as a threat to maintaining peace and inciting separatism among its citizens. The active promotion of Chinese nationalism is evident in the portrayal of the DPP as a challenge to the CCP's efforts to influence their narratives in Taiwan.

History of Nationalism in China

The influence of the formation of modern Chinese nationalism has also shaped Taiwan. To understand Chinese nationalism today, it is important to understand the historical contexts of how Chinese nationalism was formed because many themes of nationalism in China’s history are still relevant in China today. The rise of nationalism in China is mainly associated with anti-imperialist movements and the rise of nation-statehood beginning in the early 1900s. Mao’s era from 1949-1979 saw a major rise in nationalism due to building feelings of resentment towards imperialism, capitalism, and feudalism.⁸⁹ China’s history with western aggressors deeply influenced Mao, but specifically the Japanese, and their occupation of Taiwan and Korea. During his rule, there was no force uniting the various regions or ethnic identities within Taiwan, and Mao used the Japanese imperialism rhetoric for cohesion within China and further highlighted the victimization of the Chinese people by foreign powers.⁹⁰ Mao’s introduction of the “Century of Humiliation” to China brought down political differences and introduced common hegemonic

⁸⁷ “White Paper: The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era.”

⁸⁸ “White Paper: The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era.”

⁸⁹ Shameer Modongal, “Development of Nationalism in China,” ed. Zhouxiang Lu, *Cogent Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (December 31, 2016): 1235749, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2016.1235749>.

⁹⁰ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People*, Studies in Rhetoric/Communication (Columbia, South Carolina: The University of South Carolina Press, 2017).

values.⁹¹ After the massacre in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and a surge of Western liberalism, the CCP reintroduced historical narratives of post-colonial China and a new form of neo-nationalism. This included anti-Westernism, arguing that the West can credit its success on its years of colonialism and history of imperialism.⁹² Nationalism in China is important to Taiwan because China's vision for rejuvenation and a singular national identity includes the unification of China and Taiwan. A strong identity heavily influences China's nationalism, and Taiwan remains a part of that identity, which is why it is important to understand its influence over Taiwan.

Drivers of Political Agenda: Education, Media, Xi Jinping, and the Chinese Dream

Nationalism and Narrative under Xi Jinping

Xi Jinping's version of cultural nationalism has five main objectives, according to author Jason Cong Lin. In short, those objectives are reiterating to the public that Chinese culture is superior to Western culture, shedding light onto anti-western subjects to divert attention away from domestic issues, creating an image of a growing China to appear that China has great power in the world, constructing a unified Han-dominant China, and national rejuvenation.⁹³ Rather than focusing nationalism on just the century of humiliation, the narrative has evolved into a "great power" narrative. The narrative of great power is supplemental to the "rejuvenation of China" through the eyes of President Xi.

Xi has defined rejuvenation as the "Chinese Dream." Unlike the American dream, the Chinese Dream is defined as "a dream of the whole nation, as well as of every individual—only

⁹¹ Lu. *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People*

⁹² Modongal, "Development of Nationalism in China."

⁹³ Jason Cong Lin, "The Rising China Is Not a 'Sick Man' Anymore: Cultural Nationalism in the Xi Jinping Era," 97, accessed February 7, 2024, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/10670564.2023.2214513?needAccess=true>.

when the country does well, and the nation does well, can every person do well.”⁹⁴ The dream is one of the main implications behind the level of nationalism that Xi has instilled into his era of politics. Xi wants the Chinese dream to be a unified collective dream rather than having individual Chinese civilian dreams. As historian Gloria Davies wrote, “he is not offering citizens the freedom to discuss what dreams they can realistically achieve in a highly competitive and unequal society under increasing state control. Rather, he is telling them to dream as patriots.”⁹⁵ Xi believes that constant reminders of China's power through the past and present will support the CCP's future since he has been worried about their stability since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. He has stated the importance of “strengthening ideological and political work to prevent a similar outcome in China.”⁹⁶ According to political scientist Suisheng Zhao, Chinese nationalism has shifted into a state-led popular nationalism under Xi. These state-led popular nationalists are no longer anti-authoritarian, are proud of their government, and would go out of their way to defend government policies.⁹⁷

Xi continues to cultivate a nationalist narrative that China has always been superior, reiterating the memory of Chinese inferiority caused by the century of humiliation. Xi's cultivation of nationalism helps by framing the unification of Taiwan as a great historical mission to maintain domestic support for CCP's policies. The 20th CCP Congress has set a new tone for the CCP as Xi spoke about the “great achievements” of the CCP and the “resilience” of the policies made throughout the year.⁹⁸ Xi's ideology framework, which establishes himself as the

⁹⁴Elizabeth C. Economy, “Excerpt: The Third Revolution,” accessed February 1, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/excerpt-third-revolution>.”

⁹⁵ Gloria Davies, “A Dream of Perpetual Rule,” in *China Dreams*, ed. Jane Golley et al. (ANU Press, 2020), 18–32, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv12sdxmk.6>.

⁹⁶ Davies, “A Dream of Perpetual Rule.”

⁹⁷ Suisheng Zhao, “From Affirmative to Assertive Patriots: Nationalism in Xi Jinping's China,” *The Washington Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (October 2, 2021): 149, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2021.2018795>.

⁹⁸ “Full Text of the Report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” accessed February 7, 2024, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202210/t20221025_10791908.html.

central figurehead of the CCP, uses national rejuvenation to push his vision and interest. Failure to unify Taiwan with the mainland could be seen domestically as a weakness or inability of the CPP and Xi to achieve their objectives; thus, Xi would seek to mitigate any potential perception of weakness.

Education

Since 2016, Xi has added patriotism to the curriculum of primary, secondary, and university-level schools in China, which have, in turn, been successful in getting its message across to the younger generations, specifically millennials and Gen-Z.⁹⁹ Textbooks at schools in China have been written in accordance with Xi's Chinese dream. Certain lessons include that the dream is the "great revival of China" and that citizens must serve state interests to achieve that dream.¹⁰⁰ The education system is highly focused on state confidence and obedience to the state to serve personal interests and benefits. As for Taiwan, certain parts or aspects of Taiwan's domestic history that do not relate to the concept of unity are intentionally left out of Chinese textbooks.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, textbooks contain the vision of peaceful unification with Taiwan based on the "One China principle."

Another implication of nationalism under Xi is the rise of cultural nationalism, which is promoted through Chinese cultural superiority and all ethnicities in China being one Chinese culture. The 8th-grade Chinese history course on "Ethnic Solidarity and Unity of the Motherland" features lessons on "minorities," Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan.¹⁰² The history of these ethnicities and regions is left vague and mainly focuses on how the unity of these groups is the wish of the entire Chinese Nation. Lessons on Taiwanese history leave out any essence of

⁹⁹ Zhao, "From Affirmative to Assertive Patriots."

¹⁰⁰ Edward Vickers, "Smothering Diversity: Patriotism in China's School Curriculum under Xi Jinping," *Journal of Genocide Research* 24, no. 2 (April 3, 2022): 162, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2021.1968142>.

¹⁰¹ Vickers, "Smothering Diversity."

¹⁰² Vickers.

Taiwanese identity and mainly circle back to the importance of unity. For example, historian Edward Vickers writes, “for Taiwan and Hong Kong alike, the imperative of unification is justified in terms of a profoundly racialized and culturally essentialist conception of identity notably absent from the discourse of non-Han minorities.”¹⁰³ To ensure China's rejuvenation, it is crucial to Xi that cultural identity is strengthened to bolster the great unity of the Chinese nation. Through education, the usage of cultural propaganda and patriotism helps illuminate the great strengths that China will have in the future. To China, remembering past struggles and the century of humiliation helps to prove that it is necessary to develop a strong nation based on a unified culture, patriotism, and dreams of the future.¹⁰⁴

Xi’s restriction on Chinese education is crucial to Taiwan’s comprehension of how the Chinese youth perceive Taiwanese identity, which is that they are Chinese and nothing more. This harms Taiwan because it hinders its sovereignty, making it difficult for Taiwan to grow international support by misleading the international perception of Taiwan. It is important for Taiwan to encourage education and scholarly research about Taiwanese identity and culture. Doing this will bolster unity within Taiwan and create an even stronger sense of culture separate from China. Furthermore, it will create better knowledge of Taiwan’s history and identity internationally.

Censorship and Disinformation in the Media

Xi and the CCP have been aware "from past experience (e.g. the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests) that Western political culture can endanger the CCP's authoritarian rule and erode its foundation."¹⁰⁵ This means the CCP is conscious that not just Western actions affected their stability, but Taiwan’s actions could also. Taiwan needs to understand how Xi’s increase in

¹⁰³ Vickers.

¹⁰⁴ Lin, “The Rising China Is Not a ‘Sick Man’ Anymore,” 99.

¹⁰⁵ Lin, 99.

control over the Chinese people through education, censorship, and disinformation can be used to the advantage of Taiwan. The CCP's tactic of faulting “Western powers and Western values,” has diverted public negativity and created a common enemy.¹⁰⁶ One example from a Chinese citizen is an accusation that “the US of covertly waging an economic war that first led to China’s stock market crash,” furthering the Western conspiracy that Western countries (i.e. US) do not want China to prosper.¹⁰⁷ Another instance of the CCP usage of averting blame is blaming the origins of the White Paper Revolution on anti-government protesters in Hong Kong and Russia, which allowed authorities to conduct random searches on citizens' phones.¹⁰⁸ These student protests are serious challenges as they are a threat to the CCP’s regime and Xi, “sowing seeds of discontent among the Chinese people” as the Chinese government struggles to control the narrative over their citizens.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, the CCP does not only try to control the narrative domestically but internationally through spreading disinformation globally. During Taiwan’s 2024 presidential elections, there was an influx of misinformation among the presidential candidates affecting elections, as revealed by the Taiwanese civil society organization Doublethink Lab that “less than 20% of respondents believed the false information spread in Taiwan during elections came from abroad.”¹¹⁰ These uses of misinformation play off the pre-existing “fears in Taiwanese society” and have the power to sway elections.¹¹¹ Many Taiwanese officials suspect that local collaborators are paid indirectly by Chinese sponsors to spread US skepticism and pro-Chinese

¹⁰⁶ Suisheng Zhao, “The Patriotic Education Campaign in Xi’s China: The Emergence of a New Generation of Nationalists | China Leadership Monitor,” March 2, 2023, <https://www.prcleader.org/post/the-patriotic-education-campaign-in-xi-s-china-the-emergence-of-a-new-generation-of-nationalists>.

¹⁰⁷ Zhao.

¹⁰⁸ Zhao.

¹⁰⁹ Zhao.

¹¹⁰ “China Is Flooding Taiwan with Disinformation,” *The Economist*, accessed February 16, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/asia/2023/09/26/china-is-flooding-taiwan-with-disinformation>.

¹¹¹ “China Is Flooding Taiwan with Disinformation.”

sentiments in the media.¹¹² Though there are laws against disinformation, the difficulty is that “they are limited to cases of proven state-sponsored activity,” and with a high volume being published constantly, the work of fact-checking organizations cannot keep up.¹¹³ These issues only increase with the advance of AI and how AI will be used as a tool to spread misinformation.¹¹⁴

These examples convey that the CCP's utilization of censorship and disinformation poses a threat to Taiwan's autonomy by actively blocking access to any narratives that differ from the CCP's stance on Taiwan. The CCP eliminated any support or sympathy toward Taiwanese independence domestically and internationally. In addition, CCP censorship makes it challenging for Taiwan to promote peaceful co-existence. With these implications, it becomes increasingly evident that Chinese censorship is significant not only in protecting the autonomy of Taiwan but also in amassing any allies internationally.

Impacts of Chinese Nationalism on Taiwan

Although nationalism in China directly affects its citizens, nationalism is also used as an attempt to advance a unification agenda. This section highlights how nationalism has been used directly in Taiwan. Although China has used media and technology to put out disinformation, this section aims to show how they have used nationalism as a tool as well. Not only has the Chinese government been reinstating the importance of culture amongst their own people, but they have been repeatedly projecting it into Taiwan as well.

¹¹² “China Is Flooding Taiwan with Disinformation.”

¹¹³ “China Is Flooding Taiwan with Disinformation.”

¹¹⁴ Allie Funk, Adrian Shahbaz, and Kian Vesteinsson, “The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence,” Freedom House, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2023/repressive-power-artificial-intelligence>.

Furthermore, discourse in China has tended to focus on the cultural similarities between Taiwan and China. The use of the word “family” when referring to Taiwan has surged, as well as other sentimental terms when discussing the history between the mainland and Taiwan. For example, Chinese textbooks portray the separation of Taiwan as painful and emotional. These textbooks include old emotional poetry and images of Chinese feeling nostalgic and distraught from the separation of China and Taiwan.¹¹⁵ The unification of Taiwan is strong implication of China's rejuvenation plan. The Chinese government, under Xi, has continued to publicize the shared history between Taiwan and China, as well as efforts made to celebrate their shared cultural identity. These efforts have been seen through the 2012 Cross-Strait Intangible Cultural Heritage Month and Cross-Strait Cultural Friendship Weeks.¹¹⁶ Political scientists Gang Lin and Weixu Wu write, “in the case of Taiwan, however, political discourse on the mainland has focused more on cultural similarities, ethnic equivalence, and common economic interests of people between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and less on so-called institutional identity of the economic and political system on the other side of the Taiwan Strait.”¹¹⁷ Xi has attempted to create a historical narrative of great collaboration between China and Taiwan. For example, in 2015, Xi spoke about the great cooperation of the KMT and CCP throughout the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. In reality, however, the KMT has the perspective that the war was part of ROC history, and from the perspective of the DPP, Taiwan had nothing to do with the War of Resistance.¹¹⁸ Although China has been trying to create a sense of shared cultural identity, most people in Taiwan are aware of this sense of culture, but politically, they continue to

¹¹⁵ Vickers, “Smothering Diversity.”

¹¹⁶ Gang Lin and Weixu Wu, “Chinese National Identity under Reconstruction,” in *Taiwan and China*, ed. Lowell Dittmer, *Fitful Embrace* (University of California Press, 2017), 75–92, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1w76wpm.8>.

¹¹⁷ Lin and Wu, “Chinese National Identity under Reconstruction.”

¹¹⁸ Lin and Wu.

reject the authoritarian political system in China and do not share any form of political identity with it.

Recommendations

What can Taiwan do to mitigate Chinese nationalism? The tension in recent years over the rise of the Taiwanese identity and consciousness poses a problem for Beijing's narrative that Taiwan is a part of China. It is important to understand Taiwan's difficult position in navigating the status quo without provoking China while concurrently promoting its independence and protecting its national identity. We recommend that Taiwan continue focusing on maintaining the status quo with China as its best course of action. There is no concrete solution to mitigate Chinese nationalism, yet to continue to co-exist and co-prosper (as much as that is possible) with China while protecting Taiwan's de facto independence.

Chinese nationalism is a complex political driver that significantly impacts Taiwanese dealings with China. Dealing with a difficult to predict variable such as nationalism is a delicate matter that Taiwan must navigate to safeguard its interests, society, and culture.

History, Civil Society, & Domestic Politics in Taiwan

Introduction: Utilizing Taiwan's Soft Power

Taiwan's history, ingrained in its educational curriculum and public discourse, plays a pivotal role amid evolving international dynamics. As China seeks to exert influence, Taiwan faces the imperative to strengthen global ties.¹¹⁹ This section explores Taiwan's soft power—specifically, historical narrative and civil society—as strategic tools for Taiwan. Soft power grapples with a modernized reality of cultural attraction, ideology, political values, and international institutions holding influence to sway over other sovereign bodies through the conduit of public diplomacy.¹²⁰

As discussed, a major part of the divergence between Taiwan and China lies in their historical narratives. For the purposes of this section, a narrative is defined as a state-advocated, or otherwise general, account of the past and its implications for the present onward.

Additionally, scholarship has claimed that heritage, linking culture and history, emerges as a key element in soft power dynamics.¹²¹ China and Japan, as only a few examples, embark on founding heritage sites and defining historical narratives for a variety of political purposes, such as China's promotion of their supremacy and prosperity of the Silk Road coinciding with the Belt and Road Initiative.¹²² States have proven that historical narratives, for the purposes of soft power, are of vital interest, and thus, in the case of Taiwan, they may be of considerable interest.

¹¹⁹“Taiwan Desperately Needs Support from the World,” *The Economist*, accessed February 19, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2023/03/06/taiwan-desperately-needs-support-from-the-world>; Cleo Paskal, “Beijing’s Subversive Political Warfare in the Pacific—and the Need for Greater Engagement by the United States and Taiwan,” Global Taiwan Institute, March 22, 2023, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/03/beijings-subversive-political-warfare-in-the-pacific/>.

¹²⁰Joseph S. Jr. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (PublicAffairs Books, 2005).

¹²¹Kingsley Edney, Stanley Rosen, and Ying Zhu, eds., *Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics: China’s Campaign for Hearts and Minds* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2020); Burcu Baykurt and Victoria De Grazia, eds., *Soft-Power Internationalism: Competing for Cultural Influence in the 21st-Century Global Order* (Columbia University Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.7312/bayk19544>.

¹²²Ryoko Nakano and Yujie Zhu, “Heritage as Soft Power: Japan and China in International Politics,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 26, no. 7 (November 9, 2020): 869–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2020.1845322>.

Additionally, to discuss how Taiwan can utilize its civil society, one should look at how it developed. Within the following sections, we will evaluate Taiwanese history and competing narratives with China, Taiwan's civil society, and how Taiwan, based on what it has been doing, can continue to utilize and defend these two elements.

Taiwanese History: A Complex Narrative

Taiwanese history in this section dissects and claims that Taiwan's early historical connection and democratization are important to share with the international community. China's narrative of Taiwan simplifies its history, emphasizing Chinese migration and asserting sovereignty since ancient times.¹²³ However, scholarship has challenged this, with accounts of complicated and limited legal reach of the Ming and Qing dynasties over Taiwan even after the military efforts of the controversial Zheng Chenggong,¹²⁴ the complex indigenous and otherwise ethnic diversity (that are not Han Chinese or nationally Chinese) and history of organized exploitation and relations with the colonial Dutch and Spanish between said groups.¹²⁵ The oppressive legacy of the Japanese empire after the short-lived Republic of Formosa, and military government's occupation (when the island was only 15% mainland-originated), and the White Terror further complicate historical recollections, and these act as a paramount feature in

¹²³ "White Paper: The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era_Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, August 10, 2022, http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202208/t20220810_10740168.htm.

¹²⁴ Ruiping Ye, "COLONISATION WITHOUT EXPLOITATION: THE QING POLICIES IN TAIWAN DURING THE HIGH QING PERIOD (1684–1795)," *JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALASIAN LAW TEACHERS ASSOCIATION*, 2013, <http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/JIALawTA/2013/8.pdf>; Yinan He, "Competing Narratives, Identity Politics, and Cross-Strait Reconciliation," *Asian Perspective* 34, no. 4 (2010): 45–83.

¹²⁵ Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (Columbia University Press, 2010), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/he99019.0001.001>.

Taiwan's conception of itself as a nation.¹²⁶ Said topics show Taiwan's unique history over the island and legitimate connection.

Taiwan's democratization too significantly changed the country, and, through the lens of a once restricted pluralistic front for media and perspectives on Taiwanese identity,¹²⁷ shows a vibrant civil society, active demonstrative tradition, and competitive party politics. The history of Taiwan and its people reveals the multi-faceted reality of the island that, through separation, has contributed to a cultivated distinct identity that is not as simple as "just Chinese." This sentiment is reflected further in indigenous voices, in which they state their intention to reconcile history with a Taiwanese society under self-determination.¹²⁸ This narrative puts distance with China and can frame how the international community views Taiwan: not a "two Chinas" dispute contextualized under the Chinese domain, but a democratic nation with complex ties to their land, threatened by a hostile, non-democratic power. The island's democratic values, celebrated domestically, can resonate internationally, and can be used to make others empathize with Taiwan.

Taiwanese Civil Society: Shaping Identity & Democracy

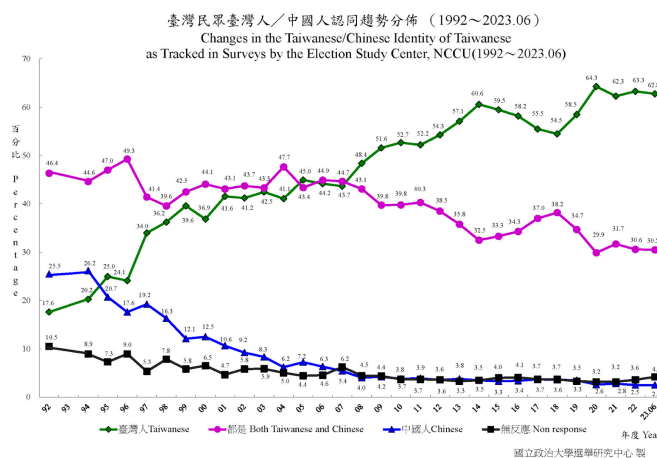
Taiwan's modern civil society, an extension of history, demonstrates vibrant democracy, such as the Sunflower Movement between March 18 and April 10, 2014, which, triggered by concerns over the Cross-Strait Services Trade Agreement, showcased participatory democracy

¹²⁶ Hass, Glaser, and Bush, *US-Taiwan Relations*, 13–52.; Leo T S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Stephen J. Hartnett, Patrick Shaou-Whea Dodge, and Lisa B. Keränen, "Postcolonial Remembering in Taiwan: 228 and Transitional Justice as 'The End of Fear,'" *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 13, no. 3 (July 2, 2020): 238–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17513057.2019.1614206>.

¹²⁷ Chien-Jung Hsu, *The Construction of National Identity in Taiwan's Media, 1896-2012* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

¹²⁸ 馬千里 Mateli Sawawan, Magaitan Lhkatafatu, and et al., "'This Is Sacred Space': An Open Letter to Xi Jinping from the Indigenous Peoples of Taiwan," Hong Kong Free Press HKFP, January 9, 2019, <http://hongkongfp.com/2019/01/09/sacred-space-open-letter-xi-jinping-indigenous-peoples-taiwan/>.

and a subsequent rise in Taiwanese independent sentiment.¹²⁹ This coincides with an increase and majority in Taiwanese identity as, over the past decades, public opinion on identity has shifted, with a rise in Taiwanese-only identity to around 62-63%.¹³⁰



Though agreeing on the increase, scholarship has debated the cause of Taiwanese identity from major events (such as attacks on Taiwanese tourists in China, and CCP's actions in Hong Kong following the National Security Act of 2020)¹³¹ and generational shifts to education, party performance in governance, and personal connections with China, such as in business.¹³² Indeed, Taiwan's education curriculum has tackled and implemented Taiwan-centric historical narratives, such as the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks and curriculum, aimed at teaching a Taiwan-centric perspective. Yet, Taiwan should be aware that domestic civil society's growing support for a Taiwanese identity is likely sensitive to a myriad of causes.

¹²⁹ Ian Rowen, "Inside Taiwan's Sunflower Movement: Twenty-Four Days in a Student-Occupied Parliament, and the Future of the Region," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 74, no. 1 (2015): 5–21; Ming-sho He, *Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven: Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019).

¹³⁰ Austin Horng-En Wang et al., "Why Does Taiwan Identity Decline?," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, April 21, 2023, 002190962311680, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231168068>.

¹³¹ Hsu, Chien-Jung *Construction of National Identity in Taiwan's Media* 97-99

¹³² Da-Chi Liao, Boyu Chen, and Chi-chen Huang, "The Decline of 'Chinese Identity' in Taiwan?! — An Analysis of Survey Data from 1992 to 2012," *East Asia* 30, no. 4 (December 1, 2013): 273–90, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-013-9198-3>; Wang et al., "Why Does Taiwan Identity Decline?"

With disinformation targeting and becoming salient among civil society, especially during recent election years, evidence has also shown this has been in some part due to covert Chinese stories infiltrating Taiwan's sphere, but also due to Taiwanese media sources originating misinformation, as well as a record of a lack of fact validation on public forums.¹³³ These sources target mainly Taiwanese political actors and policies. Historical narrative, modern identity, and civil society operate in tandem. To effectively convey this to the international stage, Taiwan must safeguard the integrity of information circulating in its civil society to protect and promote it globally. Effectively executing this strategy involves a combination of domestic protection and global promotion, aligning with Taiwan's democratic values and, thus, systems.

Taiwan's Domestic Politics: Operating Within The System

Taiwan, under the pressure of China's insistence on unification under the PRC, finds itself in an ambiguous position where it cannot operate politically like other sovereign states. This is especially apparent in public opinion on a formal de-jure declaration of independence, something the Taiwanese government, despite what previous politicians have stated, has not done and has instead consisted on the path of an official "government-in-exile" strategy in order not to alarm nor provoke Beijing.¹³⁴ According to a poll by the Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation in 2023, 48.9% of participants supported formal independence, compared to 26.9% supporting a continuation of the status quo and 11.8% supported unification. Though prospects for Taiwanese independence support seem formidable, even in Taiwan, the statistics for those preferring the status quo and unification pose an opposing opinion to be considered. Taiwan

¹³³ Adrian Rauchfleisch et al., "Taiwan's Public Discourse About Disinformation: The Role of Journalism, Academia, and Politics," *Journalism Practice* 17, no. 10 (November 26, 2023): 2197–2217, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2110928>.

¹³⁴ Nathan F. Batto, "Taiwan Is Already Independent," *Foreign Affairs*, December 12, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/taiwan/taiwan-already-independent>.

cannot assert itself like other countries, so to find a path, we must look at how Taiwan's current diplomatic mechanisms and political system support and can support soft power via narratives.

Taiwan's "Unofficial" Diplomacy with History & Values

Taiwan maintains relations with other countries, and with the US, for example, through mutual democratic values and economic relations. Taiwan utilizes foreign service connections, mostly Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices (TECOs), to serve the purpose that countries would often attribute to embassies.¹³⁵ The two major parties also maintain communication with The United States, such as in Washington.¹³⁶ Taiwan also unofficially uses systems of sister cities and friendship groups between political actors. Taiwanese support for cooperation with countries like the US is strong,¹³⁷. Although the systems in which Taiwan conducts affairs with countries like the US are conducted in a technically non-state manner, that does not necessarily constrict it to do certain things, including promoting culture and historical narrative, much in the way countries consistently do within their embassies.

Foreign diplomacy, especially under President Tsai has been, on one hand, very focused on "values based" diplomacy on democracy, peace, and human rights, which has been pushed into a dialogue about medicine, security, industry & trade (like with the EU) and helping NGOs participate internationally, such as with environmental issues.¹³⁸ Additionally, Taiwan has extended into educational facilities through the establishment of Taiwan Resource Centers

¹³⁵ "TECRO Profile and Mission," Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States 駐美國台北經濟文化代表處, December 12, 2023, https://www.roc-taiwan.org/us_en/post/18.html.

¹³⁶ Glaser, Bonnie S. "Book Talk: US-Taiwan Relations with Bonnie Glaser." Lecture, 2024.

¹³⁷ Kat Devlin and Christine Huang, "In Taiwan, Views of Mainland China Mostly Negative," *Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project* (blog), May 12, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/05/12/in-taiwan-views-of-mainland-china-mostly-negative/>.

¹³⁸ "FOREIGN AFFAIRS FACT FOCUS," text, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 26, 2024, http://www.taiwan.gov.tw/content_5.php; "President Tsai Attends 2023 EU Investment Forum," Office of the President Republic of China (Taiwan), October 12, 2023, <https://english.president.gov.tw/News/6622#:~:text=The%20president%20emphasized%20that%20the,the%20fruits%20of%20our%20collaboration.>

starting in 2012.¹³⁹ This aligns with our recommendation to insert Taiwanese narratives into international discourse. The narrative of Taiwan’s stance on democratic values is reiterated too by Taiwan’s partners in the US and other countries that cite such as a core reason for their strong ties, such as those in Europe (Czech Republic being a recent case), the Pacific, and Americas.¹⁴⁰ Democratic narratives support Taiwan’s alliances that add to its deterrence plan, and with President Lai’s statement to commit to “values-based diplomacy,”¹⁴¹ Taiwan should seek to further this approach. Additionally, Taiwan should further its approach to foreign civil society, such as with its education institutes, and work to add a historical narrative as part of a more holistic view of these values of democracy and self-determination.

Taiwan Political Parties & Relations: An Obstacle?

The current political landscape might complicate a cohesive approach regarding historical narrative and soft power policy, but ongoing changes may prove an opportunity for cooperation. The 2024 election marked President-Elect Lai Ching-te's victory, but without an absolute majority in the Legislative Yuan, and with the emergence of the TPP challenging both major parties, their campaign highlighted their stance of discontent for both parties and a “middle road.” This election amplifies the growing gap in Taiwan-China relations, fueled by Chinese

¹³⁹ “Center for Chinese Studies_Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies,” Center for Chinese Studies, February 26, 2024, <https://ccs.ncl.edu.tw/en/academy2.aspx>.

¹⁴⁰ Ben Blanchard and Robert Muller, “In Diplomatic Coup, Taiwan President Speaks to Czech President-Elect,” *Reuters*, January 31, 2023, sec. World, <https://www.reuters.com/world/czech-president-elect-speak-taiwan-president-diplomatic-breakthrough-2023-01-30/>; The Associated Press, “US Lawmakers Visiting Taiwan Affirm ‘Shared Values,’” *NBC News*, February 21, 2023, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/us-lawmakers-visit-taiwan-tsai-ing-wen-rcna71526>; Megan Janetsky, “Taiwan’s President Seeks to Strengthen Relations with Allies in Central America Visit,” *PBS NewsHour*, April 1, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/taiwans-president-seeks-to-strengthen-relations-with-allies-in-central-america-visit>.

¹⁴¹ Thompson Chau, “Taiwan Presidential Front-Runner Pledges ‘Values-Based Diplomacy,’” *Nikkei Asia*, August 25, 2024, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Taiwan-tensions/Taiwan-presidential-front-runner-pledges-values-based-diplomacy>.

pressure for unification.¹⁴² Throughout the history of Taiwan's government, the ROC has seen momentous changes in its approach to the PRC. The KMT, historically with Chinese roots and embracing a Chinese identity and unification ideology,¹⁴³ has shifted towards democratic values and protecting Taiwan with “open dialogue” and deterrents.¹⁴⁴

Both the DPP and KMT, as of recently, seem to be converging on principles of democracy, military, and the status quo, while still differing in fundamental ideologies pertaining to Chinese relations.¹⁴⁵ Lai will be faced with challenges pertaining to how each party represents a Taiwanese or Chinese identity, but a moment in which both major parties can agree on “non-aggressive” policies that, yet support ultimately a Taiwanese status quo away from the jurisdiction of China, provide opportunities for legislation concerning democratic values in soft power projection, and protecting said democracy.

Counter-Disinformation Methods

Taiwanese society, being heavily integrated with the online environment, has seen civilians cognisant of disinformation, yet their democratic society proceeds to be one of the most heavily targeted by it. The Taiwanese government has worked with volunteers, fact-checking report functions, and even AI technology, specifically to combat threats of AI-generated falsified information with the works of the Minister of Digital Affairs, Audrey Tang.¹⁴⁶ Civil society

¹⁴² Susan V Lawrence, “Taiwan: Background and US Relations - IF10275” (Congressional Research Service, January 16, 2024), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10275>.

¹⁴³ Shirley Kan, “Implications of the KMT-CPC Breakdown,” Global Taiwan Institute, December 2, 2020, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2020/12/implications-of-the-kmt-cpc-breakdown/>.

¹⁴⁴ Dennis Lu Chung Weng, “From Dove to Hawk: KMT’s Transformation and the Quest for New Guardrails in Cross-Strait Relations,” Brookings, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/from-dove-to-hawk-kmts-transformation-and-the-quest-for-new-guardrails-in-cross-strait-relations/>; Brown David G., “Are DPP and KMT Views of China Converging?,” Global Taiwan Institute, October 21, 2020, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2020/10/are-dpp-and-kmt-views-of-china-converging/>.

¹⁴⁵ David G., “Are DPP and KMT Views of China Converging?”

¹⁴⁶ Jude Blanchette et al., *Protecting Democracy in an Age of Disinformation: Lessons from Taiwan* (Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 2021), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28659>; Patrick Tucker, “Taiwan Is Using Generative AI to Fight Chinese Disinfo,” Defense One, September 22, 2023, <https://www.defenseone.com/technology/2023/09/taiwan-using-generative-ai-fight-chinese-disinfo/390573/>; Tiffany Hsu, Amy Chang Chien, and Steven Lee Myers, “Can Taiwan Continue to Fight Off Chinese Disinformation?,” *The*

actively engages in education, fact-checking, and resistance against CCP intimidation tactics.¹⁴⁷ Taiwanese people, including young groups, organize to educate about disinformation, even formulating classes to help elderly persons with media literacy and compete in fact-checking competitions. Larger fact-checking organizations include Doublethink Labs, Cofacts (on the social app Line), MyGoPen, and Taiwan Factcheck Center. Methods have included cartoons, report functions, and otherwise public announcements for people to critically engage with the media consumed. Civil society and NGOs thus have shown an effective counter with more engagement to the plethora of disinformation sources, compared to controversial failed legislation for emergency media control provisions, transparency in social media platforms, or fines and prison sentences.¹⁴⁸ The government may consider a more substantial approach to supporting NGOs and civil society networks as a great feature of Taiwanese democracy.

Additionally, scholarship has pointed to Taiwan's relatively new liberal media landscape and a lack of precautions and measures of credible merit to news and media sources, such as scandals with the China Times being fined for fact-checking failures.¹⁴⁹ While Taiwan may perform strongly on the front of civil society engagement in fact-checking, it may seek to strengthen its own reliable media sources to assess and prove them as credible to the public, such as through the Association of Taiwanese Journalists.

Recommendations

This section recommends Taiwan:

New York Times, November 26, 2023, sec. Business,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/26/business/media/taiwan-china-disinformation.html>.

¹⁴⁷ "The Battle with China Is Psychological as Much as Physical," *The Economist*, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2023/03/06/the-battle-with-china-is-psychological-as-much-as-physical>; Jordyn Haime, "Taiwan's Amateur Fact-Checkers Wage War on Fake News from China," Aljazeera, September 19, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/9/19/taiwan>.

¹⁴⁸ Emily Feng, "Taiwan Deals with Lots of Misinformation, and It's Harder to Track Down," *NPR*, January 11, 2024, sec. World, <https://www.npr.org/2024/01/11/1216340756/taiwan-election-disinformation-social-media-ptt>.

¹⁴⁹ Rauchfleisch et al., "Taiwan's Public Discourse About Disinformation."

1. In terms of promoting historical narrative & civil society abroad:
 - a. Strategic Communication: Further Taiwan's commitment to using a democratic narrative and "values-based" diplomacy in international activities. Furthermore, develop and incorporate a comprehensive international communication strategy highlighting Taiwan's historical ties to the island and its historical journey towards democracy. This strategy will have to be active, and communicated to representatives, government officials, and otherwise people of political interest to create ties with Taiwan. It may be most efficient to find means to integrate these strategies with existing ties (TECO, parliamentary connections, businesses, educational institutions, etc.)
2. In terms of protecting civil society at home (specifically disinformation):
 - a. Further collaborate and bolster with civil society groups working in the field to curb the spread of false political information, such as Doublethink, MyGoPen, and Taiwan Factcheck Center, and safeguard public perceptions.
 - b. Develop measures for credibility in Taiwanese media sources in which the government can certify journalistic or otherwise informational integrity.

Regional Politics in Taiwan

Taiwan is in continual need of key allies to protect itself from the mainland and should look towards more regional economic partners to create an informal economic security bloc that could pressure China not to escalate tensions in the Taiwan Strait to maintain the status quo. This section will be structured by the following: the Philippines, South Korea, Japan, and a summary of our policy recommendation.

The Philippines

We have selected the Philippines as a key potential ally because it is the closest island chain to Taiwan and many Filipinos reside in Taiwan. If conflict broke out in the Taiwan Strait, it would affect the Philippines economy and ultimately cause issues to arise in the Philippines. In the event of an invasion, regional politics around the South China Sea would worsen, prompting Filipino intervention.

The Philippines has taken action to support itself in the region by supporting the United States. According to the Brookings Institute reports, “On February 2, 2023, Philippine and US defense officials announced that the US military will be given new access to four Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) bases nationwide. This move effectively cemented the two allies’ efforts to expand the US strategic footprint in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region in the face of an aggressive and expansionist China.”¹⁵⁰ The Philippines has an opportunity to increase its defensive ties by incorporating more partners to put pressure on China, ensuring greater preventative tactics to make the onset of war less appealing to China. With the four new bases opened for the United States in the Philippines, Taiwan is a key point of interest due to its

¹⁵⁰ Renato Cruz De Castro, “The Philippines’ Evolving View on Taiwan: From Passivity to Active Involvement,” Brookings, accessed February 8, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-philippines-evolving-view-on-taiwan-from-passivity-to-active-involvement/>.

relative proximity.¹⁵¹ The Philippines, which has strengthened military ties with Japan, Australia, South Korea, France, and Vietnam, has “agreed to increase coastguard co-operation in the South China Sea..., which has also contested China’s claims in the region.”¹⁵²

In contrast, China claims most of the South China Sea “[rejecting] a 2016 arbitration tribunal that dismissed those claims under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.”¹⁵³ The UN Law of Sea established freedom-of-navigation rights, set territorial sea boundaries 12 miles offshore, and set exclusive economic zones up to 200 miles offshore, amongst other mechanisms.¹⁵⁴ China has used its coast guard and maritime militia to block Philippines resupply missions and “in particular around the Second Thomas Shoal, ramm[ed] ships and us[ed] a water cannon and laser against Philippine sailors.”¹⁵⁵ Chinese encroachment on territories claimed by Manila are infractions against the Law of the Sea. Overextension into the Filipino territorial and economic zone directly interferes with the flow of maritime functions, including trade in the Philippines. This, in tandem with assaults on Philippine sailors, has soured Chinese-Philippine relations.

After the 2024 Taiwanese elections, China has made a substantial effort to rebuke countries that have congratulated Lai Ching-te but has reserved severe condemnation for the Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.¹⁵⁶ The Philippines has been highly receptive to deepening ties with neighbors against China due to Chinese adventurism and Filipino public support against China. Recently, Philippine international relations have been characterized by its

¹⁵¹ Renato Cruz De Castro, “The Philippines’ Evolving View on Taiwan: From Passivity to Active Involvement,” Brookings, accessed February 8, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-philippines-evolving-view-on-taiwan-from-passivity-to-active-involvement/>.

¹⁵² A. Anantha Lakshmi and Kathrin Hille, “‘Gutter-Level’ Talk: China-Philippines Discord Deepens over Taiwan,” February 1, 2024, <https://www.ft.com/content/f0246816-0bac-4754-b85e-b1a7a9f1da38>.

¹⁵³ Lakshmi and Hille.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations, “Oceans and the Law of the Sea,” United Nations (United Nations), accessed February 6, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/oceans-and-the-law-of-the-sea>.

¹⁵⁵ Lakshmi and Hille, “‘Gutter-Level’ Talk.”

¹⁵⁶ Lakshmi and Hille.

dramatically upgraded defense ties with the United States and Japan, which have economic ties to Taiwan. In addition, “Marcos Jr.[,] went much farther than any regional leader—even US officials—in congratulating the winning Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan.”¹⁵⁷ Marcos Jr. is willing to press China on the international stage, and with the Philippines looking for defensive ties this could bode well for Taiwan.

According to the Philippines’ government in its National Security Policy from 2023 to 2028, tension in the Taiwan Strait is a major concern to the country.¹⁵⁸ Due to its geographic proximity to Taiwan, any conflict in the Taiwan Strait could impact the archipelago, with 150,000 Filipinos living in Taiwan and worsened attacks on Filipino sailors and ships. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., in an interview with Nikkei Asia, stated that it would be difficult for the Philippines not to get involved in the conflict due to its close geographic location to Taiwan.¹⁵⁹ This in concurrence with the latest cases of aggressive Chinese activity in territories claimed by Manila and Chinese control of the South China Sea, has cultivated citizens’ fears and turned public opinion against China. A survey by OCTA Research listed that “70 percent of Filipinos believe Manila should assert the country’s territorial rights in the South China Sea, including through military action such as naval patrols and troop presence.”¹⁶⁰

Hence, it would be in Taiwan’s best interest to continue to build social and economic ties with the Philippines. In the context of changing public opinion, the TECO in the Philippines noted, “There are also approximately 8,000 Filipinos who are married with Taiwanese [...]

¹⁵⁷ “Marcos Jr. Moves the Philippines Dramatically Closer to the United States,” Council on Foreign Relations, accessed February 6, 2024,

<https://www.cfr.org/article/marcos-jr-moves-philippines-dramatically-closer-united-states>.

¹⁵⁸ “Is the Philippines Ready for a Taiwan Conflict?,” accessed February 1, 2024,

<https://thediplomat.com/2023/08/is-the-philippines-ready-for-a-taiwan-conflict/>.

¹⁵⁹ “Marcos Says ‘hard to Imagine’ Philippines Can Avoid Taiwan Conflict,” Nikkei Asia, accessed February 1, 2024,

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/Marcos-says-hard-to-imagine-Philippines-can-avoid-Taiwan-conflict>.

¹⁶⁰ Lakshmi and Hille, “‘Gutter-Level’ Talk.”

Meanwhile, the Taiwanese also thank [Filipinos] for their hard work and contribution toward the economic development in Taiwan.”¹⁶¹ At this point in time, the Philippines has citizens and interests occurring in Taiwan and has to keep in mind the danger of a potential conflict might have on its trade routes and its citizens. Although Marcos’ administration looks “‘forward to close collaboration’ on ‘strengthening mutual interests’ and ‘fostering peace,’” his government cannot recognize Taiwan and follows the One China Policy.¹⁶² Even so, we recommend that Taiwan continue to build a relationship with the Philippines while developing an information campaign utilizing the TECO in the Philippines to make information regarding the importance of Taiwan more public to the average Filipino citizen.

South Korea

We have identified South Korea, which switched diplomatic relations from Taiwan to China in 1992, as a potential ally for Taiwan due to its willingness to align with the US and Japan to preserve peace in the Taiwan Strait. The relationship between South Korea and Taiwan is characterized by government officials visiting Taipei and military exchanges between senior officers. South Koreans, including the current President Yoon Suk Yeol, have related the China issue to the one with North Korea. In continuation of their position regarding North Korea, South Korea has portrayed the need to keep the status quo in Taiwan, concluding that “‘these tensions occurred because of the attempts to change the status quo by force, and we together with the international community oppose such a change [...] The Taiwan issue is not simply an issue between China and Taiwan but, like the issue of North Korea, it is a global issue.’”¹⁶³ Although

¹⁶¹ “Taiwan-Philippines Relations,” Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in the Philippines 駐菲律賓臺北經濟文化辦事處, accessed February 25, 2024, https://www.roc-taiwan.org/ph_en/post/66.html.

¹⁶² Lakshmi and Hille, “‘Gutter-Level’ Talk.”

¹⁶³ Russell Hsiao, “Taiwan and South Korea Enhancing Their Engagement as Chinese Aggression Intensifies,” Global Taiwan Institute, September 20, 2023, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/09/taiwan-and-south-korea-enhancing-their-engagement-as-chinese-aggression-intensifies/>.

South Korea does not explicitly support Taiwan, this statement encapsulates South Korea's current stance on Taiwan's position, that of the need for stabilization.

On May 22, 2021, Joe Biden and then President Moon Jae-In discussed the importance of preserving peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. The discussion marked a change in position on Taiwan, as Seoul has recognized the PRC as the sole government of China since 1992.¹⁶⁴ This was the first time in nearly 30 years that the Republic of Korea (ROK) addressed the situation in the Taiwan Strait with a bilateral document with Korea's partner, the United States. Similar to US-Taiwan relations, the ROK and Taiwan have maintained unofficial ties. Today, the ROK and Taiwan are each other's fifth and sixth largest trading partners.¹⁶⁵ Taiwan produces sixty percent of the world's semiconductors and ninety percent of the world's most advanced semiconductors, with Samsung in South Korea accounting for most of the other ten percent.¹⁶⁶ The importance of the semiconductor trade in Taiwan is not lost on the world economy, which holds the majority market share. In concurrence with being each other's fifth and sixth trade partners and "[in] the absence of formal diplomatic relations between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the ROK, Seoul has also been stepping up its parliamentary diplomacy with Taipei in addition to these presidential statements." In late December 2022, Chung Woo-taik, the ROK's deputy assembly speaker, with members of the National Assembly visited Taiwan. Cho Kyoung-tae, a member of the National Assembly, is also a chairman of the Korea-Taiwan Parliamentarian Friendship Association.¹⁶⁷ This same Friendship Association "received a three-member delegation from the

¹⁶⁴ Chaewon Lee and Adam P. Liff, "Reassessing Seoul's 'One China' Policy: South Korea-Taiwan 'Unofficial' Relations after 30 Years (1992-2022)," *The Journal of Contemporary China* 32, no. 143 (2023): 745-64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2113959>.

¹⁶⁵ Lee and Liff."

¹⁶⁶ "Taiwan's Dominance of the Chip Industry Makes It More Important, Taiwan's Dominance of the Chip Industry Makes It More Important," *The Economist*, accessed February 8, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2023/03/06/taiwans-dominance-of-the-chip-industry-makes-it-more-important>.

¹⁶⁷ "Taiwan and South Korea Enhancing Their Engagement as Chinese Aggression Intensifies," Global Taiwan Institute, September 20, 2023,

Korean Mission in Taipei led by Representative Kang Young-hoon,” which in May 2019, “committed to promoting exchanges between Taiwan and Korea. Both Chairmen Lin Te-fu and Chen Ou-po of the Taiwan-Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group recognize his efforts to promote bilateral relations between Taiwan and Korea.”¹⁶⁸ Although no formalized communication has developed since Representative Kang retired, these recent changes in South Korea are of keen interest to Taiwan in the search for key allies.

Therefore, we recommend that Taiwan continue to partake in parliamentary diplomacy, creating communication avenues with the ROK utilizing the Korea-Taiwan Parliamentarian Friendship Association and other such informal bodies to receive officials from South Korea.

Japan

Informal allies are instrumental in Taiwan’s efforts to hold off China. One of these informal allies we suggest is Japan, who switched diplomatic ties from Taiwan to China in 1972. Despite this switch, Japan remains an important business partner to Taiwan with “Bilateral trade between Japan and Taiwan totaled US\$88.2 billion in 2022 (3.39% increase), of which Japan’s exports to Taiwan amounted to US\$54.6 billion (2.71% decrease), and Taiwan’s exports to Japan amounted to US\$33.6 billion (15.10% increased).”¹⁶⁹ Japan plays a vital role as Taiwan's third-largest trading partner due to substantial trade volume and the reciprocal economic benefits shared between the two nations.

<https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/09/taiwan-and-south-korea-enhancing-their-engagement-as-chinese-aggression-intensifies/>.

¹⁶⁸ 立法院, “立法院,” text/html, 立法院 (立法院, July 23, 2013),

<https://www.ly.gov.tw/EngPages/Detail.aspx?nodeid=45579&pid=219466>.

¹⁶⁹ International Trade Administration, MOEA, “International Trade Administration, MOEA,” Text (International Trade Administration, MOEA, November 28, 2011),

<https://www.trade.gov.tw/english/BilateralTrade/BilateralTrade.aspx?code=7030&nodeID=4639>.

In terms of Japan's relationship with the PRC, Japanese firms were among the first to invest in China's growing market but also raised early alarms of Chinese expansionism.¹⁷⁰ In 2010 and 2012, disputes over uninhabited yet contested islands in the East China Sea which Japan calls the Senkaku Islands (and China calls the Diaoyu Islands) created enough concern, that Sasae Kenichiro, a former Japanese ambassador to America, relayed that “this is not a small compartmentalized issue between Japan and China, but a sign of a growing power in the region.” Early on, Japan recognized the increasing power of China in the region, and with rising tensions between the two prominent nations in East Asia and in “an era of competition with China, Japan's perspective is being sought anew.”¹⁷¹

According to Jagannath P. Panda, Head of the Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs, “Nobuo Kishi, former Japanese minister of defense, in line with Abe's sentiment, stated in 2021 that the ‘peace and stability of Japan is directly connected with Taiwan.’” Including important sectors such as trade and energy. Therefore, Tokyo is inclined to support the US and its allies to protect important sea lanes for energy and trade in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁷² Similar to the Philippines, a conflict in Taiwan would impact the supply lines in the region and in the event of war, disrupt trade. As such, Taiwan serves as a proactive economic partner to Japan by which both can grow concurrently.

Deepening connections with Taiwan provide substantial security benefits to Japan. Taiwan strategically is the gateway to the South China Sea and, in tandem with the Japanese island chain, nearly encircles the coast of China. In December 2022, “Japan's New National Security Strategy, Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program were released to safeguard

¹⁷⁰ “How Japan Sees China,” *The Economist*, accessed February 7, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/asia/2022/01/01/how-japan-sees-china?>

¹⁷¹ “How Japan Sees China.”

¹⁷² Jagannath P. Panda, “Taiwan: Tokyo's New Ally?,” Institute for Security and Development Policy, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://isdps.se/publication/taiwan-tokyos-new-ally/>.

Japan's national interests," which outlined a new security policy shift towards increased "defense spending, cooperation with like-minded partners for maintaining its free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision, and a move away from the traditional defense-orientated policy to an offensive posture through acquiring counterstrike missile capabilities." By doing so Tokyo is strengthening its military as a contingency to proactively maintain peace in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁷³

Japan holds an interest in maintaining its trade lines with Taiwan. For Japanese interests, the status quo must be upheld. In the advent of a conflict, Japan and the United States would work together against a Chinese threat, as it continues to grow as the regional hegemon. Taiwan, in this sense, has Japan as a major informal economic ally that, in tandem with the United States, can press sanctions against China in the event of an invasion. This would, over time, impact the Chinese ability to carry out a prolonged conflict with Taiwan. Japan currently has a GDP of \$4.23 Trillion. Against China's 17.96 Trillion GDP, this strategic alliance has substantial bargaining power over China.¹⁷⁴

Therefore it is our recommendation to Taiwan to continue to engage with Japan while maintaining or increasing trade across mutual sectors while working to build a closer defense relationship with Japan

Recommendations

Taiwan still holds a unique position in the region. In the advent of an invasion by the PRC, Taiwan is in need of key allies, other than the United States, that can support its interests in keeping the status quo, thus preventing war in the Taiwan Strait. To specifically outline our recommendations, they are as follows:

¹⁷³ Panda, "Taiwan: Tokyo's New Ally?"

¹⁷⁴ "World Bank Open Data," World Bank Open Data, accessed February 7, 2024, <https://data.worldbank.org>.

1. Maintain a positive trade relationship with the Philippines. Utilize the TECO in the Philippines to build greater understanding and closer ties with the Philippines public about the importance of Taiwan as a destination for Filipino migrant workers and of the political and economic relationship with Taiwan.
2. Continue to partake in parliamentary diplomacy with the ROK utilizing the Korea-Taiwan Parliamentarian Friendship Association and other informal bodies to receive officials from South Korea in Taipei to open communication channels between the South Korean government and Taiwan that can continue to change views of Taiwan, building deeper ties.
3. Continue to engage in trade with Japan while increasing defense cooperation with Japan in line with Japan's New National Security Program.

Taiwan's Diplomatic Strategy

Introduction

In the intricate web of international relations, diplomacy has become an important tool for avoiding conflict and promoting stability. This is particularly important in the context of the intricate triangular relationship between the US, Taiwan, and China — a relationship characterized by historical complexities and contemporary challenges. As tensions have fluctuated in recent years, the importance of diplomacy must be emphasized. How Taiwan chooses its diplomatic strategy is crucial to avoiding war. Against this backdrop, exploring effective diplomatic strategies is imperative for maintaining peace in East Asia and dealing with an unstable balance of power.

Negotiation is a key aspect of diplomacy that has historically been pivotal in resolving international conflicts, often averting potential crises. A classic example of successful high-stakes negotiation is the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.¹⁷⁵ This event pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war, to a point where the US and the Soviet Union were locked in a tense standoff over the deployment of nuclear weapons in Cuba. Through secret channel communications, careful negotiations, and a willingness to compromise, the leaders of the two countries reached an agreement. The US agreed to secretly remove its missiles from Turkey and Italy, while the Soviet Union removed its missiles from Cuba. This resolution averted a catastrophic global conflict, demonstrating how diplomacy through negotiation can effectively resolve the most dangerous situations. The relevance of this example extends to contemporary dynamics between the US, Taiwan, and China. Despite the different contexts and stakes, the nature of using negotiations to de-escalate tensions remains relevant. For the Taiwanese

¹⁷⁵ US State Department, "Milestones: 1961–1968 - Office of the Historian," accessed February 7, 2024, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/cuban-missile-crisis>.

Government, where misunderstanding or miscalculation could lead to conflict, a similar approach of careful negotiation and open communication may be critical.

This section will analyze Taiwan's diplomatic tactics in recent years. Since Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, cross-strait relations have faced many variables, not only in specific cross-strait affairs but also in the international community, where Tsai Ing-wen has articulated her "foreign" policy many times before and after she came to power and where her foreign interactions are gradually unfolding. Based on a review of Taiwan's history of foreign relations, this report will analyze Taiwan's foreign policy with China, the US, and other countries in the international community. Determining Lai's diplomatic tactics going forward and making suggestions for Taiwan's foreign strategy.

Taiwan's diplomatic strategy in recent years

After Tsai Ing-wen became president, Taiwan had several diplomatic strategies. The first strategy is Taiwan's friendly policy toward the US and Japan. In her op-ed "Taiwan Can Build on US Ties," published in the *Wall Street Journal* as early as June 1, 2015, Tsai put forward four pillars of Taiwan's foreign relations: namely, expanding multifaceted cooperation with the US, identifying international programs that Taiwan can participate in and benefit the international community, protecting Taiwan's economic autonomy through trade diversification, and enhancing principled interaction with China.¹⁷⁶ In other words, the four pillars of Taiwan's foreign relations are expanding multifaceted cooperation with the US, identifying international programs in which Taiwan can participate and benefit the international community, protecting Taiwan's economic autonomy through trade diversification, and enhancing principled interaction with China. Tsai went to the US on her first visit after the DPP formally nominated her to run for

¹⁷⁶ Ing-Wen Tsai, "Taiwan Can Build on US Ties," *Wall Street Journal*, June 1, 2015, sec. Opinion, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/taiwan-can-build-on-u-s-ties-1433176635>.

the election in May 2015. Tsai chose Japan as her second visit in October 2015, and thus, the US and Japan became a key focus of Taiwan's foreign work. From a series of conversations from pre-election through post-election, it is clear that Tsai Ing-wen attaches more importance to US-Japan relations. For example, in an article published in the Wall Street Journal, Tsai mentioned that the US is undoubtedly Taiwan's most important partner; A comprehensive and sustained partnership with the US is the foundation of Taiwan's overall national security and the continued deepening of the USJapan relationship is the foundation of Taiwan's national security.¹⁷⁷

The second strategy is Taiwan's implementation of the New Southbound Policy. As mentioned in the above section on the New Southbound Policy mainly guided Taiwanese companies to increase their investments in Southeast Asian countries.¹⁷⁸ In the past, Taiwan's Southbound Policy mainly guided Taiwanese enterprises to increase investment in Southeast Asian countries. However under the New Southbound Policy, trade and investment will only play a cooperative role, and Taiwan's diversified and multi-oriented partnership with South and Southeast Asia will also be built on civil exchanges, cultural exchange, and cultural cooperation. Taiwan, South Asia, and Southeast Asia will also build a diverse and multifaceted partnership based on civil exchanges between the two sides, culture, education, research, and other aspects of the link, that is, to strengthen the overall relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India. We can analyze Tsai Ing-wen's New Southbound Policy from the following perspectives. Tsai Ing-wen's New Southbound Policy is the hope that through economic and trade exchanges, it will develop substantive relations with Southeast Asian and South Asian countries and through decentralized investment to try to reduce or even eliminate

¹⁷⁷ Tsai, "Taiwan Can Build on US Ties."

¹⁷⁸ Kwei-Bo Huang, "Taiwan's New Southbound Policy: Background, Objectives, Framework and Limits," *Revista UNISCI*, 2018, <https://www.unisci.es/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/UNISCIDP46-3Key-Bopdf.pdf>.

the influence of the Chinese mainland and constraints.¹⁷⁹ According to Taiwan's official website, Taiwan is one of the largest investors in China. From 1991 to the end of December 2022, Taiwan has approved 45,195 investments in China, totaling \$203.33 billion. In 2022, cross-strait trade amounted to \$205.11 billion;¹⁸⁰ this data shows that Taiwan and China are closely linked in trade. If the trade link is not solved, it is feared that China will constantly use economic and trade means to sanction Taiwan; therefore, when Tsai Ing-wen opted to shift trading partners, it was a foresighted strategy.

Furthermore, Tsai's "new" is mainly reflected in the scope and areas of expansion. The scope from only Southeast Asia to South Asia in the field of cooperation from the economic and trade extended to more diversified areas of cooperation, including culture, education, health, and so on.¹⁸¹ Tsai's New Southbound Policy is a continuation of Taiwan's previous diplomatic strategy. Judging from the policies of successive Taiwan administrations, no matter whether the KMT or the DPP is in power, the origin of the Southbound Policy itself has always existed; only the degree of importance attached to it has varied. Tsai Ing-wen hopes to reduce Taiwan's dependence on mainland China for trade and investment through the new southbound direction. Taiwan's New Southbound Policy has achieved some substantial results. The main reason why the "Southbound policy" was not so effective in the past was that labor costs in mainland China were low at that time, and the mainland market was still in the rapid development stage.¹⁸² Compared with her predecessors, Tsai Ing-wen's choice of the New Southbound Policy is a very astute choice, especially in the mainland's rising costs of manpower, land, and other costs,

¹⁷⁹ Huang, "Taiwan's New Southbound Policy: Background, Objectives, Framework and Limits."

¹⁸⁰ ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Cross-Strait Relations: Fact Focus," text, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 8, 2024), http://www.taiwan.gov.tw/content_6.php.

¹⁸¹ Huang, "Taiwan's New Southbound Policy: Background, Objectives, Framework and Limits."

¹⁸² György Iván Neszmélyi, "Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and the Cross-Strait Relations," *Polgári Szemle*, accessed February 7, 2024, <https://polgariszemle.hu/aktualis-szam/177-nemzetkozi-kitekintes/1093-taiwan-s-new-southbound-policy-and-the-cross-strait-relations>.

resulting in a market environment that makes it easier to implement the policy. So Tsai Ing-wen chose to make the New Southbound Policy one of the most important strategic goals for her, and evidently, it has been very successful and effective. Therefore, the Taiwan government should continue this policy and invest more resources in the New Southbound Policy.

The third strategy is that Taiwan's diplomatic approach, in the face of China's threat to explore the one country, two systems model for Taiwan and undermine the status quo of peace and stability in the region, is to maintain the status quo and that the Taiwan government will continue to handle cross-strait relations based on the Constitution of the Republic of China (ROC), the Cross-Strait Act (臺灣地區與大陸地區人民關係條例 *Taiwan diqu yu dalu diqu renmin guanxi tiaoli*), and the public's opinion. China's re-emphasize the One Country, Two Systems model for Taiwan results from Xi Jinping's speech in 2019, in which he hoped to similarly govern Taiwan through means similar to those used for Hong Kong and Macau, which is unacceptable to Taiwan. Therefore, according to the official website of the government of Taiwan, on March 11, 2019, the government proposed guidelines aimed at strengthening national security measures, safeguarding national sovereignty, and ensuring that current and future generations have the right to determine Taiwan's future.¹⁸³ The legislature also passed the Anti-Infiltration Act on January 15, 2020, which prohibits persons from accepting money or instructions from a foreign hostile power to engage in political lobbying, make political contributions, or disrupt assemblies, public order, elections, and referendums.

Wang Huning, in 2022, became Xi Jinping's most trusted person at the 20th Communist Party Congress and the second most important person in the Communist Party in terms of policy toward Taiwan, after Xi Jinping.¹⁸⁴ At Wang's annual Taiwan Work Conference in May 2023, he

¹⁸³ ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Cross-Strait Relations: Fact Focus."

¹⁸⁴ Global Taiwan Institute, "Wang Huning's First Year Supervising the United Front System: Taiwan Policy and Discourse," Global Taiwan Institute, January 10, 2024,

reinforced the direction of the CCP's current policy: expanding united front civil society exchanges; providing support to selected individuals and groups in Taiwan, especially to those who agree with the CCP's policies. Individuals and groups, especially those who agree with the PRC's claim of sovereignty over Taiwan. At the May meeting, Wang reiterated China's adherence to the 1992 Consensus as a precondition for any cross-Strait negotiations. While the definition of the term is very vague, it encapsulates the idea that the governments of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC) can each maintain the existence of One China while maintaining different interpretations of what that means. On the other hand, the Tsai Ing-wen Government does not recognize the 1992 Consensus, and her advocacy of maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait is still the Government's unchanging position. The Tsai Ing-wen Government believes that the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China are essentially two countries that are not subordinate to each other.¹⁸⁵

The fourth strategy is Taiwan's emphasis on diversified foreign interactions, parliamentary diplomacy, and the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); emphasizing diversified "diplomacy" and valuing the role of NGOs is a long-established strategy in Taiwan's foreign interactions, as evidenced by Lee Teng-hui's practical diplomacy, Chen Shui-bian's diversified diplomacy, and Ma Ying-jeou's living diplomacy. Lee Teng-hui's pragmatic diplomacy, Chen Shui-bian's pluralistic diplomacy, and Ma Ying-jeou's living diplomacy all essentially emphasize expanding its international space in a variety of ways other than the official route, and Tsai Ing-wen's use of parliamentary diplomacy is a key reason for Taiwan's diplomacy. One of the main reasons for diplomacy is cross-strait relations. Beijing has been vigorously promoting its "One China" principle in the international arena, which has led to more restrictions on

<https://globaltaiwan.org/2024/01/wang-hunings-first-year-supervising-the-united-front-system-taiwan-policy-and-dis-course/>.

¹⁸⁵ ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Cross-Strait Relations: Fact Focus."

interactions and contacts with Taiwan, especially the executive branch, because of the need to comply with their respective One China policies.¹⁸⁶

In contrast, diplomacy between parliament and cities has more room for interaction since they are not subject to restrictions on state recognition.¹⁸⁷ Taiwan's parliamentary diplomacy was actively promoted even before the Covid, and many friendship groups with members of parliament from different countries were established. These friendship groups can strengthen the interaction between Taiwan and individual countries' congressmen in terms of communication and relationship building.

Another very important aspect is that since there is some cooperation between Taiwan's Legislative and the Executive Branch on many issues, such interactions with members of the parliament from other countries actually help Taiwan to promote a better understanding of Taiwan by other countries through the power of parliamentary diplomacy. This is one of the most important functional orientations of parliamentary diplomacy. During Tsai Ing-wen's presidency, Taiwan's parliamentary diplomacy achieved some results, adopted some necessary means, and made some transformations. We have seen during this period, for example, Taiwan's dealings with the Czech Parliament and the visit of the Czech Speaker Marketa Pekarova Adamova, cooperation with US-Japanese civic organizations, as well as exchanges with many other countries, and so on, all of which are some of the important achievements of parliamentary diplomacy.¹⁸⁸ According to Tsai, Taiwan's position in the world must be predicated on strong and active international relations, which are the foundation for ensuring Taiwan's security.

¹⁸⁶ Zlatko Šabič and David Huang, "Taiwan's Parliamentary Diplomacy," in *Parliamentary Diplomacy of Taiwan in Comparative Perspective: Against Isolation and Under-Representation* (Bristol University Press, 2021), 56–107, <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/345/monograph/chapter/2991023>.

¹⁸⁷ Sitara Srinivas and Shashank Mattoo, "Taiwan's Battle for Diplomatic Space," n.d., https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ORF_OccasionalPaper_367_Taiwan.pdf.

¹⁸⁸ Srinivas and Mattoo, "Taiwan's Battle for Diplomatic Space."

In addition, city-to-city diplomacy is also a part of Taiwan that is of great importance. Taiwan currently has about 250 friendship cities, and Taiwan's cities have strong ties with many of these cities.¹⁸⁹ In particular, many cities in the US have offices in local Taiwanese cities in almost every major city. Taiwan is also currently building relationships with more regional cities, where city-to-city ties can provide a platform for strengthening economic, social, and cultural ties in the current context.

Recommendations

As for the suggestions for Taiwan's foreign policy after Lai's election, this section offers two. First, Lai's government can develop deeper cooperation with these countries on the basis of the New Southbound Policy because the New Southbound Policy has already achieved a certain degree of success, and Taiwan can use it to develop more partners, especially economically, to minimize further its economic dependence on China and the risk of being sanctioned. The second suggestion is that Taiwan should strengthen its sub-national diplomacy further. Taiwan has achieved some success in sub-national diplomacy, but there are still many regions that could benefit from an improved understanding of Taiwan, such as Western European countries and Australia. Since sub-national diplomacy is almost never threatened by China, Taiwan should use this method to expand its influence further and develop civil cooperation with more regions and countries so that Taiwan's voice can be heard all over the world, which will be very helpful to Taiwan's image in the international arena as well as reduce the risk of being invaded by China.

¹⁸⁹ Marcin Jerzewski, "Subnational Diplomacy: An Underutilized Instrument in Taiwan-Cee Ties," *CEIAS* (blog), October 5, 2022, <https://ceias.eu/taiwan-cee-subnational-diplomacy/>.

Taiwan's International Relations

Taiwan has maintained relevance on the international stage due to its diplomatic relations, economic strength, and political status. The ROC has shown its capability to thrive as a significant contributor to the global economy and has consistently fostered strong ties with the international community. Taiwan's relations with other countries vary but ultimately show the importance of Taiwan's independence. To uphold its de facto independent status, Taiwan should do more, to develop the quantity and substance of diplomatic relations with other countries, regardless of its diplomatic status. This approach serves two purposes: it strategically enhances Taiwan's relevance and fosters global dependence on Taiwan's resources. By deploying these strategies, Taiwan will disperse the impacts of potential conflict across the world.

Diplomatic Relationships

To understand Taiwan's significance to the world so far we must look at key official and unofficial partners. At this time, 12 countries formally recognize the Republic of China. Relations in East Asia and the Pacific region include the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and Tuvalu. These small islands rely on foreign aid and financial assistance from major diplomatic partners. Relations between Latin America and the Caribbean include Belize, the Republic of Guatemala, Haiti, the Republic of Paraguay, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. Many Central American countries have maintained relations with Taiwan despite pressure from China. Unfortunately, this does not include countries like Honduras, which broke ties with Taiwan in favor of China in early 2023. African and European relations include Eswatini and the Holy See respectively. These countries identify Taiwan as a sovereign state. In return, “the Republic of China (Taiwan) is engaged in a range of bilateral and multilateral infrastructure development projects covering healthcare, transportation, education,

agriculture and fisheries, science and technology, and environmental protection. By promoting economic and social development in allied nations and other friendly countries, these programs raise average incomes, reduce poverty, and improve living standards, enhancing public welfare.”¹⁹⁰ Formal diplomatic recognition with these countries is an important aspect of Taiwan’s recognition as a country.

European Union Relationship

Despite the lack of diplomatic relationships, Taiwan has been able to create and sustain many informal partnerships. These nontraditional relationships help Taiwan’s efforts to defend against China’s aggression. As mentioned above, the Holy See is the only formal diplomatic partner of Taiwan in Europe. Although the European Union recognizes the PRC as the only legitimate governing authority, Taiwan is still an important partner to them. Taiwan is a like-minded partner in Asia that shares the value of democracy. Regarding the EU’s presence in Taiwan, “16 out of 27 EU member states and the EU as an individual entity have established representative offices in Taiwan. Taiwan has its representative offices in 19 out of 27 EU countries, while the Brussels office also serves as a mission to the EU.”¹⁹¹ The EU’s presence in Taiwan serves multiple purposes: strengthening bilateral relations through representative offices, and promoting dialogue and cooperation. They are also there to expand economic opportunities with significant trade potential and mutual benefits. “Taiwan and the EU are important economic partners. In terms of bilateral trade in goods, Taiwan was the EU’s 13th largest trading partner overall and 5th largest trading partner in Asia in 2022; on the other hand, the EU is the 5th largest trading partner overall of Taiwan, after mainland China, ASEAN, the United States, and

¹⁹⁰ MOFA, “Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China(Taiwan),” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan), accessed February 25, 2024, <https://en.mofa.gov.tw/https%3a%2f%2fen.mofa.gov.tw%2fcp.aspx%3fn%3d1579%26Create%3d1>.

¹⁹¹ Vladimíra Ličková et al., “Taiwan’s Quasi-Diplomatic Interactions with Europe: Representative Offices,” *CEIAS* (blog), December 14, 2023, <https://ceias.eu/taiwans-quasi-diplomatic-interactions-with-europe/>.

Japan.”¹⁹² Any shift in this partnership can significantly disrupt both economies. These trade relations highlight the established ties between the EU and Taiwan.

Enhancing the New Southbound Policy

The prior section on Taiwan’s Diplomatic Strategy covered the NSP, but this section will cover how Taiwan can enhance the policy. Taiwan has done a great job fostering relationships with policies like the NSP. “Under President Tsai Ing-wen’s New Southbound Policy, Taiwan also strives to broaden exchanges with the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations member states, six South Asian countries, Australia, and New Zealand on economic and trade cooperation, talent cultivation, resource sharing, and regional links. The long-term goal is to create a new type of cooperation based on shared benefits.”¹⁹³ It is the perfect way to strengthen ties despite not having many official diplomatic partners. The NSP can potentially extend its reach with the cooperation of other government organizations. The EU is a prime candidate for collaboration. The European Parliament has advocated for enhanced EU-Taiwan ties. The move is motivated by concerns about China's actions and recognition of Taiwan's regional significance. The EU's support for Taiwan aims to enhance trade and political connections, promote stability in the Indo-Pacific, and foster closer EU-Taiwan relations. Taiwan's most crucial contribution to the global society is its high-tech supply chain, particularly in semiconductors. Parliament encourages the Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) to quickly establish a supply chain agreement with Taiwan. The European Parliament’s resolution on the situation in the Strait of Taiwan “calls on the EEAS and the Commission to consider connectivity projects with Pacific island states and co-investment in partnerships between the EU’s Global Gateway

¹⁹² Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium, “Economic Relations between Taiwan and the EU,” Taipei Representative Office in the EU and Belgium 駐歐盟兼駐比利時代表處, accessed February 25, 2024, https://www.taiwanembassy.org/be_en/post/143.html.

¹⁹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “FOREIGN AFFAIRS,” text, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 9, 2024), http://www.taiwan.gov.tw/content_5.php.

and Taiwan's New Southbound Policy with a view to fostering trade and political relationships as well as stability in the Indo-Pacific region"¹⁹⁴ The Global Gateway Infrastructure program "will mobilize up to €300 billion of investments for sustainable and high-quality projects, taking into account the needs of partner countries and ensuring lasting benefits for local communities. This will allow EU's partners to develop their societies and economies, but also create opportunities for the EU Member States' private sector to invest and remain competitive, whilst ensuring the highest environmental and labour standards, as well as sound financial management."¹⁹⁵ The initiative allows the EU to enhance its global standing in infrastructure and connectivity. This demonstrates the EU's commitment to sustainability and promotes its values through economic and social projects. Global Gateway has a broader geographic reach, aiming to promote connectivity and sustainable development across diverse regions globally. Regions that the initiative focuses on are Asia and the Pacific, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. In contrast, the New Southbound Policy has a more targeted approach, focusing specifically on countries in South and Southeast Asia.

The Global Gateway initiative aims to bridge infrastructure gaps in the Asia-Pacific region. The NSP and Global Gateway have this goal in common and can collaborate to enhance regional connectivity, economic growth, and social development. The two initiatives will be able to complement each other geographically. An efficient area of collaboration would be with the ASEAN member states. Thailand for example is a country for potential synergy in work. Global Gateway's plan includes "upgrading the operator's infrastructure with smart grid technology, establishing a modern electricity grid with two-way communication between suppliers and

¹⁹⁴ Reinhard Bütikofer, "JOINT MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION on the Situation in the Strait of Taiwan | RC-B9-0389/2022 | European Parliament," accessed February 27, 2024, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2022-0389_EN.html.

¹⁹⁵ European Commission, "Global Gateway - European Commission," March 1, 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en.

consumers for efficient energy management.”¹⁹⁶ Taiwan's expertise in technology, combined with its commitment to sustainable practices and green energy, makes it an appealing partner. This collaboration is feasible because Thailand is already one of the NSP target countries. Partnering with the European Union has the potential to expand Taiwan's global influence and impact. By collaborating with Taiwan, the EU can tap into Taiwan's expertise and resources, creating economic opportunities for both parties. This partnership also promotes shared values like democracy and sustainable development and counters China's influence.

International Involvement

Taiwan's participation in global organizations has been halted by China's assertive claims of sovereignty. This has resulted in Taiwan being shut out of various organizations including UN-affiliated bodies. Despite its standing, Taiwan tries to maintain relationships with the UN. In the past five decades, Taiwan's engagement with UN-specialized agencies has been circumstantial. The country has been involved with organizations such as the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). Even with this resume, Taiwan's participation in the UN has dwindled in recent years. “The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has used its economic clout and its position as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council to silence any discussion of Taiwan’s status in the intergovernmental organization. And it also blocks any contact between the government in Taipei and the U.N.’s agencies”¹⁹⁷ The likelihood of Taiwan joining the UN is slim to none while under China’s thumb. In addition, despite the ROC’s successful campaign against COVID-19

¹⁹⁶ European Commission, “Global Gateway - European Commission,” March 1, 2023, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en.

¹⁹⁷ JONAS PARELLO-PLESNER, “Time for the UN to Recognize Taiwan’s Voice,” POLITICO, September 28, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/un-china-taiwan-voice-recognition/>.

and multiple applications, it still has been unable to secure a seat in the World Health Organization (WHO). “Taiwan had observer status at the World Health Assembly (WHA) – the governing body of the World Health Organization (WHO) – from 2009-2016, when relations were warmer with Beijing. It has been seeking to return to that role since 2017, but those efforts have been blocked by Beijing under its one-China policy that sees Taiwan as a breakaway territory with no right to join international bodies.”¹⁹⁸ Taiwan is more likely to become a member of WHA than it is at the UN. To improve its status with organizations like WHA Taiwan must exercise public diplomacy, “defined as the communicative act of informing, engaging, and influencing publics overseas to advance national and strategic ambitions”¹⁹⁹ This response from Taiwan will potentially promote global recognition and sympathy for its exclusion in international politics. Acknowledgment is critical for the validity of Taiwan's international agreements. Nations that acknowledge Taiwan may refrain from engaging in negotiations and may consider Taiwan incapable of entering into multilateral treaties. Recognition of statehood is a cornerstone of international law when defining a country's legal identity and ability to engage in global relations. Each country's stance is different with legal implications depending on the state of affairs and perspectives. According to the Montevideo convention, “a state must fulfill the following four criteria to qualify for statehood: a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and the capacity to enter into international relations.”²⁰⁰ If the ROC keeps focusing on public diplomacy it will be in a much better position to form ties with the global community.

¹⁹⁸ Lawrence Chung, “Why Hope Is Rising for Taiwan to Regain WHO Observer Seat,” South China Morning Post, April 26, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3175568/taiwan-banking-growing-global-support-regain-who-observer-seat>.

¹⁹⁹ Gary D. Rawnsley, “Introduction: Taiwan, Public Diplomacy, and the World Health Assembly,” *International Journal of Taiwan Studies* 3, no. 1 (February 3, 2020): 5–9, <https://doi.org/10.1163/24688800-00301002>.

²⁰⁰ Anais Fang, “International Legal Frameworks for Statehood and Their Relevance to Taiwan’s Defense,” Global Taiwan Institute, February 22, 2023, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/02/international-legal-frameworks-for-statehood-and-their-relevance-to-taiwans-defense/>.

This public diplomacy can be exercised through showcasing its cultural heritage and core values through international events, exhibitions, and festivals. Additionally, utilizing international broadcasting and social media platforms can amplify Taiwanese voices to a global audience, fostering understanding and empathy.

Policy Recommendation

We recommend that Taiwan adopt a collaborative policy that aligns the New Southbound Policy with the European Union's Global Gateway initiative. The best way to carry this policy out is to do the following:

1. Identify areas of common interest between the NSP and Global Gateway. As mentioned before, countries like Thailand are the perfect place for both initiatives to collaborate.
2. Establish think tanks for high-level dialogue to facilitate coordination and knowledge sharing.
3. Organize joint training programs and capacity-building initiatives for partner countries.
4. Ensure the partnership is transparent and benefits all parties involved.

By adopting this policy, Taiwan can leverage the EU's Global Gateway initiative to amplify the impact of its NSP, fostering mutual benefits, and promoting its importance on the international stage. We also recommend advancing Public Diplomacy. Taiwan's public diplomacy should focus on achievable short-term goals.

1. Have as much open dialogue about membership in organizations as possible. This is better than trying to persuade governments to switch diplomatic recognition or rejoin the United Nations.

2. Continue highlighting Taiwan's commitment to the global community and its significant contributions. International broadcasting and social media are the perfect channels for this.

By building on these strategies, Taiwan can strengthen its international presence and forge stronger connections with countries worldwide.

Taiwan Economy

Introduction

Beijing's aggression towards the island has always loomed as a shadow over Taiwan. The economic coercion strategies used by China in recent years and the potential of war call for a strategy to maintain growth as well as to keep peace. This report tackles the critical question of how to deter conflict through economic strategies. We will examine Taiwan's current economy by looking at key sectors, providing an overview of each sector, and identifying the challenges posed by China's influence. In the end, sector-specific policy recommendations that contribute to maintaining peace will be given.

Current Economy

Manufacturing

Manufacturing is a vital sector, which accounted for a significant 34.34% of Taiwan's GDP in 2022.²⁰¹ The island is renowned worldwide for its production of semiconductors, electronics, machinery, and equipment. Leading the forefront is the semiconductor industry, which stands as a cornerstone of Taiwan's industrial success. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited (TSMC), headquartered in Hsinchu, Taiwan, is the world's largest semiconductor manufacturer, producing over 60% of the world's semiconductors and over 90% of the most advanced ones for the world's leading companies like Nvidia and Apple.²⁰² Its chips have become increasingly more significant than ever due to the advent of AI and the

²⁰¹ "Major Economic Indicators for Taiwan" (Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research, January 2021), <https://www.cier.edu.tw/cef/P2.pdf>.

²⁰² "Taiwan's Dominance of the Chip Industry Makes It More Important," *The Economist*, accessed February 1, 2024, <https://www.economist.com/special-report/2023/03/06/taiwans-dominance-of-the-chip-industry-makes-it-more-important>.

growing demand for electric vehicles. TSMC's pivotal role in the global tech supply chain is a significant factor contributing to China's cautious approach towards Taiwan. There is the risk that the US might intervene and defend the island because, in addition to potentially losing a vital partner in dealing with China, a war on Taiwan soil will severely impact the production and export of chips which will lead to devastating economic consequences worldwide. TSMC's production will significantly be hindered as the company "relies heavily on overseas equipment, software, and materials."²⁰³ Production will halt and lead to, according to Chris Miller who is an associate professor of international history at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, "disastrous delays to manufacturing production... will be a cost measured in the trillions of dollars..."²⁰⁴ President Biden has also stated, on three different occasions, that the US will intervene if China attacks.²⁰⁵ It is crucial for Taiwan to reinforce its position as an indispensable player in the semiconductor manufacturing sector, ensuring ongoing support from allies such as the United States.

In addition to chip manufacturing, electronics manufacturing is also a significant industry. The Taiwanese electronics contract manufacturer Foxconn, which assembles electronic devices for major companies including Apple and Microsoft, is a major player. A significant portion of its manufacturing capabilities is based in cities such as Shenzhen and Zhengzhou in China, where lower labor costs have historically attracted international companies like Foxconn. The recent major tax audit of the company by the Chinese authorities in October 2023 indicates Beijing's willingness to use economic measures as a form of coercion. The company's founder, Terry Gou, ran for the 2024 Taiwanese Presidential election as an independent. Despite stepping

²⁰³ *Why Taiwan Dominates the Semiconductor Industry, as US and China's Tech War Heats up* | 7.30, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTi--TWTr9c>.

²⁰⁴ *Why Taiwan Dominates the Semiconductor Industry, as US and China's Tech War Heats up* | 7.30.

²⁰⁵ John Ruwitch, "Biden, Again, Says US Would Help Taiwan If China Attacks," *NPR*, September 19, 2022, sec. National Security, <https://www.npr.org/2022/09/19/1123759127/biden-again-says-u-s-would-help-taiwan-if-china-attacks>.

down from an executive role and no longer serving as the CEO, Gou remains a major shareholder and influential figure within the company. Some experts including Keith Zhai, a former senior correspondent for the Wall Street Journal and senior advisor to the strategic advisory firm Global Counsel, believe the fact that the audit happened three months away from the election suggests it was not a coincidence but a “friendly warning” to signal Gou to reconsider his political ambitions.²⁰⁶ This event demonstrates how closely entwined economic interest and political leverage can become. Beijing utilized economic tools to further its political objectives, showcasing a strategic approach to blending commerce with coercion. In response to the rising political tension, Foxconn has expanded its manufacturing operations to India which represents a strategic shift to diversify its production base beyond China.²⁰⁷ However, this transition was not without its challenges. Contrary to China’s one-party system which could quickly mobilize resources, provide financial incentives, and streamline processes to support the company's massive scaling needs, India’s democratic system is characterized by a wide range of stakeholders, each with their own interests and powers.²⁰⁸ This includes local government officials who have regulatory powers that can impact Foxconn's operations, as well as landowners who control the land needed for scaling or building new factories. Negotiating with these stakeholders can be time-consuming and complex. Therefore, due to the slower scaling pace, the factories in India currently only account for a small production output (for Apple, only 10% of iPhone production).²⁰⁹ Despite these obstacles, Foxconn's strategic move to India marks a significant step towards mitigating risks associated with concentrated manufacturing locations, particularly in light of potential geopolitical tensions.

²⁰⁶ “What Message Is China Sending with Foxconn’s Audit? | International | 2023-11-02 | web Only,”

CommonWealth Magazine, accessed February 7, 2024, <https://english.cw.com.tw/article/article.action?id=3554>.

²⁰⁷ “Why Production of Apple iPhones Has Been Moving from China to India,” PBS NewsHour, December 3, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/why-production-of-apple-iphones-has-been-moving-from-china-to-india>.

²⁰⁸ “Why Production of Apple iPhones Has Been Moving from China to India.”

²⁰⁹ “Why Production of Apple iPhones Has Been Moving from China to India.”

Services

Taiwan's beautiful natural landscape, unique culture, delicious street food, and busy night markets attract tourists from all over the globe each year. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism in Taiwan was on an upward trend, with visitor numbers increasing from 5,567,277 in 2010 to 11,864,105 in 2019.²¹⁰ However, during this period, the proportion of tourists from China showed a noticeable decline. From 2016 to 2017, the number of Chinese visitors dropped from 3,511,734 to 2,732,549.²¹¹ This sharp decline can be attributed to the election of President Tsai Ing-wen, from the DPP, known for her pro-Taiwan sovereignty stance, contrasting with the KMT, the preceding ruling party. Beijing has also previously restricted group tours to Taiwan during times of high tension. An example would be in mid-2019 when Beijing suspended a program that allowed individual tourists from 47 Chinese cities to travel to Taiwan and only those who travel as part of tour groups can.²¹² This was done in an attempt to isolate Taiwan and put pressure on the DPP President. This resulted in less revenue for Taiwan's tourism industry as Chinese tourists were the top nationality that visited Taiwan for leisure. According to Benny Wu, the chairman of the Taipei Association of Travel Agents, "This will have a huge impact on Taiwan's tourism and economy. Hotels and restaurants will be affected."²¹³ The pandemic struck shortly thereafter, causing a severe blow to the industry as the island shut its borders to foreign visitors in early 2020. Following the reopening of its borders in October 2022, there was a swift increase in the total number of foreign visitor numbers, soaring from 895,962 in 2022 to 6,486,951 by

²¹⁰ “來臺旅客人數-按居住地分,” December 2023, <https://nstatdb.dgbas.gov.tw/dgbasall/webMain.aspx?sys=100&funid=qryout&funid2=A070107010&outmode=8&y m=10701&y mt=11212&cycle=41&outkind=11&compmode=0&ratenm=%u7D71%u8A08%u503C&fldlst=1111111 111&compmode=0&rr=q9847x&&rdm=R146902>.

²¹¹ “來臺旅客人數-按居住地分.”

²¹² “China Freezes Travel Permits to Taiwan Over Rising Tensions,” TIME, July 31, 2019, <https://time.com/5639832/china-bans-travel-taiwan-tourists/>.

²¹³ “China Freezes Travel Permits to Taiwan Over Rising Tensions.”

2023.²¹⁴ Despite this rebound, the number of visitors from China failed to recover, remaining at notably low levels with only approximately 226,269 arrivals in 2023, demonstrating the lingering effects of the ban. Before the ban in 2018, Chinese tourists comprised over 24% of total visitors to Taiwan. After the ban, their share plummeted to 3.48%.²¹⁵ This underscores the direct impact political issues can have on tourism flows, consequently affecting Taiwan's economy. The decline in Chinese tourists created a gap that was filled by other visitors such as those from Hong Kong, Macau, and the Americas. Initially, in 2018, visitors from Hong Kong and Macau represented 15% of total tourism, with the Americas contributing 6.6%. By 2023, their shares had grown to 18.5% and 9.9%, respectively.²¹⁶ Although the influx of tourists from other regions has yet to compensate fully for the decline in Chinese visitors and the overall visitor numbers have not rebounded to previous levels, this trend does indicate a shift towards diminishing reliance on Chinese tourism.

Agriculture

While Taiwan's agriculture sector has reduced its share of GDP since industrialization in the 1950s to less than 1.39% in 2022,²¹⁷ it is still worth the discussion as the industry has been targeted by Beijing and has been used by China as an economic coercion tool. Today, Taiwan is known for producing certain high-value fruits and vegetables for both domestic consumption and export. The island's agricultural products find their markets in countries including China, the US, Hong Kong, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. In 2020, China was the largest importer of Taiwanese agricultural products and purchased more than 1 billion USD worth of goods.²¹⁸

Historically, China offered incentives for Taiwanese farmers to export to China by dropping all

²¹⁴ “來臺旅客人數-按居住地分.”

²¹⁵ “來臺旅客人數-按居住地分.”

²¹⁶ “來臺旅客人數-按居住地分.”

²¹⁷ “Major Economic Indicators for Taiwan.”

²¹⁸ “Taiwan's FM Condemns 'hostile' Fruit Import Ban from China,” AP News, September 19, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/business-china-beijing-global-trade-taiwan-bd29b4fc08ae38289d72427b49540499>.

tariffs on specific fruits including pineapples, atemoyas, wax apples, mangoes, and peaches.²¹⁹ These measures aimed to cultivate goodwill among Taiwanese farmers and stakeholders within the agricultural sector, with the hope of influencing their views towards the PRC positively. This prompted many farmers to switch to growing one specific fruit because the export volume to China was increasing drastically each year and it has become extremely profitable.²²⁰ This shift led to a significant dependence on the Chinese market, a vulnerability that was not fully apparent to many until it was too late. In recent years, China, growing impatient with the ongoing political tensions with Taiwan, began to use trade as a weapon and imposed bans on certain exports, often targeting agricultural products. In March 2021, China implemented a ban on Taiwanese pineapples, a significant blow considering 91% of pineapple exports were sent to China in 2020.²²¹ While China's official reason for the ban cited the presence of "harmful creatures" in the fruit that could jeopardize China's agricultural safety, the decision was widely criticized as politically motivated. Experts interpreted this as a calculated move by Beijing to exert pressure on Taiwan, deliberately causing trouble for Taiwanese farmers and disrupting a vital economic channel. The pattern continued in September when China announced a similar ban on the import of atemoyas, a popular Taiwanese fruit, which also predominantly relied on the Chinese market, with 90% of exports going there.²²² Citing the same reason, this ban further highlighted the use of trade restrictions as a political tool, aiming to destabilize Taiwan's agricultural sector and put pressure on the island's economy and its political stance. As a result, Taiwanese agricultural products found their way elsewhere to other countries, specifically Japan and Hong Kong. In an attempt to fill the demand void left by China, a campaign called "Freedom Pineapple" was

²¹⁹ Christina Thornell, "How China Uses Fruit to Punish Taiwan," Vox, April 1, 2022, <https://www.vox.com/23006359/china-taiwan-import-ban-fruit-pineapple-atemoya>.

²²⁰ Thornell.

²²¹ "Thirty Major Agricultural Exports by Destinations, 2020" (Ministry of Agriculture, 2020), https://eng.moa.gov.tw/upload/files/eng_web_structure/2505659/ZA_ZA06-4_109.pdf.

²²² Thornell, "How China Uses Fruit to Punish Taiwan."

launched by the government, encouraging domestic and international consumption of pineapple.²²³ Japan, Hong Kong, and South Korea replaced China as their top export destination. In 2022, 87.8% of pineapple exports were sent to Japan, 11.2% were to Hong Kong, and 0.32% were to South Korea.²²⁴ Nevertheless, similar to the situation in the tourism sector, this shift still isn't sufficient to compensate for the loss of the Chinese market. Even though both China and Japan represented nearly 90% of Taiwan's pineapple exports during their peak years—China in 2020 and Japan in 2022—the export value to China was substantially higher, reaching \$54,751,000,²²⁵ in contrast to Japan's \$27,396,000.²²⁶ While the current revenue outcomes are certainly less than ideal for Taiwan's pineapple industry, this strategic move away from dependency on the Chinese market is a wise decision as it will strengthen market resilience going forward.

Challenges and Policy Recommendations

The evolving dynamics between Taiwan and China have significantly influenced Taiwan's economic strategies. Historically, Taiwan's manufacturing, services, and agricultural industries were deeply intertwined with the Chinese market. Beijing has used this to push the narrative that Taiwan's economy depends on that of China, suggesting that without Beijing's support, Taiwan could face economic challenges. However, our analysis of Taiwan's current key economic sectors reveals a shift away from this dependency. As cross-strait relations continue to remain uncertain, firms are pivoting to other countries, diversifying trading partners and markets. This report recommends that Taiwan should persist with its diversification efforts. Diversifying partners will not only mitigate the risk of economic sanctions from China, making any potential

²²³ Thornell.

²²⁴ “Thirty Major Agricultural Exports by Destinations, 2022” (Ministry of Agriculture, 2022), https://eng.moa.gov.tw/upload/files/eng_web_structure/2505729/ZA_ZA06-4_111.pdf.

²²⁵ “Thirty Major Agricultural Exports by Destinations, 2020.”

²²⁶ “Thirty Major Agricultural Exports by Destinations, 2022.”

bans less impactful but also enhance Taiwan's sovereignty. By becoming more economically integrated with other countries and having them as allies, China will become increasingly hesitant to attack as more countries will send aid to Taiwan if an invasion were to occur. Although it can be argued that economic interdependence between Taiwan and China could serve as a peacekeeping mechanism (the EU is an example in which the integration of its members' economies has made the cost of conflict significantly high and thus effectively promoted peace in Europe), and reducing these ties could theoretically escalate the risk of confrontation. The reasoning behind this is that if two entities do not have significant economic stakes in each other's success, the chances of military actions will be significantly higher because there will be no direct economic repercussions (only indirect repercussions from other countries, such as when the EU imposed sanctions on Russia for its aggression in Ukraine).²²⁷ However, this report believes that Taiwan's case is uniquely complex and calls for a different approach. Xi has become obsessed with the idea of "reunification" and economic integration between Taiwan and China might not be enough to deter China's aggression. In fact, Beijing has strategically used economic integration as a means to bind Taiwan closer, increasing Taipei's dependence on the mainland²²⁸. This economic integration, however, does not imply mutual dependence due to the vast disparity in the sizes of their economies. With China's GDP at 18,560 billion USD and Taiwan's at 791.61 billion USD in 2024²²⁹, the economic scale heavily tilts in China's favor. Xi has said in the past "We make no promise to abandon the use of force and retain the option of

²²⁷ "EU Sanctions against Russia Explained," February 6, 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/>.

²²⁸ "China Promotes Economic 'Integration' with Taiwan While Militarily Threatening the Island," AP News, September 14, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/china-taiwan-fujian-economy-development-election-768d22d500d963c8eabc486fa8e005c2>.

²²⁹ "World Economic Outlook (October 2023) - GDP per Capita, Current Prices," accessed February 18, 2024, <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPDPC@WEO>.

taking all necessary measures...”²³⁰, indicating that China will pursue unification with force regardless of the economic consequences of such a conflict. This stance indicates that the potential economic consequences of a military conflict are secondary to the political goal of reunification. Consequently, Taiwan must diversify its partnerships with other countries and seek the support of its international allies to effectively mitigate the risk of over-reliance on a single market and counter Beijing's aggression. The following section gives specific policy recommendations for each sector.

In the manufacturing industry, the government can...

- 1) Enhance Semiconductor Leadership: Taiwan needs to ensure that it continues to play an indispensable role in the global chips supply chain. This will garner international support as the world depends heavily on the island's semiconductor, making it more likely for other countries to aid Taiwan in the event of an invasion from China, similar to the assistance Western allies provided to Ukraine. For specific policy recommendations, please refer to the next section on Taiwan's technology.
- 2) Diversification of Manufacturing Location: Diversifying manufacturing firms' locations in South and Southeast Asian countries reduces the risk associated with having a concentrated manufacturing base that could be targeted in the event of cross-strait tensions or conflict. Although Foxconn has already moved parts of its production to India, the new factories only account for a small portion of production due to the complex scaling challenges as discussed previously (India's democratic system is characterized by a wide range of stakeholders, each with their own interests and powers.²³¹ Negotiating

²³⁰ Chris Buckley and Chris Horton, “Xi Jinping Warns Taiwan That Unification Is the Goal and Force Is an Option,” *The New York Times*, January 2, 2019, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/01/world/asia/xi-jinping-taiwan-china.html>.

²³¹ “Why Production of Apple iPhones Has Been Moving from China to India.”

with these stakeholders can be time-consuming and complex.). To address these challenges, it is recommended that the Taiwanese government engage in high-level diplomatic dialogues with Indian counterparts. The aim would be to collaborate closely with the relevant stakeholders to facilitate smoother regulatory approvals and expedite land acquisition processes, thereby streamlining the expansion of manufacturing facilities in India.

In the tourism industry, the government can

- 1) **Implement Discounted Travel Packages:** To make up for the loss of Chinese tourists and reduce its dependency on them, Taiwan already has plans to implement incentive programs to give 5,000 NT (166 USD) to 500,000 individual tourists and 20,000 NT (667 USD) to 90,000 tour groups in May 2024.²³² However, tourists will only know if they are selected to participate in the program once they arrive at the airport. To some people, this may not be an enticing enough reason to choose Taiwan as their destination given the uncertainty of the benefit. This report recommends that, on top of the original incentive program, the government should collaborate with airlines and hotels to offer immediate discounts at the time of booking. This approach ensures tourists benefit from savings upfront, enhancing the attractiveness of Taiwan as a travel destination. To fund this enhanced discount initiative, a slight adjustment to the initial incentive could be considered, such as reducing the individual tourist incentive from 5,000 NT to 3,000 NT and 20,000 NT to 12,000 NT for tour groups, allowing for the reallocation of funds towards the new immediate discount program. Another reason for this recommendation is

²³² “Taiwan Introduces Plan to Attract Tourists — by Paying Them,” Travel + Leisure, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.travelandleisure.com/taiwan-paying-tourists-incentive-plan-7113445>.

that the government can choose to target specific countries. By offering flight and accommodation discounts specifically to tourists from designated countries, Taiwan can effectively broaden its tourism market. For instance, should the government recognize potential growth in attracting more tourists from Korea, it could implement discounts exclusively for flights originating from Korea. This focused approach allows Taiwan to diversify its tourist base, addressing specific market potentials and reducing reliance on any single source of tourism.

- 2) Expand Visa-Exempt Countries: Taiwan already has a VISA exemption program with the US, Canada, East Asia (Japan and Korea), and many European countries. Including Southeast Asian countries in this list aligns with the objectives of the New Southbound Policy (a policy initiated by President Tsai Ing-wen that aimed to enhance relationships with ASEAN South Asia, Australia, and New Zealand). By broadening the visa exemption list to include this region, Taiwan not only stands to increase tourism revenue but also to diversify its tourist demographic, significantly reducing its reliance on visitors from China. The inclusion of Southeast Asian countries, with their substantial populations, offers a considerable opportunity to attract a larger number of international visitors. However, loosening border restrictions to Southeast Asian countries could be challenging as Taiwanese society has bad preconceptions towards their people, often stemming from misconceptions about their cultures and economic contributions (many see them as uncivilized people who perform unskilled hard labor).²³³ To address this, Taiwan needs to alter its people's perceptions by integrating Southeast Asian cultures,

²³³ "Engaging with Southeast Asia - A People-Centered Cross-Cultural Dialogue," New Southbound Policy, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://nspp.mofa.gov.tw/nsppe/nspp.mofa.gov.tw/nsppe/news.php?post=135472&unit=410&unitname=&postname=Engaging-with-Southeast-Asia---A-People-Centered-Cross-Cultural-Dialogue>.

histories, and economic roles into the educational curriculum. A deeper understanding of the region and its people will create a more welcoming environment for visitors from Southeast Asia, ultimately benefiting the nation's tourism industry.

In the agricultural sector, the government can

- 1) Enhance Trade Partnerships with South Korea: Negotiate lower tariffs with South Korea for fruit exports that are banned in China, such as pineapples and atemoyas. Why South Korea? Considering the competitive nature of fruit markets in Southeast Asia due to lower-cost produce, focusing on East Asian economies presents a more viable option. With Japan already being a significant importer of Taiwanese fruits (87.8%), South Korea represents an untapped potential for growth, especially noting that it currently constitutes a mere 0.32% of Taiwan's pineapple exports in 2022.²³⁴ The geographical proximity (long distance can also cause issues for agricultural products transportation as they are quite vulnerable) is another reason that makes it an ideal candidate for expanded trade relations. To incentivize South Korea to engage in these trade agreements, Taiwan can offer reciprocal benefits such as lowering tariffs on selected imports from Korea that are of high interest or need within Taiwan.

²³⁴ “Thirty Major Agricultural Exports by Destinations, 2022.”

Technology

Introduction

The semiconductor industry, often regarded as the backbone of modern technology, plays a pivotal role in powering everything from smartphones and computers to critical infrastructure and defense systems. Taiwan's semiconductor industry, in particular, occupies a central position in this global ecosystem, not only standing at the forefront of technological innovation but also serving as a linchpin in international political and economic landscapes. Semiconductors are integral to national security, economic prosperity, and technological advancement worldwide, making Taiwan's mastery over cutting-edge chip manufacturing both a strategic asset and a point of vulnerability amidst rapid technological developments and complex geopolitical shifts.

However, as the demand for semiconductors surges and geopolitical tensions rise, Taiwan faces a multitude of unprecedented challenges and opportunities. The reliance of the global economy on Taiwanese semiconductors underscores the importance of safeguarding this industry from both external pressures and internal shortcomings. Addressing the acute talent shortage in the semiconductor sector is paramount to sustaining innovation and production capacity. Moreover, enhancing the security of Taiwan's semiconductor supply chain and fostering deeper cooperation with allied countries is critical in mitigating geopolitical risks and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of these essential components.

To navigate these intricate dynamics and solidify its standing in the global technology arena, this article proposes three core policy recommendations: Firstly, to vigorously cultivate chip engineers and related talents, starting from basic education, thus addressing the pressing talent shortage that hampers industry growth. Secondly, to ensure the security of Taiwan's semiconductors by enhancing cooperation with allied countries, while keeping the most

advanced chip technologies domestic, thereby safeguarding technological sovereignty and strategic advantages. Thirdly, to establish factories in allied countries, deepening friendships and simultaneously addressing the multifaceted threat from China. These strategies aim to provide a comprehensive policy framework for Taiwan's technology industry to face future challenges, ensuring that it remains at the helm of global innovation while securing its economic interests and national security in an increasingly complex and competitive world.

Talent shortage problem

One significant challenge that Taiwan currently faces is the talent shortage in the semiconductor industry, which is particularly evident in companies like TSMC. This issue is not just a corporate headache but a national concern, given the pivotal role the semiconductor industry plays in Taiwan's economy and global supply chains. As the world's leading supplier of advanced semiconductors, Taiwan's ability to maintain its competitive edge is crucial for its economic security and technological sovereignty. The roots of this talent shortage are multifaceted, involving industry-internal issues such as high work demands, irregular working hours, and relatively lower employee treatment compared to international chip giants, all of which reduce the industry's attractiveness to new talent.²³⁵ Additionally, societal challenges, such as low birth rates²³⁶ and the youth's declining interest in STEM education, exacerbate the talent gap.²³⁷ The preference among many young people for more flexible job paths over the demanding field of technology research and development, coupled with China's aggressive recruitment offering high salaries to Taiwanese semiconductor talents,²³⁸ poses significant

²³⁵ 半导体行业观察, “逃离台积电? -36氪,” November 12, 2023, <https://36kr.com/p/2514751262560514>.

²³⁶ “Countries with the Lowest Fertility Rates 2023,” Statista, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268083/countries-with-the-lowest-fertility-rates/>.

²³⁷ 立法院, “立法院,” text/html, 立法院 (立法院, July 23, 2013), <https://www.ly.gov.tw/EngPages/Detail.aspx?nodeid=45579&pid=219466>.

²³⁸ Jane Perlez, Amy Chang Chien, and John Liu, “Engineers From Taiwan Bolstered China’s Chip Industry. Now They’re Leaving.,” *The New York Times*, November 16, 2022, sec. Business, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/16/business/taiwan-china-semiconductors.html>.

challenges to maintaining a robust talent pipeline.²³⁹ This talent drain not only threatens Taiwan's dominance in the semiconductor market but also has broader implications for global technology supply chains and national security, given the strategic importance of semiconductors in everything from consumer electronics to defense technologies.

The semiconductor industry's significance to Taiwan cannot be overstated; it accounted for a substantial portion of the country's GDP and exports. Therefore, the talent shortage problem directly impacts Taiwan's economic stability and its global standing in the technology sector. Moreover, the strategic dimension of semiconductor technology, where chips are integral to military hardware and cybersecurity, highlights the issue's relevance to Taiwan's national security. In light of these concerns, addressing the talent shortage is imperative. Taiwan must initiate comprehensive measures starting with educational reform. Strengthening STEM education to spark students' interest in science and technology is crucial. To do such things, Taiwan should build more related classes through middle school, high school, and college. Furthermore, improving the semiconductor industry's working environment and employee treatment will enhance its attractiveness, ensuring Taiwan remains at the forefront of semiconductor innovation. These steps are essential not only for Taiwan's economic prosperity but also for its security and strategic interests in an increasingly technology-driven world.²⁴⁰

Encouraging international cooperation and exchange to provide broader learning and internship opportunities for students and professionals is a strategic imperative for Taiwan,

²³⁹ “‘Tip of the Iceberg’: Taiwan’s Spy Catchers Hunt Chinese Poachers of Chip Talent | Reuters,” accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/tip-iceberg-taiwans-spy-catchers-hunt-chinese-poachers-chip-talent-2022-04-08/>.

²⁴⁰ “2023semi_WhitePaper_1.Pdf,” accessed February 26, 2024, https://hunter.104.com.tw/img/manager/2023semi_WhitePaper_1.pdf?&utm_campaign=2023semi-whitepaper&utm_term=104blog-A.

especially in the context of its semiconductor industry.²⁴¹ This approach serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it broadens the horizons and experiences of Taiwanese talent, equipping them with global perspectives and skills that are crucial in an industry driven by innovation and international competition. Exposure to global best practices, cutting-edge research, and diverse professional cultures prepares Taiwanese professionals to tackle the complex challenges facing their industry, enhancing Taiwan's capability to innovate and maintain its competitive edge in semiconductor technology.²⁴²

Secondly, by opening doors to foreign talents through such exchanges, Taiwan not only enriches its talent pool with diverse expertise and ideas but also strengthens its position as a global hub for semiconductor research and development. Attracting international talent is not merely about filling immediate gaps in the workforce; it's about fostering a dynamic, multicultural technological ecosystem that propels forward-thinking and innovation. This influx of foreign talent can also help mitigate some of the demographic challenges Taiwan faces, such as an aging population and low birth rates, by introducing skilled professionals into the economy.²⁴³

Furthermore, international cooperation and the consequent exchange of talent are pivotal for Taiwan's technological and economic security. In an era where technology is a key element of geopolitical strategy, having a robust, innovative semiconductor industry supported by a diverse, global talent base enhances Taiwan's strategic autonomy. It ensures that Taiwan can continue to

²⁴¹ “行政院全球資訊網,” text/html, 2.16.886.101.20003 (2.16.886.101.20003, December 1, 2011), <https://www.ey.gov.tw/Page/5A8A0CB5B41DA11E/6bbd5511-ca28-4133-b7f1-0467d37f6e8a>.

²⁴² “「半導體科技人才培育」專題報告,” accessed February 26, 2024, <https://ppg.ly.gov.tw/ppg/SittingAttachment/download/2023042797/00001532520048323004.pdf>.

²⁴³ Sarah Wu, “Taiwan Invests in next Generation of Talent with Slew of Chip Schools | Reuters,” accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/funds/taiwan-invests-next-generation-talent-with-slew-chip-schools-2022-03-10/>.

play a critical role in the global supply chain, not just as a manufacturer but as a leader in semiconductor innovation and design.²⁴⁴

In light of these considerations, fostering international partnerships and creating a welcoming environment for foreign experts are essential steps toward sustaining Taiwan's technological leadership and economic vitality. Such efforts not only inject new vitality into Taiwan's technological development but also contribute to the country's long-term security and prosperity in the global arena.

The protective power of silicon shield may be weakened:

Taiwan's "silicon shield" - its indispensable role in the global digital economy, especially as the world's top silicon chip manufacturer, has become a theoretical basis for deterring regional conflicts.²⁴⁵ The concept of Taiwan's "silicon shield" suggests that its central role in the global semiconductor supply chain, especially as the leading manufacturer of advanced silicon chips, serves as a deterrent against regional conflicts, particularly aggression from China. The theory posits that the global dependence on Taiwan's semiconductor production makes international stakeholders, including major powers, inclined to ensure Taiwan's stability to maintain the flow of these critical components. However, this deterrent effect is being challenged as geopolitical tensions rise and both China and the United States push for greater self-sufficiency in semiconductor manufacturing. This shift potentially reduces the global stake in Taiwan's security, thus weakening the silicon shield.²⁴⁶ Taiwan, with "golden egg" companies like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), not only drives the global supply chain of the Fourth Industrial Revolution but also triggers fundamental questions about the stability of the

²⁴⁴ Wu.

²⁴⁵ David E. Sanger, "China Has Leapfrogged the US in Key Technologies. Can a New Law Help?," *The New York Times*, July 29, 2022, sec. US, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/us/politics/us-china-semiconductors.html>.

²⁴⁶ "Taiwan's 'Silicon Shield': Why Island May Not Be the next Ukraine | Business and Economy | Al Jazeera," accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/4/1/silicon-shield-why-taiwan-is-not-the-next-ukraine>.

Taiwan Strait and the future of global supply chains due to its strategic importance. However, as China and the United States seek greater self-sufficiency in chip manufacturing and tensions rise across the Taiwan Strait, the concept of Taiwan's silicon shield faces challenges.²⁴⁷

The concept of Taiwan's silicon shield derives its strength not merely from Taiwan's role as a global leader in semiconductor manufacturing but from its pioneering advancements in cutting-edge technologies, such as the 2nm and 3nm fabrication processes. These technological feats underscore Taiwan's critical position in the global digital economy and its theoretical deterrence against regional conflicts. However, the landscape of semiconductor manufacturing is shifting. The trend towards geographical diversification and the adoption of "China+1" or "Taiwan+1" strategies reflect a growing recognition of the need to mitigate supply chain vulnerabilities. This approach involves establishing manufacturing facilities in additional countries to reduce dependence on a single region, enhancing resilience against geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions.

Taiwan is well aware of the importance of its semiconductor industry to its self-defense. "Our semiconductor industry is not just about our economic security. It also seems to be related to our national security," Taiwan's Economic Minister Wang Meihua said in a 2021 interview with Reuters, referring to Taiwan's semiconductor dominance.²⁴⁸ Fortunately for us, TSMC has invested heavily in staying on the cutting edge of semiconductor production technology. In 2022 alone, TSMC plans to invest US\$40-44 billion in capital expenditures.²⁴⁹ Taiwan has also incentivized TSMC and other companies to continue researching new semiconductor

²⁴⁷ Alexander Neill, "Will Taiwan's Silicon Shield Protect It from China?," March 28, 2023, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/china-taiwan-silicon-shield/>.

²⁴⁸ "Taiwan Chip Industry Emerges as Battlefield in US-China Showdown," *Reuters*, December 27, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/taiwan-china-chips/>.

²⁴⁹ Yang Jie, "TSMC to Invest Up to \$44 Billion in 2022 to Beef Up Chip Production," *Wall Street Journal*, January 13, 2022, sec. Business, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/tsmc-to-invest-up-to-44-billion-in-2022-to-beef-up-chip-production-11642076019>.

technologies through generous tax rebates, which the government plans to increase by the end of the year bringing semiconductors home.²⁵⁰ After the shortage of semiconductors, many countries realized that China's invasion of Taiwan, or even any natural disaster in Taiwan, would severely damage their economies. Therefore, countries around the world are trying to localize semiconductor production. South Korea, home to Samsung, has created incentives, invested in infrastructure, and funded research and development in an attempt to increase its semiconductor production and localize its supply chain.²⁵¹ The EU's EU Chip Law will provide \$43 billion in subsidies for semiconductor manufacturing plants and semiconductor research.²⁵² From 2014 to 2030, China plans to invest US\$150 billion in semiconductors.²⁵³

The most high-profile attempt to localize semiconductor production is the US Chip and Science Act passed in August 2022. To many, the CHIP Act poses a threat to Taiwan's Silicon Shield. The bill means the United States wants to stop relying on Taiwan for semiconductor chips and instead have foundries in the United States. When discussing the bill, President Biden said: "The future of the chip industry will be created in the United States." While other countries have enacted similar legislation, the scale of subsidies and tax credits offered by the United States makes it the most likely to get it done.²⁵⁴ As a result, many wonder whether the US commitment to Taiwan would change if the US could stop relying on Taiwan for its semiconductors. Of course, there are many other factors involved in the United States' defense of

²⁵⁰ "Ministry Eyes More R&D Incentives - Taipei Times," June 17, 2022, <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/biz/archives/2022/06/17/2003780000>.

²⁵¹ "Korean gov't vows generous state investment, incentives for 'chip superpower' - Pulse by Maeil Business News Korea," accessed February 26, 2024, [//pulsenews.co.kr/view.php?year=2022&no=646060](https://pulsenews.co.kr/view.php?year=2022&no=646060).

²⁵² "How Europe Aims to Achieve Strategic Autonomy for Semiconductors," Brookings, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-europe-aims-to-achieve-strategic-autonomy-for-semiconductors/>.

²⁵³ David Shepardson, Jeff Mason, and Jeff Mason, "Biden Signs Bill to Boost US Chips, Compete with China," *Reuters*, August 9, 2022, sec. Technology, <https://www.reuters.com/technology/biden-sign-bill-boost-us-chips-compete-with-china-2022-08-09/>.

²⁵⁴ "Biden Ends Slog on Semiconductor Bill with Signature - POLITICO," accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/08/09/biden-ends-slog-on-semiconductor-bill-with-signature-00050530>.

Taiwan, but Taiwan's current dominance in semiconductor production is certainly an important part of its protection.

While Taiwan remains the epicenter for the most advanced semiconductor technologies, the global pursuit of self-sufficiency in chip manufacturing, particularly in the 7nm and more mature process nodes, signals a broadening of the industry's base. Notably, the United States and other regions are accelerating their efforts to develop semiconductor capabilities, albeit primarily in less advanced nodes than Taiwan's leading-edge 2nm and 3nm technologies. This diversification does not diminish the strategic value of Taiwan's "Silicon Shield," as the island continues to be the hub for the highest-end semiconductor production. However, it prompts a reconsideration of Taiwan's competitive positioning and the need for strategic actions to maintain its leadership.

Taiwan faces a core problem: how to maintain its central position in the global semiconductor supply chain while strengthening the Silicon Shield to ensure safety and stability. The Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), the world's largest semiconductor manufacturer, produces 54% of the global chips, more than the total of all other semiconductor companies combined.²⁵⁵ Impressively, TSMC manufactures 92% of the world's advanced chips, which are used in many American products.²⁵⁶ Apple's top-of-the-line phones and computers, including Apple's leading 5-nanometer processor, are manufactured by TSMC. Other major American companies, including Qualcomm, Nvidia, AMD, and Intel, also employ TSMC to produce advanced chips. Advanced chips are essential for commercial and military artificial intelligence, with the US military needing semiconductors for all its major defense systems and

²⁵⁵ Ciel Qi, "Taiwan's Bargaining Chips?," *TechCrunch* (blog), December 2, 2021, <https://techcrunch.com/2021/12/02/taiwans-bargaining-chips/>.

²⁵⁶ Qi.

platforms.²⁵⁷ These chips, designed in the US but manufactured in Taiwan, are also used in much of the military's modern weaponry, autonomous vehicles, and military simulations. Taiwan's semiconductor dependency makes it critically important to the United States.²⁵⁸ Thus, we must leverage this to continually secure US support to ensure Taiwan's safety. In an interview with CNBC, US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo stated, "If you allow yourself to think about the situation where the US no longer gets the chips currently made in Taiwan, it's a terrifying scenario. It's a deep and direct recession. You can't protect yourself by manufacturing military equipment."²⁵⁹

China also relies on Taiwan and TSMC for semiconductors. Like the US, China needs advanced chips for commercial purposes and weaponry. China's booming tech industry depends on semiconductors, with a 2020 Congressional Research Service report finding China accounts for 60% of the world's semiconductor demand, 90% of which is purchased from foreign suppliers.²⁶⁰ In 2021, of the \$430 billion in semiconductors China purchased, 36% came from Taiwan.²⁶¹ Taiwan should strengthen economic ties and alliances with countries such as the US and Japan, including building chip factories there, to enhance friendship while ensuring the most advanced technology remains in Taiwan. For example, Taiwan's establishment of TSMC production lines in Arizona is an excellent example of how investment in key areas can deepen friendships with major allies. TSMC's investment in Arizona is seen as a significant step in its

²⁵⁷ Sujai Shivakumar and Charles Wessner, "Semiconductors and National Defense: What Are the Stakes?," June 8, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/semiconductors-and-national-defense-what-are-stakes>.

²⁵⁸ Paul Laudicina, "Semiconductors: How The US Can Make Up For Lost Time," *Forbes*, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paullaudicina/2022/01/29/semiconductors-how-the-us-can-make-up-for-lost-time/>.

²⁵⁹ Lauren Feiner, "Raimondo Warns of 'deep and Immediate Recession' If U.S. Were to Be Cut off from Taiwan Chip Manufacturing," *CNBC*, July 20, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/20/us-faces-recession-if-cut-from-taiwan-chip-manufacturing-raimondo.html>.

²⁶⁰ Qi, "Taiwan's Bargaining Chips?"

²⁶¹ "Taiwan Is Caught in a Great Game Over Microchips - The New York Times," accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/29/technology/taiwan-chips.html>.

global layout strategy and a clear sign of strengthening US-Taiwan relations.²⁶² Some may question this: doesn't this make the US less dependent on Taiwan? The CHIPS Act, in reality, serves not as a reduction of US commitment to Taiwan's defense but as a backup for worst-case scenarios, offering protection against the impacts of potential Chinese invasion by lessening the fallout from damaging TSMC and other Taiwanese chip makers. This not only mitigates the geopolitical crisis facing Taiwan's supply chain but also strengthens friendships with other countries and ensures its safety. Another reason would be that the United States announced that it would begin formal trade negotiations with Taiwan in the fall of 2022²⁶³ and is working to establish a fourth alliance between Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea to prevent China from making progress in the semiconductor manufacturing sector.²⁶⁴ This move makes Taiwan's position in the world even more significant and ties the two economies, Taiwan and the United States, more closely together. Therefore, Taiwan should offer more support to the United States and other allies in terms of factory construction and semiconductors in exchange for better friendship, economic exchanges, and protection.

The US and China's dependency on Taiwan's semiconductors makes the industry a crucial component of Taiwan's continued de facto independence. As long as Taiwan ensures its chips remain world-leading, its semiconductor industry makes it economically challenging for China to justify an invasion. TSMC's factories are located close to China's coastline, meaning they could be damaged or destroyed during an invasion. Even if the factories remain intact, China might not be able to utilize them. TSMC's Chairman, Mark Liu, announced in an

²⁶² Rupert J Hammond-Chambers, "Commentary: The Strategic Importance of the TSMC Arizona Investment," n.d.

²⁶³ "US, Taiwan to Start Formal Trade Talks under New Initiative | Reuters," accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-taiwan-start-formal-trade-talks-under-new-initiative-2022-08-18/>.

²⁶⁴ Courtney Donovan Smith, "The Vast and Vulnerable Semiconductor Supply Chain," *Taiwan Business TOPICS* (blog), August 18, 2022, <https://topics.amcham.com.tw/2022/08/the-vast-and-vulnerable-semiconductor-supply-chain/>.

interview with CNN, “No one can control TSMC by force. If you take military force or invade, you would render TSMC's factories inoperable. This is such a complex manufacturing facility that it relies on real-time connections with the outside world, Europe, Japan, the US, from materials to chemicals to spare parts and then to engineering software and diagnostics.”²⁶⁵

Looking ahead, the erosion of Taiwan's "Silicon Shield" seems inevitable. The semiconductor manufacturing industry in the United States is poised for growth, with the eventual capability to produce advanced chips in large quantities. Such a transition won't happen overnight, which currently places Taiwan in a position of value due to its dominance in semiconductor manufacturing. Taiwan's strategic geographic importance to the United States is complemented by its technological significance, further solidifying its status as a vital ally to Washington. Taiwanese decision-makers are urged to tightly weave Taiwan's semiconductor industry into the fabric of the United States' development strategies, as suggested previously. If Taiwan can capitalize on the current spotlight on its semiconductor industry to deepen its ties with the United States, the potential weakening of Taiwan's Silicon Shield will be negligible.

In conclusion, Taiwan faces numerous challenges, but by implementing these recommendations, a solid foundation can be provided for the future development of its tech industry, especially the semiconductor industry. This requires joint efforts from the government, industry, and international partners to ensure Taiwan maintains its leading position in the global tech competition while protecting its economic security and political independence. These strategies not only enable Taiwan to confront current challenges but also lay the groundwork for future prosperity and security.

²⁶⁵ “On GPS: Can China Afford to Attack Taiwan? | CNN,” accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/videos/tv/2022/07/31/exp-gps-0731-mark-liu-taiwan-semiconductors.cnn>.

Leveraging International Trade for Taiwan's Security

Taiwan, amid geopolitical challenges, should aim to strategically wield international trade relationships to deter potential threats from China. This portion of the report delves into how Taiwan can utilize its leverage in the global supply chain, the current landscape of Taiwan's trade environment, present-day relations with the US and China, and proposes domestic policies to fortify Taiwan's negotiating stance for expanding international trade agreements for the purpose of averting war with China through soft diplomacy.

Import and Exports

Taiwan's ongoing integration into global supply chains has been pivotal for its economic growth. As mentioned in previous sections, Taiwan holds a critically important position for most global supply chains as an industry leader for electronic integrated circuits.²⁶⁶ In 2023, Taiwan's export of electronic integrated circuits made up 38.5% of all exports which accounted for a majority of domestic exports and the global market share.²⁶⁷ This has allowed for Taiwan's expansion into global markets and has been a driving force in their domestic economic growth. Taiwan's largest import is also electronic product parts consisting of 23% of total imports.²⁶⁸ With such a significant role in the global supply chain, a continued expansion of international trade for Taiwan's electronics market, for both imports and exports, could strengthen other nations' economic connection to Taiwan through trade. These trade relationships could lead to Taiwan gaining sturdier backing from powerful nations which in turn would influence China's approach to Taiwan. Taiwan's connections with other nations could help dissuade unprovoked attacks due to the ramifications China would have to face from the international community.

²⁶⁶ The Secretariat, "Trade Policy Review: Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu" (World Trade Organization, September 12, 2023), https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tpr_e/s448_e.pdf.

²⁶⁷ "Annual External Trade Report in 2023" (Ministry of Finance, R.O.C., February 23, 2024), <https://service.mof.gov.tw/public/Data/statistic/bulletin/112/2023英文分析.pdf>.

²⁶⁸ "Annual External Trade Report in 2023."

Current Trade Agreements

Taiwan has strategically pursued Free Trade Agreements (FTA) to enhance its economic ties and regional influence as well as other cooperative agreements. Presently, Taiwan has signed FTAs with Panama, Honduras, and Nicaragua as well as Economic Cooperation Agreements (ECA) with Singapore, New Zealand, Paraguay, Eswatsini, the Marshall Islands, and Belize which has played a crucial role in its international integration.²⁶⁹ Additionally, Taiwan is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), and the Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC).²⁷⁰ Taiwan's membership with these international groups is important as it establishes ties between Taiwan and the international community despite pressure from Beijing.

The reason these current and future agreements are crucial for Taiwan's success is that FTAs can be used for deterrence. This is in alignment with the tactics of soft diplomacy which is defined as shaping the preferences of other nations through co-optation instead of coercion, typically through the means of culture, political values, and foreign policy.²⁷¹ By establishing FTAs, acknowledgment of Taiwan in the global community increases along with the number of nations who would then be stakeholders in Taiwan's success. This then strengthens Taiwan's international relations and diplomatic ties. With more robust international recognition, Taiwan could receive more support in its attempts to join other international organizations and trade cooperations, prompt further discussion on aversion strategies, and provide Taiwan with a more holistic connection to global markets. As a result, Taiwan would then have the potential to

²⁶⁹ International Trade Administration, "Taiwan - Trade Agreements," January 10, 2024, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/taiwan-trade-agreements>.

²⁷⁰ International Trade Administration.

²⁷¹ Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Public Diplomacy in a Changing World, 616 (March 2008): 94.

capitalize on its friendly trade relations to negotiate diplomatic alliances. Successfully doing so would provide a credible threat to China and would increase the cost China would have to incur to directly confront Taiwan and challenge the status quo.²⁷² This would consequently promote long-term deterrence.²⁷³

Taiwan-US Trade Relations

The US has not yet established an FTA with Taiwan, but there are still significant economic ties between the two. The key mechanism for this relationship is the United States-Taiwan Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) which has allowed for important trade dialogue between the two bodies. As the relationship between Taiwan and the US is a cornerstone of Taiwan's foreign policy and ongoing economic stability, it is critical that Taiwan continues trade negotiations with the US. Doing so would help strengthen diplomatic ties and lead to a perceived support of Taiwan which will then grant Taiwan greater ease in establishing other international relationships.²⁷⁴ By maintaining a strong economic partnership with the US, Taiwan could encourage deterrence through soft diplomacy and inadvertently keep China at bay. One way this could be achieved is through ongoing negotiations under TIFA and with the US-Taiwan Technology Trade and Investment Collaboration (TTIC).²⁷⁵ Presently, there is discourse surrounding the expansion of trade in agriculture, digital trade, promotion of

²⁷² Jude Blanchette, Ryan Hass, and Lily McElwee, "Building International Support for Taiwan," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, February 13, 2024, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/building-international-support-taiwan>.

²⁷³ Paul K. Huth, "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Debates," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (June 1999): 25–48, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.25>.

²⁷⁴ Kai-Chih Chang, "A Taiwanese Perspective on the Need for a US-Taiwan Free Trade Agreement," Global Taiwan Institute, December 16, 2020, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2020/12/a-taiwanese-perspective-on-the-need-for-a-us-taiwan-free-trade-agreement/>.

²⁷⁵ "Investment and Trade Office," Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York 駐紐約台北經濟文化辦事處, June 29, 2023, https://www.roc-taiwan.org/usnyc_en/post/91.html#.

worker-centric trade, semiconductors, 5G, electric vehicles, and sustainable energy which Taiwan should pursue.²⁷⁶

Furthermore, with the US currently engaged in a trade war with China, now could be an ideal time for Taiwan to push for an FTA with the US. Seeing as a trade agreement with Taiwan would be one of the least politically sensitive routes to demonstrate support, they would avoid overtly provoking discussions around sovereignty or recognition of statehood whilst benefiting both of the involved parties.²⁷⁷

Moreover, Taiwan is currently situated in a position of strength with the US as a top global holder of foreign exchange reserves with half of the reserve in US Treasuries amounting to \$248.4 billion as of 2021.²⁷⁸ This has led the US to monitor Taiwan's economic policies more closely as a trading partner which could be leveraged to negotiate a favorable trade agreement.

Another point to be leveraged is a bilateral tax agreement passed in an initial House committee vote in the US in order to eliminate double taxation between the US and Taiwan. This has been an active proposal that was negotiated between the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and the Taipei Economic & Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) and has successfully led to both the *United States-Taiwan Expedited Double-Tax Relief Act* and the *Taiwan Tax Agreement Act of 2023* to be passed by committee near unanimously at the end of 2023.²⁷⁹ This passing of legislation has been considered by some as the largest landmark event for US-Taiwan trade

²⁷⁶ "Taiwan - Country Commercial Guide," International Trade Administration US Department of Commerce, January 10, 2024, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/taiwan-trade-agreements>.

²⁷⁷ Chang, "A Taiwanese Perspective on the Need for a US-Taiwan Free Trade Agreement."

²⁷⁸ "US-Taiwan Trade Relations" (Congressional Research Service, March 7, 2022), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10256>.

²⁷⁹ "Bipartisan Senate Finance and Foreign Relations Committee Members Call for Swift Passage of Taiwan Double-Tax Relief Legislation Released By House Ways And Means Committee | The United States Senate Committee on Finance," January 31, 2024, <https://www.finance.senate.gov/chairmans-news/bipartisan-senate-finance-and-foreign-relations-committee-member-s-call-for-swift-passage-of-taiwan-double-tax-relief-legislation-released-by-house-ways-and-means-committee>.

relations since Taiwan's ascension to the WTO back in 2002.²⁸⁰ This legislation is encouraging deeper relations to be forged between the US and Taiwan and is very meaningful to the corporations impacted by it.²⁸¹ Since the US tends to set the international standard for other nations to follow, this tax agreement grants Taiwan greater authority to forge economic diplomacy with other nations. Additionally, this tax agreement signifies a more pronounced backing of Taiwan by the US which not only is a signal to the PRC to continue abiding by the status quo but helps garner Taiwan more support in the international system.

Taiwan-China Trade Relations

In terms of Taiwan's current relationship with Beijing, they have signed the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) which normalized their trade relationship back in 2010. However, this agreement with the PRC has posed challenges amidst political tensions due to Taiwan's dependence on their economic ties to the PRC's markets which led Taiwan to becoming glaringly susceptible to harm from embargoes and other trade ploys.

Over the years, Taiwan has focused on a reduction of dependence on China for specific markets which has been crucial for Taiwan's economic resilience. However, despite the efforts made, Taiwan is still largely reliant on China as its trade relations account for 35.2% and 20.4% of Taiwan's total exports and imports respectively.²⁸² This has resulted in China being Taiwan's most significant trade partner as of 2023. In light of this, as mentioned in previous sections, continued diversification efforts for both Taiwan's import and export blends would be beneficial and can successfully lead to deterrence of provocations from their much more powerful neighbor.

²⁸⁰ Rupert Hammond-Chambers, "Special Commentary: Current Status of US-Taiwan Bilateral Relations," *US-Taiwan Business Council*, December 13, 2023, <https://www.us-taiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023.12.13-Special-Commentary-Current-Status-of-US-Taiwan-Bilateral-Relations.pdf>.

²⁸¹ "2024 Business Climate Survey" (Taipei, Taiwan: The American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan, 2024), <https://amcham.com.tw/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/AmCham-2024-Business-Climate-Survey.pdf>.

²⁸² "Annual External Trade Report in 2023."

However, it is vastly important not to underestimate the benefits of engaging in a healthy trade relationship with the PRC as this cooperation between the two parties fosters discourse towards amicable, mutually beneficial policy implementation and can lead to deterrence as well. Walking the tightrope between the two can be achieved through Taiwan's continued participation and acceptance into global agreements whilst minimizing, but not eliminating, their trade relationship with the PRC. As far as Taiwan's domestic capabilities to pursue this recommendation, bettering their institutions and business environment to promote FDI and capture more of the global market could increase their total good exportation and would lead to a more durable international connection.²⁸³²⁸⁴ Such a connection would increase the cost to the PRC should they proclaim war on Taiwan and in turn would push back the fulcrum for their tipping point to actively go after Taiwan.

Policy Recommendation Summary

Abridging the above sections, the following are the policy recommendations that the government of Taiwan should consider:

1. Utilization of Electronics Market: Taiwan should continue to utilize its leverage as a leader in the exportation of electronic integrated circuits and as a major electronics importer to negotiate and expand international trade relations.
2. Expansion of Trade Agreements: Taiwan should prioritize the expansion of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Economic Cooperation Agreements (ECAs) with strategic partners to strengthen its economic ties and enhance its regional influence. This includes

²⁸³ Zafar Ahmad Sultan, "A Causal Relationship between FDI Inflows and Export: The Case of India," *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 4, no. 2 (2013): 1–9.

²⁸⁴ Mladen Vučković et al., "Business Environment and Foreign Direct Investments: The Case of Selected European Emerging Economies," *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 2020): 243–66, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2019.1710228>.

pursuing FTAs with nations like the United States to diversify its trade relationships and reduce dependency on any single market.

3. **Enhanced Engagement with the United States:** Taiwan should continue to engage in trade negotiations with the United States under frameworks like the TIFA and the TTIC. These engagements not only foster economic partnerships but also contribute to deterrence through soft diplomacy.
4. **Diversification of Markets:** Taiwan should continue efforts to reduce dependency on specific markets, particularly the PRC, to enhance its economic resilience and mitigate risks associated with political tensions. This could involve expanding trade relationships with countries beyond the Asia-Pacific region.
5. **Strengthening Domestic Institutions:** Taiwan should focus on improving its domestic institutions and business environment to attract FDI and facilitate greater participation in the global market. This would not only bolster Taiwan's economic capabilities but also increase the cost to potential adversaries, such as the PRC, in the event of conflict.
6. **Promotion of Multilateralism:** Taiwan should actively seek participation in international organizations and trade cooperations to enhance its global recognition and diplomatic ties. This would increase Taiwan's leverage in negotiations and contribute to long-term deterrence strategies.

Defense and Gray Zone Warfare

Introduction

The relations between China, Taiwan, and the United States have emerged as a focal point of the Indo-Pacific region and China's increased pressure has brought these relations to the forefront of the geopolitical conversation specifically regarding a potential military conflict between China and Taiwan. The potential for kinetic war between these two states is problematic for China and Taiwan and the entire world. It is vital for practical and realistic defense policy to be put in place to maintain security in the region. This section will cover the backgrounds of China and Taiwan's military, including their strengths, weaknesses, and needs. As well as the role the United States plays in fostering a future where China and Taiwan do not see armed conflict with one another. This section aims to provide practical and realistic policy recommendations that would allow for this future between the two states.

Military Background

Since the 2000s, there has been a significant increase in the military capabilities of the PRC. The increased capability has also come with an increased assertiveness in the region, specifically in the South China Sea and regarding Taiwan. The PRC's new assertive stance was solidified with the Anti-Secession Law passed by China in 2005, which states under Article 2, "Taiwan is a part of China. The State shall never allow the "Taiwan Independence" secessionist forces to make Taiwan secede from China under any name or by any means."²⁸⁵ In return, the US has increased its commitment to Taiwan's defense with arms sales and military training focused on helping develop a more defense-capable Taiwan. Additionally, Taiwan has focused on modernizing its military force, with an increased focus on asymmetric warfare.

²⁸⁵ Interpret: China. "Anti-Secession Law." Accessed January 31, 2024. <https://interpret.csis.org/translations/anti-secession-law/>.

The growing concerns about PRC dominance in the Indo-Pacific have sparked renewed alliances with the United States, Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand. This comes with US-Taiwan relations being the strongest since 1979 and as the US Navy has continued to sail warships through the Taiwan Strait almost monthly as they have done so for decades.²⁸⁶ The US Indo-Pacific policy also makes it very clear how it wants the Indo-Pacific region to operate, with the advancement of a free and open Indo-Pacific as its number one priority.²⁸⁷ “Free and open” is the requirement that all governments can make their own decisions and that the shared region is governed lawfully following the Freedom of Navigation and the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. The stances from the US, PRC, and Taiwan are clear, and the US and the PRC have a strong regional defense capability. Tensions between these three nations are high and more fragile than ever.

Defense Strategies and Challenges

Despite being relatively close to mainland China, Taiwan does have defensive geographical advantages. The island’s most populated areas are coastal, which makes an amphibious assault extremely hard for the PRC to accomplish. Additionally, the coast of Taiwan is internally surrounded by mountains, further complicating a potential amphibious assault.²⁸⁸ The waters of the Taiwan Strait are not easy to navigate from June to August and November to February. Leaving about half the year ideal for maritime military action.²⁸⁹ To add to geographic advantages, Taiwan increased its budget for defense spending in 2023 by 10% and plans to

²⁸⁶ Grossman, Derek. “America’s Indo-Pacific Alliances Are Astonishingly Strong,” December 8, 2023.

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2023/12/americas-indo-pacific-alliances-are-astonishingly-strong.html>.

²⁸⁷ US Agency for International Development. “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States | Regional Development Mission for Asia,” December 21, 2022. <https://www.usaid.gov/asia-regional/indo-pacific-strategy-united-states>.

²⁸⁸ Campbell, Caitlin. “Taiwan: Defense and Military Issues - CRS Reports.” Congressional Research Service, September 19, 2023. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12481>.

²⁸⁹ War on the Rocks. “A Strait Too Far: How a Deliberate Campaigning Approach in the Pacific Can Make Beijing Think Twice,” June 5, 2023. <https://warontherocks.com/2023/06/a-strait-too-far-how-a-deliberate-campaigning-approach-in-the-pacific-can-make-beijing-think-twice/>.

increase its defense spending by approximately 7.7% in 2024. Taiwan has been criticized by other nations, such as the US, for not committing more funding to its defense budget, and this shift in spending signifies Taiwan's commitment to fortifying itself.²⁹⁰

Despite these advantages, Taiwan faces serious defense challenges as well. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been preparing its military for conflict with Taiwan for over a decade, including training exercises that simulate missile strike campaigns and amphibious assault landings. President Xi Jinping has pressed the PLA with a 2027 deadline (the PLA's 100th anniversary) of being militarily capable of occupying and governing Taiwan. There are also domestic challenges within Taiwan. Taiwan's military lacks recruiting and retaining efforts and training its military personnel. Facing the potential conflict with the PLA, it is not fully understood how far Taiwan's citizens will endure to secure the island. Additionally, Taiwan's energy, communications, and economic infrastructure is vulnerable to attack.²⁹¹ However, despite these vulnerabilities, it is essential to note that Taipei believes the least likely form of attack from the PLA will be kinetic. Coupled with the immense financial costs Taiwan would need to undertake to militarize its infrastructure, Taiwan does not see how this would be beneficial when it could prepare for more likely scenarios.²⁹²

The military advantages of China, when compared to Taiwan, are its size and resources. From 2000 to 2016, China's annual defense budget increased by around 10% each year and now increases by around 5-7% of GDP annually, giving China a budget of 230 billion USD as of

²⁹⁰ Institute, Global Taiwan. "Taiwan Announces an Increased Defense Budget for 2024." Global Taiwan Institute, September 20, 2023. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/09/taiwan-announces-an-increased-defense-budget-for-2024/>.

²⁹¹ Campbell, *Taiwan: Defense and Military Issues*.

²⁹² Li, Steven X. "Why so Little? The Curious Case of Taiwan's Defense Spending." https://orbiscascade-washington.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ALLIANCE_UW/db578v/cdi_proquest_journals_2455941255

2022 second only to the United States.²⁹³ Taiwan's budget of 19.1 billion USD for 2023 is tiny in comparison despite its increased defense spending.²⁹⁴ In addition to defense spending, China's military power greatly outweighs Taiwan's. Side-by-side, as of 2022, the PLAN has 351 naval vessels, while Taiwan's navy (ROCN) has 117.²⁹⁵ Even by sheer number of personnel, China's military force is almost ten times that of Taiwan (2.035 million and 215 thousand, respectively).²⁹⁶ On the surface, these advantages make China superior to Taiwan regarding military capability. Still, kinetic action against Taiwan should not be solely based on size and resources alone.

Even with the rapid growth and capability of the PLA, China would face extreme difficulty in an attempt to invade Taiwan. The PLA has not fought in a war since 1979 in Vietnam. Undoubtedly, China's military strength and capability have grown significantly, but where it stands now, its military lacks experience, which is a glaring weakness of the PLA. The hypothetical invasion of Taiwan would require China's army, navy, and air force in a massive joint operation between the branches. Despite President Xi's emphasis on the military's ability to win a war against Taiwan, few of its exercises have been in a joint environment. From 2002 to 2016, only 7% of the PLA's joint training exercises involved more than one branch of service.²⁹⁷

Gray Zone Warfare

²⁹³ Timothy Heath, "Why Is China Strengthening Its Military? It's Not All About War | Rand," The RAND Blog, March 24, 2023,

<https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2023/03/why-is-china-strengthening-its-military-its-not-all.html>.

²⁹⁴ David Sacks, "Taiwan Announced a Record Defense Budget: But Is It Enough to Deter China?," Council on Foreign Relations, August 30, 2023,

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/taiwan-announced-record-defense-budget-it-enough-deter-china>.

²⁹⁵ Harry Du, "How Is China Modernizing Its Navy?," China Power Project, November 9, 2023, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-naval-modernization/>.

²⁹⁶ Einar Dyvik, "Largest Militaries in the World 2024," Statista, January 23, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264443/the-worlds-largest-armies-based-on-active-force-level/>.

²⁹⁷ Campbell, Caitlin. "China's Military: The People's Liberation Army (PLA)." Congressional Research Institute, June 4, 2021. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46808>

Kinetic war is unlikely in the near future for China and Taiwan, and how Taiwan and the United States counter China's gray zone warfare tactics can play an essential role in discouraging China's further military escalation. Gray zone tactics may seem like a purely symbolic action in general. However, whether purely symbolic or not, countering gray zone tactics from China is an important way the United States can assist Taiwan in its defense efforts. This section will discuss the current state of gray zone tactics and how countering these tactics can help in averting war.

Beginning in 2022, the PRC has significantly increased its gray zone tactics toward Taiwan. These tactics include robust military exercises near Taiwan, daily sorties that enter Taiwan's ADIZ, People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) patrols across the median line established between mainland Taiwan and mainland China, and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in the airspace of some of Taiwan's controlled islands such as Kinmen. These tactics usually respond to US interactions with Taiwan, such as Nancy Pelosi's visit in 2022, and have become more recurring and normalized since. The primary concern with these increased and closer activities is the risk of Taiwan's and the United States' intelligence communities becoming normalized and failing to detect an actual attempt to invade Taiwan or at the least give Taiwan less time to assess and act on an actual attempt. These activities also use up Taiwan's military resources, straining a military that is already under stress.²⁹⁸

Countering the PRC's Gray Zone Tactics

The US plays an essential role in countering these pressures from the PRC. First, the US must maintain its own aerial and naval patrols and surveil PLA activities in proportion with the PLA while maintaining its stance on free and open navigation and strategic ambiguity. Proportion does not suggest that the US should utilize its gray zone tactics towards China that reciprocate the aggressiveness, but rather be assertive by matching approximately the US's aerial

²⁹⁸ Campbell, *Taiwan: Defense and Military Issues*.

and naval patrol to those of the PLA. The US's role in countering the PLA in this manner also includes aid from the US intelligence community, which helps Taiwan's military greatly from the resources it takes to monitor, assess, and react to these tactics with an already strained military.²⁹⁹

Current Defense Capabilities and Needs

China is rivaling the US in its military capabilities. Again, President Xi Jinping's 2027 goal is a military capable of taking over Taiwan, and its military greatly outweighs Taiwan's personnel and weapon systems. Currently, the People's Liberation Army Ground Force has approximately 2 million active duty service members compared to 215,000 and 1.3 million in Taiwan and the US, respectively.³⁰⁰ In addition to personnel size, the PLAN currently has the largest naval fleet in the world, composed of 370 ships and submarines. The People's Liberation Army Air Force has the largest air force in the Indo-Pacific region and is quickly catching up to Western air forces. Lastly, the PLA's Rocket Force has a rapidly developing intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capability, having built 300 silos in 2022 alone.³⁰¹

However, size alone is not the only factor in military capability, and the PLA has some significant weaknesses. The most critical weakness of the PLA is its Joint Operations capability. The PLA's self-assessment states this concern, and there are efforts to set up joint operations training for the PLA's officers. Lacking joint operation capability is coupled with a lack of warfighting experience for the PLA.³⁰² It has not fought a war since 1979 and has not been able

²⁹⁹ Bonny Lin, "A New Framework for Understanding and Countering China's Gray Zone Tactics," RAND, March 30, 2022, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RBA594-1.html.

³⁰⁰ Global Firepower. "Largest armies in the world ranked by active military personnel as of January 2024 (in 1,000s)." Chart. January 23, 2024. Statista. Accessed February 20, 2024. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264443/the-worlds-largest-armies-based-on-active-force-level/>

³⁰¹ US Department of Defense. "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2023." US Department of Defense, 2023.

³⁰² US Department of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2023."

to see what works and what doesn't work on the battlefield.³⁰³ The PLA lacks the lessons that other militaries, such as the US, have learned from battlefield successes and battlefield failures. The PLA must develop and execute complex and comprehensive training exercises to learn how its military operates within a joint environment. Even then, there is no way of being sure how its joint fighting force will operate.

Taiwan and the United States

To compare Taiwan alone regarding defensive capabilities and needs to China would not be a realistic comparison; China is growing its military considerably, and Taiwan will not outdo China militarily. Instead, discussing Taiwan and the US together in this section is more accurate—specifically for Taiwan's defensive needs.

Overall, Taiwan needs to continue shifting towards an asymmetric warfighting military. These weapon systems, such as anti-ship missiles (ASMs), UAVs, and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs), are cheaper yet effective in defensive strategies, allowing Taiwan to acquire more practical weapon systems with its increased defense budget. A fully asymmetric strategy would make Taiwan unable to respond effectively to gray zone tactics from the PLA.³⁰⁴ Therefore, Taiwan should not adopt a fully asymmetric capability. Maintaining its naval and air force assets and focusing on its struggling personnel numbers and readiness is essential. An asymmetric shift, not a complete switch, along with the help of the US countering China's gray zone tactics, as mentioned earlier in this section, would be a successful combination that would give Taiwan what it needs to defend itself while enabling the United States to support Taiwan's defense while maintaining its strategic ambiguity.³⁰⁵

³⁰³ US Department of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2023."

³⁰⁴ Eric Gomez, "Taiwan's Urgent Need for Asymmetric Defense," Cato.org, November 14, 2023, <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/taiwans-urgent-need-asymmetric-defense#policy-recommendations-us-security-assistance>.

³⁰⁵ Eric Gomez, "Taiwan's Urgent Need for Asymmetric Defense"

Policy Recommendations

The relations between China, Taiwan, and the United States are complex, and a hot war scenario is not as simple as it may seem to many. The following policy recommendations should be adopted to maintain peaceful relations between these three nations:

1. Taiwan should encourage the US to maintain strategic ambiguity to delay potential hostility between China and Taiwan.
2. Taiwan must adopt a more practical asymmetric warfighting capability.
3. Taiwan should seek US assistance to assess the PLA's gray zone tactics and make a peaceful US presence known with proportionate aerial and naval navigation through the Taiwan Strait and nearby areas.
4. Taiwan should work with the US to conduct training and military exercises.

Conclusion

The purpose of this task force report was to propose practical and effective policy recommendations to avoid conflict between China, Taiwan, and the United States, which could lead to peaceful relations between these three states. The task force covered three overarching topics. First, domestic politics, history, and society. Secondly, international relations, diplomacy, and regional politics. And lastly, economics, trade, technology, and defense.

From our research, we highlight the importance of Taiwan's diplomatic relationships with countries in the Indo-Pacific, the United States, and the EU. These relationships are valuable to Taiwan for it to avert conflict with China. Whether the relationships are based on diplomatic cooperation, economic partnerships, or military support, Taiwan must maintain and, in some cases, bolster these relationships for a peaceful future. Another critical finding is the importance of preserving a Taiwanese identity in the face of Chinese nationalism while balancing coexistence through cautious engagement in economic and unofficial relations with China.

From our task force findings, we feel optimistic about Taiwan's future. It is realistic for the future relations of China, Taiwan, and the United States to be stable and peaceful in implementing our policies. Moreover, with these policies, it is just as, if not more so, realistic for a future without war.

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