



MUNIAL'26

UNSC

Study Guide

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LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Dear Attendees,

It is an honor to welcome you all to the 7th annual session of İzmir Atatürk Lisesi Model United Nations Conference. I am Duru Kılıç, your Secretary-General. If you are reading this letter, you probably already know why you should be here, but let us remind you once more.

MUNIAL is a legacy preserved by generations, now bestowed upon us by our upperclassmen. Being entrusted with this conference was not an easy feat; so you can be sure that we are no amateurs when it comes to MUN, and that it isn't a coincidence you are attending the best. Our esteemed Director-General, Can Karadağ, and I have sacrificed months, if not years, working for our titles. But it wasn't just for MUNIAL; it was for the journey where we grew, improved, and found the best versions of ourselves. Now we stand proud, confident that this year will be no short of what our upperclassmen showed us, if not better.

MUN isn't just an academic achievement, though. This is a free space where you can improve your people skills, make new connections, have fun, and enhance your cultural knowledge. For me, this journey was one where I found family, and now I am honored to be the one creating the opportunity for others to do the same.

Sincerely,

Duru Kılıç

LETTER FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL

Distinguished Delegates,

It is with profound honor and immense excitement that I welcome you to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) at this beautiful and prestigious conference MUNIAL 2026.

My name is Özge Özgür, and I will be serving as your Under Secretary-General for this committee. I am currently a freshman student studying Comparative Literature at Dokuz Eylül University. My journey with Model United Nations began in 2018, and since then, this platform has evolved from a passionate hobby into a defining force that shaped my understanding of international relations, crisis management, and the delicate art of diplomacy. Whether you are a veteran delegate who has sat in countless Security Councils or a first-timer stepping into the diplomatic arena, I am thrilled to embark on this intellectual journey alongside you.

In these 3 days, we are entrusted with one of the most consequential and explosive issues of our era: "Escalation in the Taiwan Strait and Threat to International Peace and Security." The Taiwan Strait is not merely 180 kilometers of water separating two political entities. It is a geopolitical powder keg where the ghosts of civil war, the clash of authoritarian and democratic values, and the rivalry of superpowers converge. It is where 92% of the world's most advanced semiconductors are manufactured; the silicon lifeblood of our smartphones, fighter jets, electric vehicles, and artificial intelligence. It is where \$5 trillion in annual trade passes through, where 99% of trans-Pacific internet cables lie vulnerable beneath the waves, and where a single miscalculation could spiral into the first great power war of the 21st century.

As members of the Security Council, you are not merely debating abstract principles of sovereignty versus self-determination. You are crisis managers standing between peace and a conflict that economists estimate could cost \$10 trillion and claim hundreds of thousands of lives. You will grapple with the complexities of the "One China Principle" versus the "One China Policy", navigate the moral maze of strategic ambiguity, and confront the uncomfortable reality that the veto power may paralyze the very institution designed to prevent war.

I urge you to approach this Study Guide not as a document to skim, but as a strategic manual to master. Understand the historical trauma of the 1949 retreat to Taiwan and why Beijing views reunification as sacred. Grasp why Tokyo declares that "a Taiwan contingency is a Japan contingency" when Okinawa sits just 68 miles away. Analyze why Washington maintains strategic ambiguity; not out of cowardice, but out of a calculated desire to deter both Chinese invasion and Taiwanese independence declarations.

Think beyond rhetoric, don't just condemn or defend; propose actionable de-escalation mechanisms. Master the details; know the difference between a quarantine (legal grey zone) and a blockade (act of war). Understand why TSMC's 14nm chips are less critical than its 3nm monopoly. Embrace complexity; the best solutions often require uncomfortable compromises.

If you are feeling overwhelmed by the weight of this topic, you are not alone. I still remember my first UNSC assignment—staring at a background guide filled with acronyms, terrified I would embarrass myself at the podium. But here is what I learned, MUN rewards courage over perfection.

The delegate who asks a clarifying question is more valuable than the one who stays silent out of fear. The delegate who proposes a creative, even if imperfect, solution to break a deadlock earns more respect than the one who delivers a flawless speech that changes nothing. This committee is your laboratory; experiment, fail, learn, and grow. Your Chairboard and I are not here to judge you harshly; we are here to guide you, challenge you, and celebrate your breakthroughs. If you are confused about the 1992 Consensus, email or text me. If you want to workshop a directive idea, reach out. If you need a pep talk before your opening speech, I am one message away.

If you are unsure on how to use this guide; I can give you some advice. This Study Guide is structured to take you from foundational knowledge to crisis-ready expertise:

1. Start with building your conceptual foundation (What is the UNSC? What is the historical context? What are the key legal frameworks?).
2. Deep-dive into understanding the military balance, economic stakes, and grey zone warfare tactics. These sections will arm you with specific facts and statistics to make your speeches compelling.
3. Study your country's position, red lines, and leverage carefully and thoroughly. This is your diplomatic North Star.
4. Master the procedural warfare section. Understanding how to overcome vetoes, invoke Uniting for Peace, or craft Presidential Statements will shine you.
5. Review 'Questions To Ponder' and 'Further Reading' before drafting resolutions. These questions will guide your operative clauses.
6. Pay special attention to the "Keywords" sections—these are your research rabbit holes. Google them, read the linked reports, watch the YouTube explainers. The delegates who dominate the committee are not necessarily the ones who memorize the most, but the ones who understand the interconnections between military doctrine, economic leverage, and legal precedent.

While this is a simulation, the crisis we are modeling is terrifyingly plausible. As you read this letter, PLA aircraft are crossing the median line. Real Taiwanese families are stocking air raid shelters. Real Pentagon planners are wargaming amphibious invasion scenarios. Real semiconductor engineers at TSMC are working on chips that will power the next decade of technology; unless their fabs are destroyed.

Your resolutions will not stop a real war. But the skills you develop here; crisis analysis, coalition-building, strategic thinking under pressure, are the same skills that real diplomats, policymakers, and leaders use to navigate our increasingly volatile world. Take this seriously. Make it matter.

This will be a challenging committee. You will face vetoes, deadlocks, and moments where a solution seems impossible. You will be forced to choose between competing moral imperatives; sovereignty vs. self-determination, stability vs. justice, pragmatism vs. principle. Embrace that discomfort. The best diplomacy happens not when the answer is clear, but when it is agonizingly ambiguous.

I have no doubt that you will rise to this challenge. I have seen delegates transform from nervous novices to confident diplomats in the span of three days. I have witnessed resolutions born from seemingly irreconcilable positions. I have experienced the electric energy of a committee that refuses to give up on peace, even when war seems inevitable. You are that committee. You are those diplomats.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me via my email address or phone number as stated below with any questions, concerns, or just to discuss your country's strategy. I am here for you; before, during, and after the conference.

I cannot wait to see the innovative solutions you will craft, the alliances you will forge, and the impossible compromises you will broker. May your debates be rigorous, your directives be strategic, and your experience be unforgettable.

With great anticipation and unwavering support,

Özge Özgür

Under Secretary-General of United Nations Security Council

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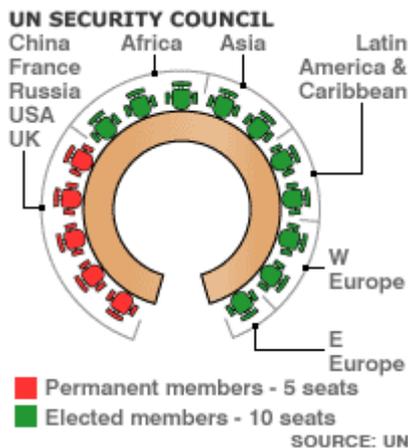
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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE



One of the [six main UN bodies](#), the [United Nations Security Council \(UNSC\)](#) is primarily responsible for maintaining world peace and security. Specifically, according to the [UN Charter](#), it has the authority to approve modifications to the Charter, authorise military action, organise peacekeeping missions, suggest new members be admitted to the [UN General Assembly](#), and impose international sanctions. Furthermore, the Security Council has the authority to recognise threats to global peace and security and to approve actions, including the use of force, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Consequently, resolutions passed by the Security Council under Chapter VII are a source of international law because they are legally binding on UN members. In essence, only the Security Council has the power to adopt resolutions that are legally binding on all of its members.¹

Structurally, five of the 15 members of the Security Council—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—are permanent (P5). Historically, these were the primary nations that emerged victorious from World War II. Therefore, any significant Security Council resolution, including those pertaining to nominations for the Office of the Secretary-General or the admission of new member states to the UN, may be vetoed by permanent members. In contrast, votes and other non-binding decisions made by the General Assembly are not subject to this veto power. Finally, for a two-year term, the remaining ten members are chosen regionally, while each month, one of the body's members takes over as president.²



Alongside is the official seating arrangement for the United Nations Security Council. In a standard session, the President (Chair) sits at the head of the horseshoe table, with the Secretary-General's representative to their right. Typically, member states are seated alphabetically, with the starting country rotating monthly. However, my dear delegates, you will notice that the current composition of this Council differs from the actual 2026 non-permanent membership of the United Nations. As the Under Secretary General for this simulation, I have curated a specialized strategic matrix.

¹ Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 6). *United Nations Security Council*, para.1 Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council

² Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 6). *United Nations Security Council*, para.3 Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_Security_Council

Specifically, this committee is designed to operate as a semi-crisis, shifting frequently into full-crisis mode. Because the "Escalation in the Taiwan Strait" is a high-intensity conflict involving global supply chains, naval doctrines, and direct P5 friction, I have created this specialized matrix that includes the key stakeholders in this specific dispute, such as frontline states and global economic hubs. Unlike a General Assembly, your "Seat" at this table comes with specific assets. Whether you represent a frontline state like Japan or an economic powerhouse like Germany, your proximity to the conflict is the primary engine of our crisis flow. Ultimately, I have prioritized functional realism over geographical quotas to ensure that every single one of the 15 delegates has a direct, life-changing interest in the outcome of the Taiwan Strait escalation.

To fully leverage these strategic assets and grasp the gravity of your mandate, it is imperative to first distinguish the binding power of this chamber from the rest of the United Nations system. While they share the same charter, the General Assembly and the Security Council differ fundamentally in their authority, scope of power, and decision-making mechanisms, reflecting their distinct roles within the United Nations. Most notably, the Security Council possesses binding decision-making authority under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, enabling it to adopt legally enforceable resolutions that may impose sanctions, authorize peacekeeping operations, or permit the use of force; consequently, its decisions must be implemented by all member states. By contrast, the General Assembly functions primarily as an inclusive diplomatic forum whose resolutions are non-binding and serve as recommendations that express the collective views of the international community, particularly on issues such as human rights, development, and peace, without enforcement mechanisms. While the Security Council is the primary body responsible for maintaining international peace and security and holds the exclusive right to authorize military action, the General Assembly's role in conflict situations remains largely advisory, even when it convenes emergency special sessions under the "Uniting for Peace" framework. Moreover, the Security Council's effectiveness is shaped, and often constrained, by the veto power of its five permanent members, which allows any one of them to block substantive decisions, leading at times to institutional deadlock. In contrast, the General Assembly operates on a majority voting system that ensures formal equality among states but lacks the capacity to compel compliance. Together, these differences highlight a balance within the UN system between enforceable authority and broad-based legitimacy, underscoring both the strengths and limitations of the organization in addressing contemporary global conflicts.³

³ Youvan, D. C. (2024). Understanding the Powers of the UN General Assembly vs. the UN Security Council: A Critical Analysis of Peacekeeping and Use of Force. *ResearchGate*, p.14, Key Differences Between the General Assembly and the Security Council: Authority: Binding vs. Non-binding Decisions, Scope of Power: Security Council's Legal Enforcement Capabilities vs. the General Assembly's Role as a Diplomatic Forum, Use of Force: Security Council's Exclusive Right to Authorize Force vs. General Assembly's Advisory Role, Veto Power: Security Council's Permanent Members vs. General Assembly's Majority Voting, Conclusion.

The following table summarizes these critical structural and operational distinctions:

Feature	United Nations Security Council (UNSC)	General Assembly (UNGA)
Primary Role	Maintaining international peace and security.	Inclusive diplomatic forum for collective views (human rights, development, peace).
Authority	Binding. Possesses binding decision-making authority under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.	Non-Binding. Functions as an advisory body whose resolutions serve as recommendations.
Enforcement Power	Can impose sanctions, authorize peacekeeping, and permit the use of force.	Lacks enforcement mechanisms; cannot compel compliance.
Decision-Making	Constrained by the Veto Power of the 5 Permanent Members (P5).	Operates on a Majority Voting System(formal equality among states).
Conflict Scope	Holds the exclusive right to authorize military action.	Role is largely advisory (except under "Uniting for Peace" framework).

A Quick Note from Your USG: Legal texts can be dry, so here is a 60-second recap to make sure you nail the difference between the UNGA and the UNSC. It sums up everything above in under a minute :)

 [What is the difference between the UN General Assembly and the Security Council? - ...](#)

However, having the power to make binding laws does not mean you can use it easily. In the Security Council, getting a majority of votes is not always enough to pass a resolution. There is one specific rule that allows five specific countries to stop any decision instantly, even if everyone else in the room agrees. This brings us the veto power.



The veto power within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is derived from Article 27, paragraph 3 of the UN Charter, which necessitates the concurring votes of the five permanent members (P5) for all substantive decisions, thereby enabling a single permanent member to block a resolution unilaterally.⁴ Originating from the "Yalta formula," this mechanism was designed to secure Great Power

unanimity but has effectively institutionalized a system of "legalised hegemony" where significant international action requires the joint consent of the P5.⁵ Historically, the veto has been exercised over 300 times, evolving from the Soviet Union's frequent obstruction of new member admissions during the Cold War to the post-Cold War era, where the United States has utilized it to protect Israel and the Russian Federation has employed it to block resolutions regarding conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.⁶ Scholars critique this privilege as an "anachronistic legacy" that violates the principle of sovereign equality and frequently induces decision-making paralysis when the geopolitical interests of permanent members are at stake.⁷ Consequently, reform efforts have emerged ranging from the Group of Four's (G4) proposal to expand permanent membership to procedural innovations like the "veto initiative," which mandates a General Assembly debate following a veto, and voluntary codes of conduct aiming to restrain veto usage in cases of mass atrocities.⁸

⁴ Latino, A. (2025). United Nations Security Council: Reform (Im)Possible? In Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Law & Università degli Studi di Camerino, Scuola di Giurisprudenza, *Bratislava Law Review* (Vol. 9, Issue 1, p. 211, sec. 2, para. 2); <https://doi.org/10.46282/blr.2025.9.1.868>; *Historical Documents - Office of the Historian*. (n.d.), p. 209, Question 2. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v01p1/d148>

⁵ Martinali, J. (2024). *A RIGHT TO IMPUNITY: VETO POWER IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL* (By E. Sipiorski & N. Rajkovic) [Thesis], p.7, sec. 1.1, para.2.

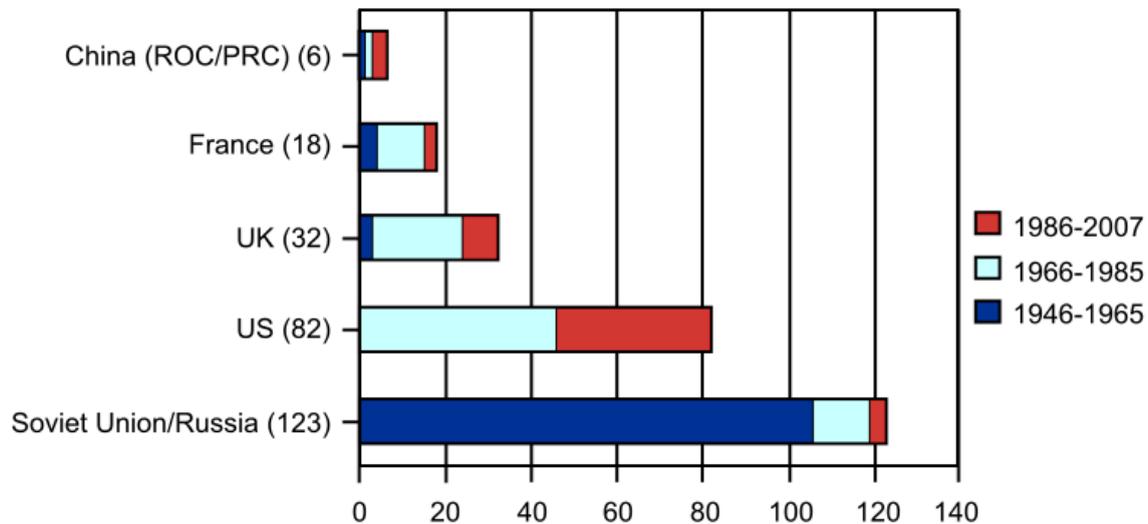
⁶ Admin, B. (2025, September 11). *UN, explained: The history of the United Nations Security Council veto*. Better World Campaign, sec. "Notable Uses of the Veto", para. 1–3.

<https://betterworldcampaign.org/peace-and-security/un-explained-the-history-of-the-united-nations-security-council-veto> ; Peters, A. (2023). The war in Ukraine and the curtailment of the veto in the Security Council. *RED*, 2023/1(5), p.87, para.1.. <https://doi.org/10.3917/red.005.0096>

⁷ Mbara, G. C., Gopal, N., Ehiane, S., & Patrick, H. O. (2021). Re-evaluating the African Union's Ezulwini consensus in the reform of the United Nations' Security Council. *Journal of African Union Studies*, 10(1), p.56, para.3. <https://doi.org/10.31920/2050-4306/2021/10n1a3>

⁸ Opanasenko, O. & Mykola Gogol Nizhyn State University. (2025). Prospects for UN Security Council reform. In *Foreign Affairs* (Vol. 1, p. 96, Abstract; p. 100, para. 2) [Journal-article]. <https://doi.org/10.59214/ua.fa/1.2025.96>; Opanasenko, O. & Mykola Gogol Nizhyn State University. (2025). Prospects for UN Security Council reform. In *Foreign Affairs*(Vol. 1, p. 102, para. 1) [Journal-article]. <https://doi.org/10.59214/ua.fa/1.2025.96>; Latino, A. (2025). United Nations Security Council: Reform (Im)Possible? In Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Law & Università degli Studi di Camerino, Scuola di Giurisprudenza, *Bratislava Law Review* (Vol. 9, Issue 1, p. 220, sec. 4, para. 2); Aldrighi, T. (2021). Restrictions on veto power: holding the permanent five accountable in the face of intervention and peacekeeping operations. p. 1049 [PDF p. 13], para. 1 *New York University*. <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/duipew/vol2/iss1/1>

Below you can see the vetoes used throughout time.



This data illustrates the frequency of veto power application by the five permanent members of the Security Council. While the legal authority granted under Article 27 is identical for all five nations, their strategic use of this mechanism varies significantly. Historically, the Soviet Union (and subsequently the Russian Federation) and the United States have been the most frequent users of the veto, often resulting in institutional deadlock during high-stakes geopolitical conflicts. In contrast, the United Kingdom and France have not exercised their veto power since 1989.

While the veto is a powerful instrument of control, its application is legally restricted to specific types of decisions. Therefore, to navigate the Council's decision-making process, one must understand the critical distinction between substantive and procedural votes. Article 27 of the UN Charter establishes a dual voting system where procedural matters require an affirmative vote of nine members, while "all other matters" require nine votes including the concurring votes of the permanent members, thereby creating the veto power.⁹ Although the Charter does not explicitly define "procedural" matters, the 1945 San Francisco Statement by the sponsoring governments clarified that decisions initiating a "chain of events" leading to enforcement are substantive, whereas organizational decisions under the "Yalta formula" are procedural.¹⁰ Ambiguities regarding this classification are typically resolved through the "preliminary question," which the San Francisco Statement subjects to a "double veto"—allowing a permanent member to veto the classification of a matter as procedural before vetoing the substantive resolution itself.¹¹ Established procedural matters, which are

⁹ United Nations, 1945, Art. 27, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>; Conforti, B., & Focarelli, C. (2016). *The law and practice of the United Nations* (N. Blokker, Ed.). Brill Nijhoff, p. 79. <https://brill.com/laio>; Isanga, M., Jr. (n.d.). Resurgent Cold War and U.N. Security Council reform opportunities. In *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy* (Vol. 47, Issue 2) [Journal-article], p. 84. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/djilp>

¹⁰ Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, Volume II (1945–1954), Article 27, Annex IV. Codification Division Publications. <https://legal.un.org/repertory/art27.shtml>; OKEKE, C. E. (2021). *OKEKE: An appraisal of the role of veto power in admission of states to the United Nations* [Journal-article], p.4; Rudzinski, A. W. (1951), The So-Called Double Veto, *American Journal of International Law*, p.448.

¹¹ Conforti, B., & Focarelli, C. (2016). *The law and practice of the United Nations* (N. Blokker, Ed.). Brill Nijhoff, p. 88. <https://brill.com/laio>; Rudzinski, A. W. (1951), The So-Called Double Veto, *American Journal of International Law*, p.444.

immune to the veto, include the inclusion of items on the agenda, the adjournment of meetings, and invitations to non-members to participate in discussions.¹² Security Council practice has further refined voting rules: under the "obligatory abstention" proviso of Article 27(3), parties to a dispute must abstain from voting in Chapter VI decisions, though this rule is often bypassed.¹³ Conversely, "voluntary abstention" by a permanent member is customarily not treated as a veto, despite the Charter's language requiring "concurring votes".¹⁴

Quick Tip: I know the difference between substantive and procedural votes can feel like a headache, but it's actually your secret weapon in this committee. I found this video that breaks it down perfectly. Watch it so you'll know exactly when you can ignore a P5 veto and keep your momentum going. : [How Does The UN Security Council Vote? - Tactical Warfare Experts](#)

Here are some other videos about the veto power that you check out:

▶ The Problem With the UN Veto Power | NowThis World

▶ What is Veto power || UN security Council || Linguawisha

▶ What Is Veto Power United Nations? - International Policy Zone

While the veto acts as a primary check on the Council's power, the 'engine' of its authority resides in the UN Charter itself. To understand how the Council moves from mere recommendation to military enforcement, one must look at the specific legal pillars—Articles 24-26 and Chapters VI and VII—that distinguish this body from any other international institution. Member States confer upon the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, granting specific powers under Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII for the discharge of these duties.¹⁵ Members agree to accept and carry out Council decisions in accordance with the Charter, and the Council is responsible for formulating plans for the regulation of armaments.¹⁶ Distinct from the pacific settlement of disputes under Chapter VI, Chapter VII empowers the Council to take enforcement action.¹⁷

¹² United Nations, 1955, pp. 67–68. https://legal.un.org/repertory/art27/english/rep_orig_vol2_art27.pdf; I; OKEKE, C. E. (2021). *OKEKE: An appraisal of the role of veto power in admission of states to the United Nations* [Journal-article], p.4

¹³ United Nations, 1945, Art. 27, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>; Kato, A. (2025). Revitalizing the obligatory abstention rule in the UN Security Council: an interpretation of the Proviso in Article 27 (3) of the UN Charter. *Journal of Conflict and Security Law*, 30(1), p.3. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcsl/kraf002>; Security Council Report. (2014). Article 27(3) and Parties to a Dispute: an Abridged History. In *Security Council Report*, p.1. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/article_27_3_and_parties_to_a_dispute.pdf

¹⁴ Conforti, B., & Focarelli, C. (2016). *The law and practice of the United Nations* (N. Blokker, Ed.). Brill Nijhoff, p. 82. <https://brill.com/laio>; *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, 1945, General: The United Nations, Volume I - Office of the Historian*, 2024. <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v01/d273>

¹⁵ United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | United Nations, Art.24, paras. 1-2. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

¹⁶ United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | United Nations, Arts.25-26. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

¹⁷ United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | United Nations, Chapter VI, para.1. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

To exercise these powers, the Council must first determine the existence of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression.¹⁸ It may then mandate measures not involving armed forces or take action by air, sea, or land forces to restore international peace and security.¹⁹ The Charter preserves the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence against an armed attack until the Council takes necessary measures.²⁰

Below you can see a table that outlines the specific Articles and Chapters that transform the Council from a diplomatic forum into a decision-making body with the power to enforce international law.

Category	Reference	Core Function	Nature of Resolution
Foundational Mandate	Article 24	Grants the Council primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.	Administrative
The "Binding" Clause	Article 25	Mandates that all UN Member States agree to accept and carry out Council decisions.	Mandatory
Peaceful Resolution	Chapter VI	Focuses on mediation, arbitration, and diplomatic settlements of disputes.	Non-Binding
Action & Force	Chapter VII	Authorizes the Council to determine threats and use sanctions or military force.	Legally Binding

You may also watch the following videos to deepen your understanding for the articles and chapters:

▶ What Is The Difference Between UN Chapter VI And VII Missions? - International Pol...

▶ What Is Chapter VII Of The UN Charter? - International Policy Zone

¹⁸ United Nations. (n.d., para.1). *Actions with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression*. Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/actions>

¹⁹ United Nations. (n.d., para.1). *Actions with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression*. Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/actions>; United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations. (2017). *Legal framework for United Nations peacekeeping* [Lesson 1.4, p.43]. Core Pre-deployment Training Materials.

<https://resourcehub01.blob.core.windows.net/training-files/Training%20Materials/003%20CPTM-EN/003-034%20Lesson%201.4%20Legal%20Framework%20for%20United%20Nations%20Peacekeeping.pdf>

²⁰ United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | *United Nations, Art.51*. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

▶ What Is the Security Council's Role in Chapter VI?

▶ What Responsibilities Does Chapter V Assign the Security Council?

Now that we know how the Security Council works, we must look at why we are discussing the Taiwan Strait. Even though some consider this a local issue, its impact on global peace makes it a primary concern for this committee. While Article 2(7) of the UN Charter generally prohibits intervention in matters essentially within a state's domestic jurisdiction, this principle explicitly yields to enforcement measures authorized under Chapter VII.²¹ Consequently, although delegations have historically objected to Taiwan-related agenda items by citing domestic jurisdiction, a Security Council determination of a "threat to the peace" under Article 39 renders this objection inapplicable to enforcement actions.²² Furthermore, Article 34 empowers the Council to investigate any situation causing international friction to determine if its continuance endangers security, a mandate that applies to potential dangers and permits "jurisdictional discussion" without requiring a prior establishment of competence.²³ Legal precedents confirm that internal conflicts are effectively internationalized—and thus subject to UNSC jurisdiction—when they trigger third-party intervention or generate cross-border spillovers, as demonstrated when the Council designated the internal crises in Somalia and Kosovo as threats to regional peace despite sovereignty claims.²⁴ This jurisdictional scope was further expanded by Resolution 1973 on Libya, where the Council authorized "all necessary measures" under Chapter VII to protect civilians, establishing that internal humanitarian crises can constitute threats to international peace warranting enforcement.²⁵ Finally, should the Security Council fail to act, Article 51 preserves the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense, which customary international law extends to the forcible protection of nationals abroad, until necessary measures are taken to maintain international peace and security.²⁶

²¹ United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | *United Nations*, Art.2 para.7.

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

²² *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs, Supplement No. 9, Volume I, Article 2(7), para.9*. United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. https://legal.un.org/repertory/art2/english/rep_supp9_voll_art2_7.pdf; Szasz, P. C. (1983). Role of the United Nations in Internal Conflicts. *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 13(2), p.352.

<https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1871&context=gjicil>

²³ United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | *United Nations*, Art.34.

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>; Gordon, R. (1994). United Nations Intervention in Internal Conflicts: Iraq, Somalia, and Beyond. *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 15(2), p.566.

<https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1566&context=mjil>; Gilmour, D. R. (1967). Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter and the Practice of the Permanent Members of the Security Council. *Australian Year Book of International Law*, p.162. <https://www5.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/AUYrBkIntLAW/1970/5.pdf>

²⁴ Mohmed, H. O., & Lujay, T. C. (2023). Definition of Internationalized Armed Conflicts and their Legal Nature. *Migration Letters*, 20(S5), p.639. www.migrationletters.com; Gordon, R. (1994). United Nations Intervention in Internal Conflicts: Iraq, Somalia, and Beyond. *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 15(2), pp.540-553.

<https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1566&context=mjil>; United Nations Security Council. (2011). *Resolution 1973 (2011)*, p.2 [on the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya].

<https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unsc/2011/en/76684>

²⁵ Williams, P. R., & Popken, C. (2011). Security Council Resolution 1973 on Libya: A Moment of Legal & Moral Clarity. *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law*, 44(1), p.228.

https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2270&context=facsch_lawrev; United Nations Security Council. (2011). *Resolution 1973 (2011)*, p.3 [on the situation in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya].

<https://www.refworld.org/legal/resolution/unsc/2011/en/76684>

²⁶ United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | *United Nations*, Art.51.

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>; Szasz, P. C. (1983). Role of the United Nations in Internal Conflicts. *Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 13(2), p.357.

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3088&context=ils>

You can see the summary of the key features of the UNSC in the images/videos below:



UN UNITED NATIONS SC SECURITY COUNCIL



PMF IAS






/pmfias
What is the UNSC?
X /pmfias

The **UNSC** is one of the **six principal organs** of the UN, considered as apex.  Responsible for maintaining **international peace and security**.  The **only UN body** that can issue **binding resolutions** for member states. 

UNSC MEMBERSHIP

15 members and each member has one vote.

Permanent Members (5)


CHINA


US


UK


FRANCE


RUSSIA

Non-Permanent Members (10)



5 Non-Permanent Members Elected Annually



2 year term



Two-Thirds Majority

A retiring member is **not eligible** for immediate re-election.

Benefits for Permanent members

- The five permanent members have **veto power**.
- **Opposition** from **any of these five Countries** **blocks the resolution** regardless of international support.

Benefits for Non-Permanent members

- They hold the **UNSC presidency** **monthly**, allowing them to set meeting agendas.
- They can also **lead** various **UNSC committees** and **working groups**.



Issues of UNSC

X /pmfias

Troubling Role of P5 and its Veto

- **Veto power** makes P5 nations **more equal than others**, ignoring the collective will of 188 members.


188 members

vs


Permanent Members

- The veto system has become a **tool to block progress in the UN**. 
- During the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the **UNSC was powerless** due to **Russia's veto**.


→

→


Doesn't Reflect the Present World Order

1945 Map



Today's Map



- The UNSC still reflects the **power dynamics of 1945**, with the **P5 nations** gaining permanent membership because they **won WWII**.
- **Lack of representation** for Africa, South America and Asia is a major issue of UNSC. P

© PMF IAS

▶ LESSON 24 - THE SECURITY COUNCIL

▶ How Does the UN Security Council Work?

▶ Why the UN security council matters

DEFINITION OF KEYWORDS

1992 Consensus: This term refers to a contested political understanding reached between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), historically summarized as "One China, Respective Interpretations." This formula allowed both sides to claim to represent "China" while tabling the issue of sovereignty to facilitate economic dialogue. However, the current Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) administration rejects the consensus as lacking a binding legal basis, while Beijing increasingly equates it directly with the rigid "One China Principle."

A2/AD (Anti-Access/Area Denial): This military strategy was developed by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to restrict foreign military movement and prevent U.S. intervention within the First and Second Island Chains. Driven by the inability to deter U.S. carrier groups during the 1996 crisis, this capability now relies on assets like the DF-21D and DF-26 ballistic missiles to target ships and deny adversaries effective operation in the theater.

ADIZ (Air Defense Identification Zone): An ADIZ is a declared airspace zone where a state requires the identification, location, and control of aircraft in the interest of national security, though it is not considered sovereign airspace under international law. In the Taiwan Strait context, the PLA has normalized incursions into Taiwan's ADIZ, with sorties rising from approximately 380 in 2020 to over 2,000 in 2024, utilizing these flights to compress Taiwan's defensive reaction time.

First Island Chain: This geographic concept describes the strategic arc of archipelagos stretching from Japan through Taiwan to the Philippines, acting as a barrier that restricts Chinese naval access to the open Pacific. The United States and its allies utilize this chain to monitor maritime movement, while the PLA seeks to project power beyond it to break the "strategic dilemma" of containment.

Grey Zone Warfare: This term defines a strategy of conflict occurring below the threshold of open war, utilizing psychological pressure, cyber-attacks, and coercion to erode sovereignty without triggering a kinetic military response. Tactics include the weaponization of legal loopholes, disinformation campaigns, and the normalization of military incursions to exhaust the adversary's resources.

Joint Sword Exercises: These are large-scale military drills conducted by the PLA, such as "Joint Sword-2024A" and "Joint Sword-2024B," designed to simulate the joint seizure of power and encirclement of Taiwan. These exercises have evolved to increasingly integrate the China Coast Guard (CCG) alongside naval and air forces to practice blockade operations and the isolation of key ports.

Kinmen & Matsu Islands: These are Taiwan-controlled offshore islands located just kilometers from the Chinese coast, which were historically the site of artillery bombardments during the 1950s crises. Currently, they serve as focal points for "grey zone" harassment,

where the China Coast Guard conducts patrols within restricted waters to challenge Taiwan's jurisdiction without crossing the Taiwan Strait median line.

Median Line: This is a *de facto* boundary running down the center of the Taiwan Strait that historically functioned as a buffer to prevent accidental conflict between the PLA and ROC armed forces. Since August 2022, the PLA has effectively erased this line through daily military crossings, nullifying the status quo and shrinking Taiwan's strategic defensive depth.

NEO (Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations): This term refers to the military logistics required to evacuate civilians, specifically foreign nationals, from a conflict zone. In a Taiwan scenario, a NEO faces "logistical impossibility" due to the lack of secure sea lanes and the sheer volume of individuals—including tens of thousands of U.S. citizens—who would need to be extracted through the contested First Island Chain during a blockade.

One China Policy (USA): Distinct from Beijing's principle, this is the U.S. diplomatic stance which "acknowledges" the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China but refuses to formally recognize Beijing's sovereignty over the island. Supported by the Taiwan Relations Act and Six Assurances, this policy treats Taiwan's status as legally undetermined and contingent upon a peaceful resolution.

One China Principle (PRC): This is a tripartite legal axiom asserted by Beijing stating that there is only one China, the PRC is the sole legal government, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. Under this principle, the PRC claims it succeeded all sovereign rights of the ROC in 1949, viewing any assertion of Taiwanese statehood as a violation of territorial integrity.

Porcupine Strategy: Also known as the Overall Defense Concept (ODC), this asymmetric military doctrine prioritizes mobile, lethal, and resilient systems over conventional platforms to counter the PLA's quantitative advantage. It employs assets like anti-ship missiles and sea mines to make an amphibious invasion prohibitively costly and difficult to execute.

Pratas Islands (Dongsha): This atoll in the South China Sea is controlled by Taiwan and has become a target for PLA coercion tactics. During the "Justice Mission-2025" exercises, the China Coast Guard conducted patrols around these islands to simulate blockade operations and exert control over maritime approaches.

Quarantine vs. Blockade: A quarantine is a "grey zone" law enforcement tactic where the Coast Guard interdicts commercial shipping in restricted waters under the guise of customs or safety inspections, intended to avoid a formal act of war. A blockade, by contrast, is a high-intensity act of war involving naval forces isolating the island to cut off all supplies, such as energy imports.

Silicon Shield: This strategic concept posits that Taiwan's near-total monopoly on advanced logic semiconductor manufacturing protects it from aggression by creating a scenario of mutually assured economic destruction. Because a disruption to this industry would cost the

global economy an estimated \$10 trillion, the security of these facilities is viewed as essential to global survival.

Sortie: In military aviation, a sortie is a combat mission of an individual aircraft, starting from takeoff. The frequency of PLA sorties crossing the median line serves as a primary metric for measuring escalation, with records reaching 153 aircraft detected in a single day and monthly totals exceeding 240 in early 2025.

Status Quo: This term refers to the existing state of affairs in the Taiwan Strait, historically characterized by a balance where Taiwan operates autonomously without declaring independence and China refrains from force. Beijing's "salami slicing" tactics and military incursions are described as actively altering this baseline to create a "new normal" of constant pressure.

Strategic Ambiguity: This is a U.S. policy posture designed to "dual-deter" both sides of the Taiwan Strait. By refusing to explicitly guarantee military intervention, Washington deters Taiwan from declaring *de jure* independence, while simultaneously deterring the PRC from using force by maintaining the legal mandate to intervene under the Taiwan Relations Act.

Strategic Clarity: In the context of the current security environment, this refers to the erosion of historical ambiguity in favor of a more direct confrontation. The study guide notes that the "Ambiguity" of the past is being replaced by the dangerous "Clarity" of conflict as red lines are drawn and military normalizations occur.

Asymmetric Warfare: Unconventional strategies used by a weaker force against a stronger one.

Kinetic Conflict: Active warfare involving lethal forces.

Retrocession: The ROC government's term for the 1945 transfer of Taiwan from Japanese to Chinese administration. Legally contested because: (1) the Cairo Declaration (1943) stated Taiwan 'shall be restored' to China but was not a binding treaty; (2) the San Francisco Peace Treaty (1952) had Japan renounce Taiwan without specifying a successor state, leaving status technically 'undetermined.' Beijing rejects 'retrocession' rhetoric, arguing Taiwan was 'liberated' as part of China's anti-colonial victory.

Monopoly: The exclusive possession or control of the supply or trade in a commodity or service. Historically, the ROC government's state monopolies on tobacco and sugar contributed to the economic grievances that sparked the February 28 Incident. In the modern context, it refers to TSMC's "near-total monopoly" on the production of advanced logic chips (under 10nm), creating a global "Silicon Shield".

Settlement Committees: Organizations formed by local Taiwanese elites, leaders, and intellectuals during the February 28 Incident in 1947. These committees attempted to maintain order in major cities and negotiate political reforms—such as free elections and regional autonomy—with the KMT administration before being violently suppressed.

Dissent The holding or expression of opinions at variance with those officially held by the government. During the "White Terror" period (1949–1987), the KMT regime strictly prohibited discussion of the February 28 Incident and imprisoned or executed thousands of individuals suspected of political dissent or sedition.

De jure: A Latin legal term meaning "by law" or "according to rightful entitlement." It describes a state of affairs that is officially and legally recognized in accordance with law (e.g., *de jure* independence would be a formal legal declaration of statehood recognized by the international community).

De facto: A Latin term meaning "in fact" or "in practice," regardless of legal status. It describes Taiwan's current reality: it operates as a fully functional independent state with its own government and military (*de facto*), despite lacking formal diplomatic recognition (*de jure*) from the UN and most countries.

Salami slicing tactic: A strategy of incremental aggression or "slicing" a large objective into small, gradual steps that are too minor individually to trigger a full-scale war but cumulatively alter the status quo. Beijing uses this tactic (e.g., slowly crossing the median line) to normalize its military presence around Taiwan without firing a shot.

Legal limbo: A situation of uncertainty where rights or status are undefined by law. In this conflict, it refers to the dangerous status of Taiwanese citizens who, because Taiwan is not a UN member, cannot access protection from the UNHCR and lack defined rights under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Antimony shock: A severe disruption to the global defense supply chain that occurred in late 2024 when China banned the export of antimony. As a critical mineral used in ammunition and night vision goggles, the ban caused prices to surge and highlighted the West's dependency on Chinese raw materials.

Benshengren: This term refers to the "native Taiwanese" population who resided on the island prior to the arrival of the Nationalist government in 1945. Although they share a Han Chinese ethnicity with later arrivals, distinct regional origins and migration histories created deep political fissures between this group and the incoming administration, eventually contributing to the tensions that sparked the February 28 Incident.

Waishengren: This term designates the "mainlanders" who migrated to Taiwan from mainland China alongside the Kuomintang (KMT) government following the Chinese Civil War and the retreat of 1949. While ethnically similar to the local population, this group was historically distinct in terms of regional origin and political status, becoming the ruling class during the subsequent authoritarian period known as the White Terror.

UNCLOS: Often referred to as the "Constitution of the Oceans," this 1982 international agreement defines the rights and responsibilities of nations regarding the world's oceans. It establishes legal boundaries for territorial seas, EEZs, and international straits. The core

dispute in the Taiwan Strait hinges on conflicting interpretations of UNCLOS regarding freedom of navigation.

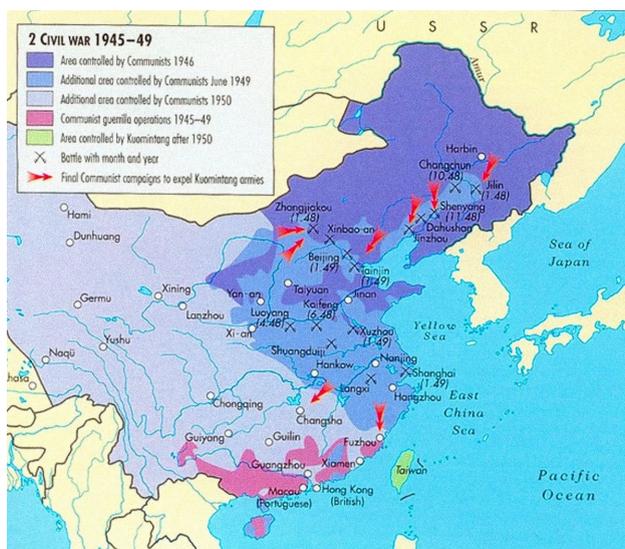
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): A maritime zone extending 200 nautical miles (approx. 370 km) from a country's coast. While the coastal state has sovereign rights over natural resources (like fish and oil) within this zone, UNCLOS grants all other nations "high seas freedoms," including the freedom of navigation and overflight for military vessels—a right the US exercises but China frequently challenges.

THE ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT

The roots of the Taiwan conflict explain why questions of sovereignty, identity, and international recognition remain unresolved, creating persistent risks of military escalation involving major powers. For the UNSC, these historical dynamics are essential to understanding how a dispute framed as “internal” has evolved into a matter with clear implications for international peace and security.

Key Turning Points Timeline

- **1927–1949** – Chinese Civil War between the KMT and CCP
- **1945** – Taiwan transferred from Japanese rule to the ROC
- **1947** – February 28 Incident and violent repression
- **1949** – ROC retreat to Taiwan; imposition of martial law
- **1954–55 / 1958** – First and Second Taiwan Strait Crises
- **1971** – UNGA Resolution 2758 transfers China’s UN seat to the PRC
- **1987** – Lifting of martial law in Taiwan
- **1995–1996** – Third Taiwan Strait Crisis
- **2016–present** – Post–1992 Consensus escalation and gray zone pressure



The Chinese Civil War and Authoritarian Consolidation

The conflict’s origins lie in the [Chinese Civil War](#) (1927–1949) between the [Kuomintang \(KMT\)](#) and the [Chinese Communist Party \(CCP\)](#), which paused during World War II but resumed after Japan’s surrender.²⁷ Following the transfer of Taiwan’s administration from Japan to the Republic of China (ROC) in 1945, tensions rose between the local population and the KMT authorities,

²⁷ Constitutional Rights Foundation. (2014). The Chinese civil war: Why did the communists win? Bill of Rights in Action, 4. p.1, para.1. <https://teachdemocracy.org/images/pdf/gates/chinese-civil-war.pdf>

culminating in the "[February 28 Incident](#)" of 1947.²⁸ This uprising against government corruption and repression was violently suppressed by KMT troops sent from the mainland, resulting in the deaths of thousands of civilians and the elimination of a generation of social elites.²⁹ This trauma solidified deep ethnic and political fissures between the *benshengren* (native Taiwanese) and the *waishengren* (mainlanders who arrived with the KMT), groups that are distinct in their regional origins and migration history but share a Han Chinese ethnicity.³⁰ Following its defeat on the mainland, the KMT government retreated to Taiwan in 1949 and imposed martial law, which remained in force until 1987, utilising "Temporary Provisions" to suspend the constitution and consolidate authoritarian rule over the island.³¹

This schematic map above (see page 21) illustrates the shifting areas of control between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the final phase of the Chinese Civil War, culminating in the establishment of The People's Republic of China and the retreat of the ROC government to Taiwan.

Here are some videos you can watch on the Chinese Civil War:

▶ Feature History - Chinese Civil War

▶ The Chinese Civil War 1945-1949 (Documentary)

▶ Mao's Art of War: The Long March and the Chinese Civil War

▶ The Chinese Civil War

▶ The Chinese Civil War | Animated History

²⁸ Shattuck, T. J. (2019). *Transitional justice in Taiwan: A belated reckoning with the White Terror*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. p.6, para.2. <https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FPRI-Transitional-Justice-in-Taiwan-final-1.pdf>

²⁹ Shattuck, T. J. (2019). *Transitional justice in Taiwan: A belated reckoning with the White Terror*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. p.6, para.2. <https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FPRI-Transitional-Justice-in-Taiwan-final-1.pdf>;

Chen, C. H., & Chung, H.-H. (2016). *Unfinished democracy: Transitional justice in Taiwan*. *Studia z Polityki Publicznej / Public Policy Studies*, 3(4), p. 21, para. 3. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/6637/663771563001.pdf>

³⁰ Gold, T. B. (2003). *Identity and symbolic power in Taiwan*. In G. Lin (Ed.), *The evolution of a Taiwanese national identity* (Asia Program Special Report No. 114, p. 11, para.2). Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/asia_rpt114.pdf; Rigger, S. (2003).

Disaggregating the concept of national identity. In G. Lin (Ed.), *The evolution of a Taiwanese national identity* (Asia Program Special Report No. 114, p.21, para.3). Woodrow Wilson International Center for

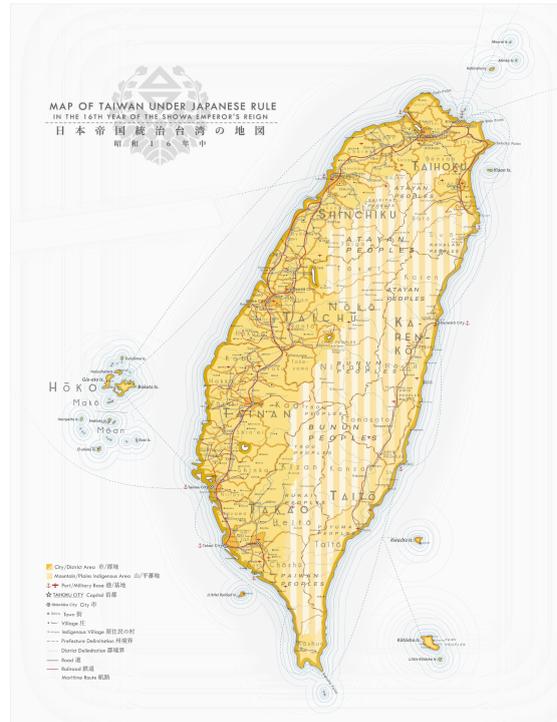
Scholars. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/asia_rpt114.pdf

³¹ Weiner, L. B. (1992). *The impact of Taiwan's political reform on its mainland China policy*. *Washington International Law Journal*, 0(1), p.30, para.2. <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=wilj>; Chen, C. H., & Chung, H.-H. (2016). *Unfinished democracy: Transitional justice in Taiwan*. *Studia z Polityki Publicznej / Public Policy Studies*, 3(4), p.20, para.3. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/6637/663771563001.pdf>

February 28 Incident

While the Civil War defined the borders, it was a single internal explosion that defined the people. To understand why 'reunification' is such a sensitive term today, we must take a deep dive into the February 28 Incident of 1947—the tragic turning point that silenced a generation and birthed the modern Taiwanese identity.

Following the surrender of Japan in 1945, the administration of Taiwan was transferred to the Republic of China (ROC), ending fifty years of Japanese colonial rule.³² Although the Taiwanese populace initially welcomed this "retrocession" with enthusiasm, the relationship between the locals and the new Kuomintang (KMT) administration, led by Governor-General Chen Yi, deteriorated rapidly due to economic instability, government corruption, and cultural clashes.³³ The new administration maintained the Japanese system of state monopolies on essential commodities such as tobacco, sugar, and camphor, a policy that contributed to severe inflation, food shortages, and the collapse of local industries.³⁴ Public discontent was further exacerbated by the conduct of undisciplined troops, the seizure of Japanese properties for private gain, and the systematic exclusion of local Taiwanese from government positions in favor of mainland officials.³⁵



³² Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; *The 228 incident* | 二二八事件紀念基金會. (n.d.). 二二八事件紀念基金會. <https://www.228.org.tw/the228incident>

³³ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

³⁴ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; *228 massacre*. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre/>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

³⁵ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; *228 massacre*. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre/>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

The tensions erupted on the evening of February 27, 1947, in Taipei, following a confrontation involving agents from the Tobacco Monopoly Bureau.³⁶ While attempting to confiscate contraband cigarettes from a vendor named Lin Jiang-mai, an agent struck her head with a pistol when she refused to relinquish her money and goods.³⁷ As an angry crowd gathered to confront the agents over this excessive force, one agent fired a shot while fleeing the scene, killing a bystander named Chen Wen-hsi.³⁸ On the morning of February 28, mass protests demanding the punishment of the agents marched toward the Monopoly Bureau and subsequently the Governor-General's office, where guards opened fire on the demonstrators, resulting in multiple casualties.³⁹ This violence transformed the unrest into an island-wide uprising, as protesters seized control of a radio station to broadcast news of the incident and call for resistance.⁴⁰ To maintain order and negotiate with the administration, local elites and leaders formed "Settlement Committees" in major cities.⁴¹ These committees presented the government with the "[32 Demands](#)" (later expanded to 42), a slate of political reforms including greater regional autonomy, free elections, and the disarming of the military police.⁴²



Although Governor-General Chen Yi publicly engaged in negotiations and feigned interest in these reforms to stall for time, he secretly petitioned Chiang Kai-shek to dispatch military reinforcements from mainland China to suppress the movement, characterizing the unrest as a rebellion fueled by communists and "treacherous" elements.⁴³

³⁶ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; 228 massacre. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre/>

³⁷ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Memorial Foundation of 228. (n.d.). *History of 228 Incident*. Taiwan 228. <https://taiwan228.org/228-history/>

³⁸ Memorial Foundation of 228, n.d., *History of 228 Incident*. Taiwan 228. <https://taiwan228.org/228-history/>; 228 massacre. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre/>; Yeh, H.-I. (2020, March 6). *Who was Chen Wen-hsi? The first victim of the 228 Massacre*. The Taiwan

Gazette. <https://www.taiwangazette.org/news/2020/3/4/who-was-chen-wen-hsi-the-first-victim-of-the-228-massacre>

³⁹ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Memorial Foundation of 228, n.d., *History of 228 Incident*. Taiwan 228. <https://taiwan228.org/228-history/>; 228 massacre. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre>

⁴⁰ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

⁴¹ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; 228 massacre. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre>

⁴² Memorial Foundation of 228, n.d., *History of 228 Incident*. Taiwan 228. <https://taiwan228.org/228-history/>; 228 massacre. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre>

⁴³ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Memorial Foundation of 228, n.d., *History of 228 Incident*. Taiwan 228. <https://taiwan228.org/228-history/>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

The arrival of Nationalist troop reinforcements (the 21st Division) at Keelung on March 8, 1947, marked the start of a systematic military crackdown.⁴⁴ Historical records and witness accounts describe indiscriminate shootings of civilians in the streets, particularly in cities such as Keelung, Taipei, and Chiayi.⁴⁵ In Kaohsiung, Commander Peng Meng-chi, later known as the "Butcher of Kaohsiung," executed local representatives who had attempted to negotiate peace and ordered military operations that resulted in significant civilian deaths at the railway station and city hall.⁴⁶ The suppression campaign, often referred to as "village cleansing," specifically targeted Taiwanese intellectuals, students, and members of the Settlement Committees, effectively removing a generation of the island's potential political leadership.⁴⁷

A government research report from 1992 estimated that between 18,000 and 28,000 people died as a result of the incident, though exact figures remain a subject of debate.⁴⁸ The violent suppression of the 1947 uprising was followed by the imposition of martial law in 1949, which lasted until 1987, a period known as the "White Terror" (see the following section).⁴⁹ During this era, discussion of the February 28 Incident was strictly prohibited, and thousands of individuals were imprisoned or executed for perceived dissent.⁵⁰

In 1995, President Lee Teng-hui issued a formal apology on behalf of the government, and the date was subsequently designated as a national memorial day, with ongoing efforts by the Transitional Justice Commission to exonerate victims and declassify political archives.⁵¹

⁴⁴ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Trustees of the 228 Memorial Foundation. (1997). *Translation of the inscription on the 228 Massacre Monument*. Taiwan Documents Project. http://www.taiwandocuments.org/228_02.htm

⁴⁵ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Trustees of the 228 Memorial Foundation. (1997). *Translation of the inscription on the 228 Massacre Monument*. Taiwan Documents Project. http://www.taiwandocuments.org/228_02.htm; *The 228 massacre in Keelung: "Thrown in the water with his hands tied up"* - 報導者 *The Reporter*. (2017, February 21). 報導者 *the Reporter*. <https://www.twreporter.org/a/photos-228-keelung-english>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

⁴⁶ Memorial Foundation of 228, n.d., *History of 228 Incident*. Taiwan 228. <https://taiwan228.org/228-history/>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

⁴⁷ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Memorial Foundation of 228, n.d., *History of 228 Incident*. Taiwan 228. <https://taiwan228.org/228-history/>; Trustees of the 228 Memorial Foundation. (1997). *Translation of the inscription on the 228 Massacre Monument*. Taiwan Documents Project. http://www.taiwandocuments.org/228_02.htm

⁴⁸ Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident; *Taiwan « World Without Genocide - Making it our legacy*. (n.d.). <https://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/taiwan-chiang-kai-shek-the-white-terror-transitional-justice-and-transnational-repression/>;

⁴⁹ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; Shattuck, T. J. (2019). *Transitional justice in Taiwan: A belated reckoning with the White Terror*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FPRI-Transitional-Justice-in-Taiwan-final-1.pdf>

⁵⁰ Johnson, F. (2025, November 9). 228 Memorial Museum Taiwan: Unveiling a Nation's Past for a Hopeful Future - Wonderful Museums. *Wonderful Museums*. <https://www.wonderfulmuseums.com/museum/228-memorial-museum-taiwan/>; *228 massacre*. (2024, February 28). OFTaiwan. <https://oftaiwan.org/history/white-terror/228-massacre/>; Shattuck, T. J. (2019). *Transitional justice in Taiwan: A belated reckoning with the White Terror*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FPRI-Transitional-Justice-in-Taiwan-final-1.pdf>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

⁵¹ *Transitional justice in Taiwan: A belated reckoning with the White Terror*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/FPRI-Transitional-Justice-in-Taiwan-final-1.pdf>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026, January 21). *February 28 incident*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_28_incident

Here are some videos you can watch on the February 28 Incident:

▶ FEBRUARY 28 INCIDENT - WikiVidi Documentary

▶ February 28 Incident in Taiwan, Every Day / 二二八事件, 每日

▶ February 28 Incident

The White Terror Period (1949–1987)

Following the retreat of the Kuomintang (KMT) government to Taiwan in 1949, the authorities implemented a decades-long period of authoritarian rule known as the White Terror.⁵² This era was legally underpinned by the imposition of martial law in May 1949 and the "Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of National Mobilization for Suppression of the Communist Rebellion".⁵³ Under this framework, specifically the *Statutes for the Punishment of Rebellion* and Article 100 of the Criminal Code, the government utilized the Taiwan Garrison Command and secret police to arrest, interrogate, and prosecute individuals suspected of sedition or communist espionage.⁵⁴

The scale of repression was extensive, with estimates indicating that approximately 140,000 individuals were imprisoned and between 3,000 and 4,000 were executed during this period.⁵⁵ The regime targeted intellectuals and potential political rivals through violent crackdowns, beginning with the April 6 Incident in 1949, where police suppressed student protests at National Taiwan University and Taiwan Provincial College.⁵⁶ By 1960, the authorities arrested Lei Chen, a publisher of the *Free China Journal* who attempted to form an opposition party, sentencing him to ten years in prison to maintain one-party dominance.⁵⁷

Throughout the late 1970s, the *Tangwai* ("outside-the-party") movement began to challenge authoritarian rule, culminating in the Kaohsiung Incident on December 10, 1979.⁵⁸ A crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations organized by *Formosa Magazine* led to the court-martial of key opposition leaders. Political violence continued with high-profile

⁵² Chen, K. W. (2008). Disciplining Taiwan: The Kuomintang's methods of control during the White Terror era (1947-1987). *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly*, 4(4), p. 187. <https://www.tisanet.org/quarterly/4-4-8.pdf>

⁵³ National Human Rights Museum. (n.d.). *White terror period*, "Background" section. https://www.nhrm.gov.tw/w/nhrmEN/White_Terror_Period

⁵⁴ National Human Rights Museum. (n.d.). *White terror period*, "Unfolding 40 Years" section. https://www.nhrm.gov.tw/w/nhrmEN/White_Terror_Period; Wikipedia contributors. (2025a). *First Taiwan Strait Crisis*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Taiwan_Strait_Crisis

⁵⁵ Wikipedia contributors. (2025b). *White Terror (Taiwan)*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, para.2. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Terror_\(Taiwan\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Terror_(Taiwan))

⁵⁶ National Museum of Taiwan Literature. (n.d.). *Post-WWII era (1945 to present)*. Virtual Museum of Taiwan Literature, "1949, the April 6 Incident" section. <https://tlvm.nmtl.gov.tw/en/Theme/ExhibitionArticleCont?Exbid=241>

⁵⁷ Hoover Institution Library & Archives. (2025). *Lei Chen 雷震 papers, 1960-1977*. Online Archive of California, "Scope and content" section. <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1g5034dw>

⁵⁸ Chen, K. W. (2008). Disciplining Taiwan: The Kuomintang's methods of control during the White Terror era (1947-1987). *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly*, 4(4), 185-210. <https://www.tisanet.org/quarterly/4-4-8.pdf>

tragedies such as the 1980 murder of the mother and twin daughters of detained activist Lin Yi-hsiung, and the 1981 death of Professor Chen Wen-cheng following an interrogation.⁵⁹ The era formally concluded with the lifting of martial law on July 15, 1987, allowing for the legalization of opposition parties and the revitalization of native languages and culture.⁶⁰

Here are some videos you can watch on the White Terror Period:

▶ What Was The White Terror In Taiwan? - History of Communism

▶ White Terror in Taiwan - Cold War DOCUMENTARY

▶ The Forgotten Dictatorship: Taiwan's 38-Year "White Terror"

Cold War Era & Shifting Alliances (1950–1979)

Taiwan's status during the Cold War was defined by its security relationship with the United States and the contest for legitimacy between Taipei and Beijing.⁶¹ The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 prompted the U.S. President Harry Truman to neutralize the Taiwan Strait, preventing an immediate invasion by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and reintegrating the Republic of China (ROC) into the U.S. security architecture. This commitment was tested during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954–1955) and the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis (1958), during which the People's Liberation Army (PLA) bombarded the offshore islands of Kinmen and Matsu.⁶² In response, the United States and the ROC signed a Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954, and the U.S. Congress passed the Formosa Resolution.⁶³

A pivotal shift in international recognition occurred on October 25, 1971, with the passage of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758. The resolution recognized the representatives of the PRC as the only legitimate representatives of China to the UN and expelled the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek.⁶⁴ Critically, while the resolution addressed the issue of China's representation, it did not contain the word "Taiwan," nor did it explicitly address the political status of Taiwan or establish PRC sovereignty over the island.⁶⁵ Beijing

⁵⁹ National Museum of Taiwan Literature. (n.d.). *Post-WWII era (1945 to present)*. Virtual Museum of Taiwan Literature. <https://tlvm.nmml.gov.tw/en/Theme/ExhibitionArticleCont?Exbid=241>

⁶⁰ National Museum of Taiwan Literature. (n.d.). *Post-WWII era (1945 to present)*. Virtual Museum of Taiwan Literature. <https://tlvm.nmml.gov.tw/en/Theme/ExhibitionArticleCont?Exbid=241>; National Human Rights Museum. (n.d.). *White terror period, "Unfolding 40 Years" section*. https://www.nhrm.gov.tw/w/nhrmEN/White_Terror_Period

⁶¹ Gallagher, R. M. (1997). *The Taiwan Strait crisis*. U.S. Naval War College, Center for Naval Warfare Studies. https://nhc.duracloud.org/durastore/collections/RG37_05_06_05_01.pdf

⁶² Wikipedia contributors. (2025a). *First Taiwan Strait Crisis*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Taiwan_Strait_Crisis

⁶³ Gallagher, R. M. (1997). *The Taiwan Strait crisis*. U.S. Naval War College, Center for Naval Warfare Studies. https://nhc.duracloud.org/durastore/collections/RG37_05_06_05_01.pdf

⁶⁴ Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China. (2024, October 2). *UNGA Resolution 2758 factsheet: What you need to know*. <https://www.ipac.global/campaigns/unra-resolution-2758-factsheet-what-you-need-to-know>

⁶⁵ Yu, M. (2025, May 28). The fraudulent UN Resolution 2758 and the courage to recognize Taiwan. *The Washington Times*. Hudson Institute. <https://www.hudson.org/corruption/fraudulent-un-resolution-2758-courage-recognize-taiwan-miles-yu>

currently asserts that the resolution confirmed its "One China" principle, a claim contested by Taipei and various international legislative alliances.⁶⁶

In 1979, the United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, terminating the Mutual Defense Treaty.⁶⁷ To maintain unofficial relations and security commitments, the U.S. Congress enacted the [Taiwan Relations Act \(TRA\)](#) of 1979, mandating that the U.S. provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive nature. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan issued [the "Six Assurances" to Taiwan](#) to clarify U.S. policy during negotiations with Beijing. These assurances stated that the United States had not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales, had not agreed to consult with the PRC on arms sales, would not play a mediation role between Taipei and Beijing, had not agreed to revise the TRA, had not altered its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan, and would not exert pressure on Taiwan to negotiate with the PRC.⁶⁸

The Third Taiwan Strait Crisis (1995–1996)

Tensions escalated significantly in 1995 after ROC President Lee Teng-hui visited his alma mater, Cornell University, in the United States.⁶⁹ Beijing viewed this visit as a move toward independence and responded with a series of missile tests and military exercises in the waters surrounding Taiwan.⁷⁰ The PRC announced missile impact zones near the key ports of Keelung and Kaohsiung, disrupting shipping and causing significant economic anxiety.

The exercises were timed to coincide with Taiwan's first direct presidential election in March 1996, aiming to intimidate the electorate and reduce support for Lee Teng-hui. In response to the coercion, the United States deployed two aircraft carrier battle groups—centered on the USS *Independence* and USS *Nimitz*—to the region, the largest display of U.S. military power in Asia since the Vietnam War. The U.S. intervention signaled that it would not tolerate reckless military action. Ultimately, Beijing's strategy failed to sway the election; Lee Teng-hui won a landslide victory with 54% of the vote, consolidating Taiwan's democratic legitimacy.⁷¹

Taiwan's Democratic Evolution (2000–2024)

The early 21st century saw Taiwan transition into a mature democracy with regular transfers of power. In 2000, Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was

⁶⁶ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. (2024). *Chapter 9: Taiwan*. In *2019 Annual report to Congress* (Annual Report to Congress 2024, pp. 1-75). U.S. Government Publishing Office https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Chapter_9--Taiwan.pdf

⁶⁷ Gallagher, R. M. (1997). *The Taiwan Strait crisis*. U.S. Naval War College, Center for Naval Warfare Studies. https://nhc.duracloud.org/durastore/collections/RG37_05_06_05_01.pdf

⁶⁸ Lawrence, S. V. (2025, February 18). *President Reagan's six assurances to Taiwan* (In Focus IF11665). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11665>

⁶⁹ Gallagher, R. M. (1997). *The Taiwan Strait crisis*. U.S. Naval War College, Center for Naval Warfare Studies. https://nhc.duracloud.org/durastore/collections/RG37_05_06_05_01.pdf

⁷⁰ Wikipedia contributors. (2025c). *Third Taiwan Strait Crisis*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_Taiwan_Strait_Crisis

⁷¹ Gallagher, R. M. (1997). *The Taiwan Strait crisis*. U.S. Naval War College, Center for Naval Warfare Studies. https://nhc.duracloud.org/durastore/collections/RG37_05_06_05_01.pdf

elected president, ending fifty years of KMT rule.⁷² His administration promoted a distinct Taiwanese identity and asserted that Taiwan and China were "one country on each side," leading to heightened tensions with Beijing and a freeze in semi-official talks.⁷³ During this period, Beijing intensified efforts to isolate Taiwan diplomatically, poaching allies such as Nauru and others.⁷⁴

Cross-strait relations stabilized under the KMT presidency of Ma Ying-jeou (2008–2016), who adopted the "[1992 Consensus](#)" and a policy of rapprochement. This period witnessed the signing of 23 economic agreements and the establishment of direct flights.⁷⁵ However, public anxiety over economic integration with China culminated in the [2014 Sunflower Movement](#), where students occupied the Legislative Yuan to block the ratification of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement.⁷⁶ This movement paved the way for the DPP's return to power in 2016 under Tsai Ing-wen.⁷⁷

The Tsai administration (2016–2024) refused to affirm the 1992 Consensus, prompting Beijing to suspend official communication and poach diplomatic allies, including Panama, El Salvador, and Honduras.⁷⁸ Military pressure also escalated; following a visit by the U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August 2022, the PLA conducted massive live-fire drills that effectively erased the tacit "median line" of the Taiwan Strait. PLA aircraft began crossing this line on a near-daily basis, establishing a new status quo of constant military pressure.⁷⁹

The Lai Ching-te Era (2024–Present): Rising Tensions

In January 2024, Lai Ching-te of the DPP was elected president with 40.05% of the vote, marking an unprecedented third consecutive term for the party, although the DPP lost its legislative majority.⁸⁰ Beijing responded immediately to the election of the candidate it labeled a "separatist"; two days after the election, Nauru severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan

⁷² Fell, D. (2024, January 25). Continuity and change in Taiwan's historic 2024 national elections. *Prospects & Perspectives*, (4). <https://www.pf.org.tw/en/pfen/33-10530.html>

⁷³ Curtis, J., & King, W. (2023, August 14). *Taiwan: Relations with China* (Research Briefing). House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9844/CBP-9844.pdf>

⁷⁴ Bock, J., & Parilla, H. (2024, August 21). Why countries abandon Taiwan: Indicators for a diplomatic switch. *Global Taiwan Brief*, 9(16). Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2024/08/why-countries-abandon-taiwan-indicators-for-a-diplomatic-switch/>

⁷⁵ Curtis, J., & King, W. (2023, August 14). *Taiwan: Relations with China* (Research Briefing). House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9844/CBP-9844.pdf>

⁷⁶ National Museum of Taiwan Literature. (n.d.). *Post-WWII era (1945 to present)*. Virtual Museum of Taiwan Literature. <https://tlvm.nmtl.gov.tw/en/Theme/ExhibitionArticleCont?Exbid=241>

⁷⁷ Templeman, K. (2022). How democratic is Taiwan? Evaluating twenty years of political change. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, 18(2), 1-24. <https://www.tfd.org.tw/backend/upload/publish/quarterly/ed610b40af4f8b9536da1b670f5e774e.pdf>

⁷⁸ Curtis, J., & King, W. (2023, August 14). *Taiwan: Relations with China* (Research Briefing). House of Commons Library. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9844/CBP-9844.pdf>; Bock, J., & Parilla, H. (2024, August 21). Why countries abandon Taiwan: Indicators for a diplomatic switch. *Global Taiwan Brief*, 9(16). Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2024/08/why-countries-abandon-taiwan-indicators-for-a-diplomatic-switch/>

⁷⁹ Lewis, B., & Shattuck, T. J. (2024, September 4). A new frontier: PRC flight activity to the east of Taiwan. *Global Taiwan Brief*, 9(17). Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2024/09/a-new-frontier-prc-flight-activity-to-taiwans-east/>

⁸⁰ Wikipedia contributors. (2024). *2024 Taiwanese presidential election*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Taiwanese_presidential_election

in favor of the PRC.⁸¹ Tensions further escalated in February 2024 when a Chinese speedboat capsized while fleeing the Taiwan Coast Guard near Kinmen, resulting in two deaths.⁸² The China Coast Guard (CCG) used the incident to reject the existence of "prohibited and restricted waters" around Kinmen, commencing regular patrols that challenged Taiwan's jurisdiction.⁸³

Following President Lai's inauguration in May 2024, where he stated that the ROC and PRC are "not subordinate to each other" based on the ROC Constitution, the PLA launched the "Joint Sword-2024A" exercises.⁸⁴ These drills focused on joint seizure of power and blockading key ports. Later in the year, the "Joint Sword-2024B" exercises integrated the China Coast Guard into encirclement maneuvers for the first time.⁸⁵

Beijing has also expanded its "gray zone" warfare and legal warfare tactics. In June 2024, Chinese authorities issued new judicial guidelines threatening the death penalty for "diehard Taiwan independence separatists," attempting to assert criminal jurisdiction over Taiwanese nationals.⁸⁶ Militarily, the PLA has normalized incursions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), with a record 153 aircraft detected in a single day during the October 2024 drills.⁸⁷ In response, the Lai administration has sought to shore up international support, emphasizing values-based diplomacy and the stability of the global semiconductor supply chain.⁸⁸

⁸¹ Bock, J., & Parilla, H. (2024, August 21). Why countries abandon Taiwan: Indicators for a diplomatic switch. *Global Taiwan Brief*, 9(16). Global Taiwan Institute.

⁸² Wikipedia contributors. (2024). *2024 Kinmen Chinese motorboat capsizing incident*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Kinmen_Chinese_motorboat_capsizing_incident

⁸³ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. (2024). *Chapter 9: Taiwan*. In *2019 Annual report to Congress* (Annual Report to Congress 2024, pp. 1-75). U.S. Government Publishing Office https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Chapter_9--Taiwan.pdf

⁸⁴ Global Taiwan Institute. (2024). *Global Taiwan Brief Vol. 9, Issue 12*. Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GTB-9.12-PDF.pdf>; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. (2024). *Chapter 9: Taiwan*. In *2019 Annual report to Congress* (Annual Report to Congress 2024, pp. 1-75). U.S. Government Publishing Office. https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Chapter_9--Taiwan.pdf

⁸⁵ Sugiura, Y. (2025). *Analysis of "Joint Sword 2024B": Focusing on changes & continuity from "Joint Sword 2024A"* (SPF China Observer No. 58). The Sasakawa Peace Foundation. <https://www.spf.org/spf-china-observer/en/document-detail058.html>

⁸⁶ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. (2024). *Chapter 9: Taiwan*. In *2019 Annual report to Congress* (Annual Report to Congress 2024, pp. 1-75). U.S. Government Publishing Office https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/Chapter_9--Taiwan.pdf

⁸⁷ Sugiura, Y. (2025). *Analysis of "Joint Sword 2024B": Focusing on changes & continuity from "Joint Sword 2024A"* (SPF China Observer No. 58). The Sasakawa Peace Foundation. <https://www.spf.org/spf-china-observer/en/document-detail058.html>

⁸⁸ Fulco, M. (2025, April 14). *Taiwan deepens engagement with diplomatic allies*. Taiwan Business TOPICS. American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan. <https://topics.amcham.com.tw/2025/04/taiwan-deepens-engagement-with-diplomatic-allies/>

THE GEOPOLITICAL FRAMEWORK



The "One China" Labyrinth

The central source of friction in the Taiwan Strait lies in the conflicting interpretations of the term "One China." While the phrase is ubiquitous in diplomatic discourse, it masks two fundamentally different legal positions held by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States. It is

crucial to distinguish between Beijing's "One China Principle" and Washington's "One China Policy," as conflating these terms obscures the legal nuances essential to the dispute.⁸⁹

The PRC adheres to the "One China Principle" (*Yige Zhongguo Yuanze*), a tripartite legal axiom asserting that there is only one China in the world, the PRC is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. From Beijing's perspective, the Republic of China (ROC) ceased to hold legal status in 1949, and the PRC succeeded in all sovereign rights, including title over Taiwan.⁹⁰ Consequently, Beijing views any assertion of Taiwanese statehood as a violation of its territorial integrity and demands that other nations accept this principle as a strict prerequisite for diplomatic relations.⁹¹

In contrast, the United States operates under its own "One China Policy." This policy is not synonymous with Beijing's principle. While the United States formally recognizes the PRC as the sole legal government of China, it maintains a distinct legal reservation regarding the status of the island itself. In the Joint Communiqués that normalized relations, the United States stated only that it "acknowledges" the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China. In the authoritative Chinese text of the 1979 Communiqué, the word used for "acknowledge" is *ren shi* (to take note of), distinct from *cheng ren* (to recognize), which is used for the PRC government.⁹² By refusing to formally recognize Beijing's sovereignty over the island, the US position treats Taiwan's status as legally undetermined, contingent upon a peaceful resolution by the people on both sides of the Strait.⁹³

⁸⁹ Lawrence, S. V. (2025, August 18). *The U.S. "One-China" Policy and Taiwan* (CRS In Focus IF12503). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12503>

⁹⁰ China/Taiwan: Evolution of the "One China" Policy—Key Statements from Washington, Beijing, and Taipei (2015). "PRC's Second Taiwan White Paper and 'Three Ifs'" (dated February 21, 2000). In *CRS Reports*. <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL30341.html>

⁹¹ *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. (2022). https://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202208/t20220810_10740168.htm

⁹² Kan, S. A. (2001). *China/Taiwan: Evolution of the "One China" policy—Key statements from Washington, Beijing, and Taipei* (CRS Report No. RL30341). Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress. <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL30341.html>

⁹³ Lawrence, S. V. (2025). *Taiwan and the international community* (CRS In Focus IF12646). Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12646>; Goldstein, L. (2025, October 19). *Target Taiwan: One China and cross-strait stability*. Defense Priorities. <https://www.defensepriorities.org/explainers/target-taiwan-one-china-and-cross-strait-stability/>

Complicating this landscape is the "1992 Consensus," a contested political understanding between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Historically summarized by the KMT as "One China, Respective Interpretations," this formula allowed both sides to claim to represent "China" while tabling the issue of sovereignty. However, the current Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) administration in Taiwan rejects the consensus, arguing it lacks a binding legal basis. Furthermore, recent PRC statements have increasingly equated the consensus directly with the "One China Principle," narrowing the space for the "respective interpretations" that previously allowed for constructive ambiguity.⁹⁴

Here are some videos you can watch on The "One China" Labyrinth:

 'One China' explained

 What is One China Policy? | CNBC Explains

❖ **The US Framework: The Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances**

Following the severance of official diplomatic ties with the ROC in 1979, the United States enacted the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). This distinct domestic legislation provides the legal basis for the United States to maintain commercial, cultural, and other relations with Taiwan as if it were a foreign state, without conferring formal diplomatic recognition.⁹⁵ Crucially, the TRA links the US decision to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC directly to the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined solely by peaceful means. It mandates that the United States provide Taiwan with "arms of a defensive character" and maintain the US capacity to resist any use of force or coercion that would jeopardize Taiwan's security or social system.⁹⁶

To balance the diplomatic concessions made to Beijing in the Joint Communiqués (specifically the 1982 communiqué regarding the reduction of arms sales), President Ronald Reagan issued the "Six Assurances" to Taiwan in 1982. These assurances act as a critical legal counterbalance, clarifying that the United States has not set a date for ending arms sales, will not consult with the PRC prior to making arms sales decisions, and will not mediate between Taipei and Beijing.⁹⁷ Most importantly regarding status, the Six Assurances explicitly state that the United States has not altered its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan—reaffirming that Washington views the status of the island as unsettled and not legally subservient to the PRC.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Wikipedia contributors. (2026a, January 19). *1992 consensus*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1992_Consensus

⁹⁵ United States Congress. (1979, April 10). *Taiwan Relations Act* (Public Law 96-8, 93 Stat. 14). United States Government Publishing Office. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479>; Feldman, H. (2007, October 2). *President Reagan's Six Assurances to Taiwan and Their Meaning Today*. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/president-reagans-six-assurances-taiwan-and-their-meaning-today>

⁹⁶ United States Congress. (1979, April 10). *Taiwan Relations Act* (Public Law 96-8, 93 Stat. 14). United States Government Publishing Office. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479>

⁹⁷ Feldman, H. (2007, October 2). *President Reagan's Six Assurances to Taiwan and Their Meaning Today*. The Heritage Foundation. <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/president-reagans-six-assurances-taiwan-and-their-meaning-today>

⁹⁸ Lawrence, S. V. (2025, February 18). *President Reagan's Six Assurances to Taiwan* (CRS In Focus IF11665). Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11665>

This interplay between the TRA, the Communiqués, and the Six Assurances creates a posture known as "Strategic Ambiguity." This policy is designed to dual-deter: by refusing to explicitly guarantee US military intervention, Washington deters Taiwan from declaring *de jure* independence; simultaneously, by maintaining the legal mandate and capacity to intervene under the TRA, Washington deters the PRC from attempting unification by force.⁹⁹

❖ International Law and the UN Framework

The battle for Taiwan's international legal personality centers on the interpretation of [UN General Assembly Resolution 2758](#), passed in 1971. The text of the resolution recognized the representatives of the PRC as the only legitimate representatives of China to the UN and expelled "the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek".¹⁰⁰

The PRC interprets Resolution 2758 as a definitive settlement of Taiwan's sovereignty. Beijing argues that by recognizing the PRC as "China," the UN implicitly expelled the ROC from all legal standing, reducing Taiwan to the status of a province with no right to separate representation in international organizations. Beijing cites opinions from the UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA), specifically memoranda from 2010, to support the view that the UN system considers Taiwan to be an integral part of China with no separate status.¹⁰¹

However, the ROC government and the United States contest this interpretation, emphasizing that the text of Resolution 2758 omits any mention of "Taiwan," addressing only the expulsion of the "representatives of Chiang Kai-shek." They argue that the resolution settled the issue of representation (credentials for the China seat) rather than sovereignty (territorial title over the island).¹⁰² Under this interpretation, the resolution's silence on Taiwan means it does not preclude Taiwan's meaningful participation in the UN system, nor does it establish Beijing's sovereignty over the island as a matter of international law.¹⁰³

Finally, delegates must consider the criteria for statehood under the Montevideo Convention (1933). Taiwan fulfills the declarative criteria for statehood:

⁹⁹ Goldstein, L. (2025, October 16). *Target Taiwan: One China and cross-strait stability*. Defense Priorities. <https://www.defensepriorities.org/explainers/target-taiwan-one-china-and-cross-strait-stability>; Kan, S. A. (2015, January 5). *China/Taiwan: Evolution of the "One China" Policy—Key Statements from Washington, Beijing, and Taipei* (CRS Report No. RL30341). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL30341.html>

¹⁰⁰ United Nations General Assembly. (1971, October 25). *Resolution 2758 (XXVI): Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations*. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/192054?ln=en&v=pdf>

¹⁰¹ Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council & The State Council Information Office. (2022, August). *The Taiwan question and China's reunification in the new era* [White Paper]. The People's Republic of China. http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgyw/202208/t20220810_10740168.htm

deLisle, J., & Glaser, B. S. (2024, April). *Why UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 does not establish Beijing's "one China" principle: A legal perspective*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States.

https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/GMF_UNGA%20Res.%202758_April%202024%20Report.pdf

¹⁰² Lawrence, S. V. (2025, August 25). *Taiwan and the international community* (CRS In Focus IF12646). Congressional Research Service. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF12646>; deLisle, J., & Glaser, B. S. (2024, April). *Why UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 does not establish Beijing's "one China" principle: A legal perspective*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States.

https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/GMF_UNGA%20Res.%202758_April%202024%20Report.pdf

¹⁰³ deLisle, J., & Glaser, B. S. (2024, April). *Why UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 does not establish Beijing's "one China" principle: A legal perspective*. The German Marshall Fund of the United States.

https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2024-04/GMF_UNGA%20Res.%202758_April%202024%20Report.pdf

it possesses a permanent population, a defined territory, a functioning government, and the capacity to enter into relations with other states. However, it lacks widespread diplomatic recognition, which is the constitutive element often required for participation in the UN system.¹⁰⁴ This creates a dichotomy where Taiwan operates as a fully functional independent state in practice (*de facto*), while being excluded from the formal legal architecture of the international community (*de jure*) -very important!- due to the PRC's successful promotion of its interpretation of Resolution 2758.¹⁰⁵

The Legal Battlefield: UNCLOS & The Status of the Taiwan Strait

a. The Legal Framework: UNCLOS as the "Constitution of the Oceans" vs. The Reality of Non-Signatories

The governance of the world's oceans is primarily dictated by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), often described as the "Constitution of the Oceans." This legal regime codified the extension of coastal state sovereignty while attempting to preserve traditional maritime freedoms. A central paradox in the application of this framework to the Taiwan Strait is the status of the primary disputants. The People's Republic of China (PRC) ratified UNCLOS in 1996, yet it interprets the Convention's security provisions in ways that many legal scholars argue contradict the treaty's text, specifically regarding the regulation of foreign military activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).¹⁰⁶ Conversely, the United States remains a non-signatory, having never ratified the treaty due to domestic political opposition regarding deep seabed mining provisions.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, Washington relies heavily on UNCLOS, asserting that its navigation and overflight provisions reflect binding "customary international law" that all nations, including the United States, have an obligation to uphold.¹⁰⁸

This legal divergence plays out across a specific geographical reality that prevents the Taiwan Strait from being legally classified as a closed body of water. The Taiwan Strait varies in width from approximately 70 nautical miles (approx. 130 km) at its narrowest point to 220 nm (approx. 407 km) at its widest, with an average width

¹⁰⁴ deLisle, J. (2025, June 28). *Talking points: What does the United Nations say about Taiwan?* U.S.-Asia Law Institute. <https://usali.org/publications/talking-points-what-does-the-united-nations-say-about-taiwan>

¹⁰⁵ Beena, Dr. (2024). China's claim on Taiwan: An international law perspective. *Journal of the United Service Institution of India, CLIV*(638), 627–639. <https://usiofindia.org/pdf/oct8.pdf>

¹⁰⁶ Pedrozo, R. (2010). Military Activities in the EEZ: A U.S.-China Dialogue on Security and International Law in the Maritime Commons. *China Maritime Studies Institute*, 7.

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=cmsi-red-books>

¹⁰⁷ Gallo, W. (2016). Why Hasn't the US Signed the Law of the Sea Treaty? *VOA*

News. <https://www.voanews.com/a/united-states-sign-law-sea-treaty/3364342.html>

¹⁰⁸ Navy JAG. (2026). Law of the Sea. *U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps*.

<https://as-jece-cms-dev-usgva.azurewebsites.us/national-security/law-of-the-sea/>; Pedrozo, R. (2010). Military Activities in the EEZ: A U.S.-China Dialogue on Security and International Law in the Maritime Commons. *China Maritime Studies Institute*, 7. <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=cmsi-red-books>

often cited around 97 nm (~180 km).¹⁰⁹ Under UNCLOS Article 3, coastal states are entitled to a territorial sea extending no more than 12 nm from their baselines.¹¹⁰ Even if one accepts the PRC's political claim of sovereignty over Taiwan, the combined territorial seas of the mainland and the island would only cover 24 nm of the waterway. Consequently, even accounting for 12 nm territorial seas on both sides, a significant "central corridor" of water—ranging roughly from 46 nm to over 100 nm wide—remains beyond territorial jurisdiction.¹¹¹

Under the standard interpretation of UNCLOS held by the United States and most maritime powers, this central corridor falls within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). While coastal states possess "sovereign rights" regarding the exploration and exploitation of natural resources in the EEZ under UNCLOS Article 56, Article 58 explicitly preserves for all states the "high seas freedoms" of navigation and overflight referred to in Article 87.¹¹² Therefore, legally speaking, this corridor functions as international waters for navigational purposes, allowing foreign warships to operate freely without coastal state permission. This interpretation is reinforced by UNCLOS Article 36, which stipulates that the regime of "transit passage"—a more restrictive regime used for narrow straits completely covered by territorial seas—does not apply if there is a route of similar convenience through an EEZ or high seas within the strait.¹¹³

b. The Dispute of Definitions: Beijing's "Internal Waters" vs. The Allied "Central Corridor"

The status of this central corridor became the focal point of a significant legal escalation on June 13, 2022. In a Foreign Ministry statement, PRC spokesperson Wang Wenbin explicitly rejected the United States' definition of the waterway as international waters. He asserted that the Taiwan Strait is divided into four distinct zones extending from the Chinese coast outward: internal waters, territorial sea,

¹⁰⁹ USINDOPACOM (U.S. Indo-Pacific Command). (2022). USINDOPACOM J06/SJA TACAID Series: Legal Status of the Taiwan Strait.

<https://www.pacom.mil/Portals/55/Documents/pdf/J06%20TACAID%20-%20TAIWAN%20STRAIT.pdf?ver=Iquptm61jOabuHldAHkiA%3D%3D>; Li, T. (2023). Is the Taiwan Strait open to international vessels under international law? *Radio Free Asia*. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/afcl/fact-check-taiwan-strait-04202023105536.html>

¹¹⁰ United Nations. (1982). *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*.

https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf; Parker, E. C. (2024). Policing the Strait: How China's Policing of the Taiwan Strait Violates the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. *American University International Law Review*, 39(4). <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/auilr/vol39/iss4/7/>

¹¹¹ Lott, A. (2022). *Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea: Use of Force and Discriminatory Navigational Restrictions in Straits*. Brill Nijhoff. [Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea](https://brill.com/ Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea)<https://brill.com/ Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea>

¹¹² United Nations. (1982). *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*.

https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf; Pedrozo, R. (2010). Military Activities in the EEZ: A U.S.-China Dialogue on Security and International Law in the Maritime Commons. *China Maritime Studies Institute*, 7. <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1006&context=cmsi-red-books>

¹¹³ Lott, A. (2022). *Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea: Use of Force and Discriminatory Navigational Restrictions in Straits*. Brill Nijhoff. [Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea](https://brill.com/ Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea)<https://brill.com/ Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea>; USINDOPACOM (U.S. Indo-Pacific Command). (2022). USINDOPACOM J06/SJA TACAID Series: Legal Status of the Taiwan Strait. <https://www.pacom.mil/Portals/55/Documents/pdf/J06%20TACAID%20-%20TAIWAN%20STRAIT.pdf?ver=Iquptm61jOabuHldAHkiA%3D%3D>

contiguous zone, and Exclusive Economic Zone.¹¹⁴ Crucially, Wang declared that China exercises "sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction" over the entire water column.¹¹⁵ He further stated that the concept of "international waters" is a "false claim" with no legal basis in the international law of the sea, designed by foreign powers to threaten China's sovereignty.¹¹⁶

This position contrasts sharply with the "High Seas Freedoms" interpretation maintained by the United States and Taiwan. The U.S. Department of State rebutted Beijing's 2022 claim by defining the Strait as an "international waterway" where Article 87 freedoms apply.¹¹⁷ Allied nations refer to this high seas/EEZ corridor as "international waters"—a term Beijing rejects—to emphasize that high seas freedoms apply, noting that while the term does not appear *verbatim* in UNCLOS, it is a standard operational term used to describe all waters seaward of the territorial sea.¹¹⁸ Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) concurrently rejected Beijing's claim, stating the Strait constitutes international waters beyond the 12 nm territorial limit and that Beijing's attempt to downgrade the status of the strait to its own EEZ reveals an ambition to annex Taiwan.¹¹⁹

Beijing's legal maneuver represents a form of "jurisdictional creep" or "lawfare." By rejecting the binary distinction between territorial seas and international waters, China attempts to treat the EEZ not as a zone of resource rights where navigation is free, but as a zone of security jurisdiction where foreign military activities can be regulated or prohibited. Chinese domestic law, specifically the 1998 Law on the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf, implies that foreign entities must comply with Chinese laws in the EEZ, a requirement China interprets as allowing it to regulate military surveys and reconnaissance.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC. (2022). Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin's Regular Press Conference on June 13, 2022. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202409/t20240909_11487817.html; Li, T. (2023). Is the Taiwan Strait open to international vessels under international law? *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/afcl/fact-check-taiwan-strait-04202023105536.html>

¹¹⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC. (2022). Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin's Regular Press Conference on June 13, 2022. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrbt/lxjzh/202409/t20240909_11487817.html

¹¹⁶ Li, T. (2023). Is the Taiwan Strait open to international vessels under international law? *Radio Free Asia*.

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/afcl/fact-check-taiwan-strait-04202023105536.html>; Glenzer, M. (2025). *Taiwan: legal status, legitimacy, and lawfare*. *Washington International Law Journal*, 34(2)

<https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1956&context=wilj>

¹¹⁷ Glenzer, M. (2025). *Taiwan: legal status, legitimacy, and lawfare*. *Washington International Law Journal*, 34(2)

<https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1956&context=wilj>

¹¹⁸ USINDOPACOM (U.S. Indo-Pacific Command). (2022). USINDOPACOM J06/SJA TACAID Series: Legal Status of the Taiwan Strait.

<https://www.pacom.mil/Portals/55/Documents/pdf/J06%20TACAID%20-%20TAIWAN%20STRAIT.pdf?ver=Jquptm61jOabuHldAHkiA%3D%3D>; Pedrozo, R. (2022). Prof. Pete Pedrozo on "Unpacking the Distinction: One China Principle v. One China Policy". *Lawfire*.

<https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2022/08/19/prof-pete-pedrozo-on-unpacking-the-distinction-one-china-principle-v-one-china-policy/>

<https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2022/08/19/prof-pete-pedrozo-on-unpacking-the-distinction-one-china-principle-v-one-china-policy/>

¹¹⁹ MOFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China). (2022). MOFA solemnly reiterates that the Taiwan Strait constitutes international waters, refuting false claims made by Chinese officials during recent meetings with the US. https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1328&s=98011

¹²⁰ Pedrozo, R. (2022). Prof. Pete Pedrozo on "Unpacking the Distinction: One China Principle v. One China Policy". *Lawfire*.

<https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2022/08/19/prof-pete-pedrozo-on-unpacking-the-distinction-one-china-principle-v-one-china-policy/>; Parker, E. C. (2024). Policing the Strait: How China's Policing of the Taiwan Strait Violates the U.N. Convention on

c. Operational Consequences: Blockade vs. Law Enforcement Quarantine

The divergence in legal definitions creates a dangerous "sovereignty trap" with profound operational consequences for future conflicts. If the international community were to accept Beijing's 2022 assertion that the Strait is not international waters, but rather a zone under full Chinese jurisdiction, the legal character of a U.S. warship transit changes fundamentally. Under China's domestic law—specifically the 1992 Law on the Territorial Sea and the 2021 Coast Guard Law—foreign warships require prior permission to enter Chinese territorial waters.¹²¹ If the entire Strait is viewed through the lens of Chinese sovereignty, a U.S. transit without permission could be framed by Beijing not as an exercise of freedom of navigation, but as an act of aggression or an invasion of sovereign territory.¹²²

This legal framing grants the PRC a strategic advantage in scenarios short of total war. If Beijing asserts full jurisdiction over the Strait, it can frame an interdiction of foreign shipping not as a military "blockade"—which is defined as an act of war under international law (UN Charter Article 2(4))—but as a domestic "law enforcement quarantine".¹²³ In this scenario, China's Maritime Safety Administration (MSA) or China Coast Guard (CCG) could board and inspect vessels in the central corridor under the guise of enforcing domestic customs, safety, or environmental laws.¹²⁴ The 2021 Coast Guard Law specifically authorizes the CCG to use force against foreign vessels in waters under China's "jurisdiction," a deliberately vague term Beijing applies to the entire Strait.¹²⁵

By labeling such actions as routine police operations within its own jurisdiction, Beijing complicates the legal basis for a U.S. military response. This distinction is critical: a military "blockade" is a recognized act of war (*casus belli*),

the Law of the Sea. *American University International Law Review*, 39(4).

<https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/auilr/vol39/iss4/7/>; Zou, K. (2000). Redefining the Legal Status of the Taiwan Strait. *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*, 15(2).

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238425389_Redefining_the_Legal_Status_of_the_Taiwan_Strait

¹²¹ Zou, K. (2000). Redefining the Legal Status of the Taiwan Strait. *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*, 15(2). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238425389_Redefining_the_Legal_Status_of_the_Taiwan_Strait;

Famularo, J. (2025). China Maritime Report #48: Great Inspectations: PRC Maritime Law Enforcement Operations in the Taiwan Strait. *CMSI China Maritime Reports*, 48. U.S. Naval War College.

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/48/>

¹²² Pedrozo, R. (2022). Prof. Pete Pedrozo on "Unpacking the Distinction: One China Principle v. One China Policy". *Lawfire*.

<https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2022/08/19/prof-pete-pedrozo-on-unpacking-the-distinction-one-china-principle-v-one-china-policy/>

¹²³ Famularo, J. (2025). China Maritime Report #48: Great Inspectations: PRC Maritime Law Enforcement Operations in the Taiwan Strait. *CMSI China Maritime Reports*, 48. U.S. Naval War College.

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/48/>

¹²⁴ Khan, M. I. (2026). Law enforcement issues in the disputed maritime areas: apples and pears for the coastal states. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 12.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2025.1690709/full>; Parker, E. C. (2024).

Policing the Strait: How China's Policing of the Taiwan Strait Violates the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea.

American University International Law Review, 39(4). <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/auilr/vol39/iss4/7/>

¹²⁵ Famularo, J. (2025). China Maritime Report #48: Great Inspectations: PRC Maritime Law Enforcement Operations in the Taiwan Strait. *CMSI China Maritime Reports*, 48. U.S. Naval War College.

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/48/>; Khan, M. I. (2026). Law enforcement issues in the disputed maritime areas: apples and pears for the coastal states. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 12.

<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/marine-science/articles/10.3389/fmars.2025.1690709/full>

whereas a "quarantine" framed as a domestic customs inspection is a gray-zone police action. If the U.S. intervenes to break such a "quarantine," Beijing can legally frame Washington as the aggressor escalating a routine domestic law enforcement matter into an international armed conflict.¹²⁶ Conversely, under the U.S. interpretation, any Chinese interference with high seas freedoms in the central corridor constitutes an illegal use of force against sovereign immune vessels. If China impedes traffic in this international corridor, it would legally constitute a blockade, which the U.S. views as an illegal act of war warranting a defensive military response.¹²⁷ Thus, the definition of the water itself determines whether a future crisis is viewed as a police action or a *casus belli*.

Statehood and Recognition

a. The Legal Argument: The Montevideo Criteria (Article 1)

From a strictly legalistic perspective, the status of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan is analyzed through the lens of the Declarative Theory of Statehood. This legal framework asserts that the political existence of a state is independent of recognition by other states, provided it satisfies specific objective criteria. These criteria are codified in Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, which establishes that a "state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states".¹²⁸

Legal analysts and the ROC government argue that Taiwan indisputably satisfies all four requirements:

- **Permanent Population:** Taiwan possesses a permanent population estimated at 23,396,049 as of January 2025, a demographic exceeding that of three-quarters of UN member states.¹²⁹ This satisfies the requirement for a stable community.
- **Defined Territory:** The ROC exercises effective and exclusive jurisdiction over a defined territory of approximately 36,197 square kilometers, comprising the islands of Taiwan, Penghu (the Pescadores), Kinmen, Matsu,

¹²⁶ Famularo, J. (2025). China Maritime Report #48: Great Inspectations: PRC Maritime Law Enforcement Operations in the Taiwan Strait. *CMSI China Maritime Reports*, 48. U.S. Naval War College.

<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/48/>

¹²⁷ Lott, A. (2022). *Hybrid Threats and the Law of the Sea: Use of Force and Discriminatory Navigational Restrictions in Straits*. Brill Nijhoff. <https://brill.com>

Parker, E. C. (2024). Policing the Strait: How China's Policing of the Taiwan Strait Violates the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea.

American University International Law Review, 39(4). <https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/auilr/vol39/iss4/7/>

¹²⁸ Organization of American States. (1933). *Convention on Rights and Duties of States (Montevideo Convention)*.

https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/intam03.asp

¹²⁹ Wikipedia contributors. (2026c, January 27). *Taiwan*. Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan>

and other minor islands.¹³⁰ While the People's Republic of China (PRC) claims sovereignty over this territory, it has never exercised governance over it since the PRC's founding in 1949.¹³¹

- **Government:** Taiwan operates under a fully functioning government based on the 1947 Constitution of the Republic of China, which has evolved into a multi-party democracy with direct presidential elections and five distinct government branches (Yuan): the Executive, Legislative, Judicial, Examination, and Control Yuans.¹³² This government maintains a standing military and exercises jurisdiction over a defined territory, satisfying the objective criteria for statehood outlined in the 1933 Montevideo Convention.¹³³
- **Capacity to Enter Relations:** The ROC demonstrates the capacity to enter into relations with other states, evidenced by its full membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) under the name "Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu" and its participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum as "Chinese Taipei".¹³⁴ Furthermore, the ROC maintains formal diplomatic relations with a small subset of the international community and unofficial relations with 59 United Nations member states via representative offices.¹³⁵

b. The Political Reality: De Jure Isolation and Dwindling Allies

Despite satisfying the factual criteria for statehood, Taiwan faces severe *de jure* isolation due to the influence of the Constitutive Theory of Statehood, which the PRC leverages to argue that recognition by other states is required for legitimacy.¹³⁶ This isolation is driven by the PRC's "One China Principle," which requires

¹³⁰ Government of the Republic of China. (2025). *Government of the Republic of China*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_the_Republic_of_China; Wikipedia contributors. (2026c, January 27). *Taiwan*. Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan>

¹³¹ Zagoria, D. S. (2003). *Breaking the China-Taiwan Impasse*. ABC-CLIO.

https://api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9780313057557_A47038031/preview-9780313057557_A47038031.pdf

¹³² Government of the Republic of China. (2025). *Government of the Republic of China*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_the_Republic_of_China;

¹³³ Fang, A. (2023, February 22). *International legal frameworks for statehood and their relevance to Taiwan's defense*. Global Taiwan Brief. Global Taiwan Institute.

<https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/02/international-legal-frameworks-for-statehood-and-their-relevance-to-taiwans-defense/>;

Hartzell, R. W. (2005). *Questions of sovereignty: The Montevideo Convention and territorial cession*. Taiwan Advice.

<http://www.taiwanadvice.com/harintmcexc.htm>

¹³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan). (2026, January 5). *MOFA solemnly condemns and refutes statements by China's Taiwan Affairs Office aimed at undermining Taiwan's participation in APEC*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan). https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1328&s=121094; Mari Y. Lee. (2024). Taiwan's position in the world. In *CRS Reports*.

https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF12646/IF12646.1.pdf

¹³⁵ Wikipedia contributors. (2026d, January 28). *Foreign relations of Taiwan*. Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_Taiwan; Wikipedia contributors. (2026e, January 28). *International recognition of Taiwan*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_recognition_of_Taiwan

¹³⁶ Fang, A. (2023, February 22). *International legal frameworks for statehood and their relevance to Taiwan's defense*. Global Taiwan Brief. Global Taiwan Institute.

<https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/02/international-legal-frameworks-for-statehood-and-their-relevance-to-taiwans-defense/>

diplomatic partners to agree to engage with Taiwan only unofficially.¹³⁷ Beijing interprets United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 as having settled the representation issue, asserting that it gives the PRC the right to represent Taiwan and block the ROC from the UN system.¹³⁸

Consequently, Taiwan's official diplomatic recognition has suffered attrition. Ten diplomatic partners switched recognition to the PRC between 2016 and 2024, most recently Nauru in January 2024. As of April 2024, only 12 states maintain formal diplomatic ties with the ROC.¹³⁹ This dwindling list represents the ROC's tenuous claim to external sovereignty.¹⁴⁰

- **Key Remaining Allies:** As of 2024, the Republic of China (ROC) maintains formal diplomatic relations with 12 nations.¹⁴¹ The most strategically significant of these include Paraguay, which remains Taiwan's sole diplomatic foothold in South America¹⁴², and The Holy See (Vatican City), which stands as Taiwan's only formal diplomatic partner in Europe. The remaining allies are concentrated among small island developing states in the Pacific—specifically the Marshall Islands, Palau, and Tuvalu—and nations in the Caribbean, such as Belize, Haiti, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.¹⁴³ In Africa, Eswatini remains Taiwan's sole diplomatic ally following the defection of other states in the region.
- **"Checkbook Diplomacy":** Beijing has aggressively utilized "dollar diplomacy" (also known as "checkbook diplomacy") to strip Taiwan of its allies by offering investment incentives and development assistance on the condition that receiving nations adopt the "One China" principle.¹⁴⁴ A prominent example occurred in March 2023, when Honduras severed ties with Taiwan; the Honduran Foreign Minister stated the country had asked Taipei to increase aid and renegotiate debt, but the request went unanswered, leading

¹³⁷ Mari Y. Lee. (2024). Taiwan's position in the world. In *CRS Reports*.

https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF12646/IF12646.1.pdf

¹³⁸ Mari Y. Lee. (2024). Taiwan's position in the world. In *CRS Reports*.

https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF12646/IF12646.1.pdf; Lawrence, S. V. (2025). *Taiwan and the international community* (CRS In Focus IF12646). Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress.

<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12646>

¹³⁹ Mari Y. Lee. (2024). Taiwan's position in the world. In *CRS Reports*.

https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF12646/IF12646.1.pdf; Lawrence, S. V. (2025). *Taiwan and the international community* (CRS In Focus IF12646). Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress.

<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12646>

¹⁴⁰ Fang, A. (2023, February 22). *International legal frameworks for statehood and their relevance to Taiwan's defense*. Global Taiwan Brief. Global Taiwan Institute.

<https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/02/international-legal-frameworks-for-statehood-and-their-relevance-to-taiwans-defense/>

¹⁴¹ World Population Review. (2026). *Countries that recognize Taiwan*.

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-that-recognize-taiwan>

¹⁴² Wikipedia contributors. (2026e, January 28). *Foreign relations of Taiwan*. Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_Taiwan

¹⁴³ World Population Review. (2026). *Countries that recognize Taiwan*.

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-that-recognize-taiwan>; Wikipedia contributors. (2026e, January 28). *Foreign relations of Taiwan*. Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_Taiwan

¹⁴⁴ Global Taiwan Institute. (2025, June 18). *Analyzing Taiwan's new southbound policy and its path towards economic sovereignty*. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2025/06/analyzing-taiwans-new-southbound-policy/>

them to seek economic opportunities with Beijing.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Nauru severed ties in January 2024.¹⁴⁶ Reports indicate Nauru requested USD \$83 million to cover a financial shortfall for an asylum detention center—a demand Taiwan refused to meet, characterizing it as "checkbook diplomacy" which Beijing utilized to retaliate against Taiwan's democratic elections.¹⁴⁷

c. Survival Strategy: Pragmatic and Integrated Diplomacy

To circumvent this diplomatic blockade, Taiwan has institutionalized a counter-strategy known as "Pragmatic Diplomacy," which was introduced in 1991. This strategy prioritizes substantive relations over formal recognition and no longer insists on the ROC being considered the sole representative of China, allowing for flexibility in international engagement.¹⁴⁸ This approach operates through a sophisticated global network of Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices (TECO), also referred to as Taipei Representative Offices.

- **The TECO Network:** These institutions function as *de facto* embassies in countries where the ROC lacks official recognition, including the United States and members of the European Union. While they lack the *de jure* status of an embassy and generally use the name "Taipei" to avoid sovereignty disputes, TECOs exercise essential diplomatic functions: they issue visas, renew passports, and promote bilateral trade and investment.¹⁴⁹ Reciprocally, other nations maintain similar unofficial missions in Taiwan; for example, the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) operates as a private nonprofit corporation incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia. It is mandated by the Taiwan Relations Act to conduct commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people of Taiwan in the absence of diplomatic recognition.¹⁵⁰
- **De Facto Independence vs. De Jure Isolation:** Through this mechanism, Taiwan maintains a unique status in international law: it is a self-governing democracy that operates with a robust economy and military, yet it suffers

¹⁴⁵ Lai, M. (2023, October 6). *Honduras ditches Taiwan for China*. Foreign Policy Research Institute. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2023/10/honduras-ditches-taiwan-for-china/>; The Caribbean Council. (2023, March 24). *Honduras officially recognises China*. The Caribbean Council.

<https://www.caribbean-council.org/honduras-officially-recognises-china/>

¹⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan). (2026, January 5). *MOFA solemnly condemns and refutes statements by China's Taiwan Affairs Office aimed at undermining Taiwan's participation in APEC*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China (Taiwan). https://en.mofa.gov.tw/News_Content.aspx?n=1328&s=121094

¹⁴⁷ Shattuck, T. J. (2024, January 24). *What does Nauru's switch to Beijing mean for William Lai's Taiwan?* *Global Taiwan Brief*, Vol. 9, Issue 2. Global Taiwan Institute.

<https://globaltaiwan.org/2024/01/what-does-naurus-switch-to-beijing-mean-for-william-lais-taiwan/>

¹⁴⁸ Wikipedia contributors. (2026e, January 28). *Foreign relations of Taiwan*. Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_relations_of_Taiwan

¹⁴⁹ Wikipedia contributors. (2026c, January 27). *Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office*. Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taipei_Economic_and_Cultural_Representative_Office

¹⁵⁰ 22 U.S.C. § 3305 — *The American Institute in Taiwan* (2023). In *United States Code, Title 22: Foreign Relations and Intercourse*. U.S. Government Publishing Office.

<https://statecodesfiles.justia.com/us/2023/title-22/chapter-48/sec-3305/sec-3305.pdf?ts=1741093426>

from *de jure* isolation, as the PRC claims sovereignty over the island and restricts its "international space" within the UN system.¹⁵¹ Taiwan has attempted to challenge this by expanding its presence through "values-based diplomacy" and "integrated diplomacy," linking its security to global democratic chains and leveraging its dominance in the semiconductor industry to forge deeper ties with unofficial partners like the US, EU, and Japan.¹⁵²

However, legal arguments and diplomatic nuances ultimately serve only as abstract shields. In the absence of distinct *de jure* international protection or a guaranteed seat at the United Nations, the preservation of the status quo rests not on international law, but on the kinetic balance of power in the Strait. As diplomatic avenues narrow and the 'One China' pressure intensifies, the contest for sovereignty shifts from the halls of embassies to the radar screens of command centers. The following section examines the hard power dynamics that define this precarious stalemate.

MILITARY DIMENSIONS

Understanding the military balance requires mastering the language of strategy. While this section contains technical terms, do not be intimidated. All specific acronyms and concepts (such as the "Porcupine Strategy" or "First Island Chain") are fully defined in the "Definition of Keywords" (see page 17) section of this guide.

The PLA: Projecting Power Beyond the First Island Chain

The modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has been driven largely by the objective of countering U.S. intervention, a strategic requirement dating back to the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. During this period, the PLA lacked the capability to effectively track or deter the U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups deployed to the region, an inability that spurred the development of anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities aimed at restricting foreign military movement within the First and Second Island Chains.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Lawrence, S. V. (2025). *Taiwan and the International Community*. Congressional Research Service. Lawrence, S. V. (2025). *Taiwan and the international community* (CRS In Focus IF12646). Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF12646>

¹⁵² Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA]. (2026). *Diplomatic Allies*. Republic of China (Taiwan). <https://en.mofa.gov.tw/AlliesIndex.aspx?n=1294&sms=1007>; Chu, P. H.-Y. (2025, October 29). *Opportunities for strengthening EU-Taiwan relations* (Global Taiwan Brief, Vol. 10, Issue 19). Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2025/10/opportunities-for-strengthening-eu-taiwan-relations/>

¹⁵³ O'Rourke, R. (2025, April 24). *China naval modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy capabilities—Background and issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. RL33153). Congressional Research Service.

<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33153>; Wilson, J. (2016). *China's expanding ability to conduct conventional missile strikes on Guam*. U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/Staff%20Report_China's%20Expanding%20Ability%20to%20Conduct%20Conventional%20Missile%20Strikes%20on%20Guam.pdf

To execute this strategy, the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) has fielded the DF-21D and DF-26 ballistic missiles. The DF-26, an intermediate-range ballistic missile with a range of 3,000 to 4,000 kilometers, is China's first conventionally armed ballistic missile capable of striking Guam and conducting precision anti-ship strikes.¹⁵⁴ This missile force is complemented by the world's largest navy by hull count; the PLA Navy (PLAN) possesses a battle force of over 370 ships, expected to rise to 435 by 2030. The PLAN's fleet now includes three aircraft carriers—the Liaoning, Shandong, and the conventionally powered Fujian—which enhance China's ability to project power and execute "far seas" operations.¹⁵⁵ These capabilities are rehearsed in large-scale drills such as the "Joint Sword" exercises, which simulate blockades and joint operations to seize maritime and air superiority around Taiwan.¹⁵⁶

Taiwan's ROC Armed Forces: The "Porcupine Strategy"

Taiwan has shifted its strategic doctrine away from the historical goal of retaking the mainland toward a defensive posture focused on preventing a successful invasion.¹⁵⁷ This approach, formalized as the Overall Defense Concept (ODC) or "Porcupine Strategy," acknowledges the resource disparity between the ROC Armed Forces and the PLA. The strategy prioritizes the acquisition of asymmetric systems—weapons that are mobile, lethal, and resilient—over expensive conventional platforms that may be vulnerable to initial bombardment.¹⁵⁸

Key components of this asymmetric defense include the deployment of anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs) such as the indigenous Hsiung Feng series and U.S.-procured Harpoons to target invasion fleets.¹⁵⁹ The Hsiung Feng III, for instance, is a supersonic missile capable of engaging naval targets at ranges of approximately 250 kilometers.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Missile Defense Project. (2024, April 23). DF-26. Missile Threat, Center for Strategic and International Studies. <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/dong-feng-26-df-26/>; O'Rourke, R. (2025, April 24). China naval modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy capabilities—Background and issues for Congress (CRS Report No. RL33153). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33153>

¹⁵⁵ O'Rourke, R. (2025, April 24). China naval modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy capabilities—Background and issues for Congress (CRS Report No. RL33153). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33153>

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Defense. (2024). Military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China 2024 (Annual Report to Congress). U.S. Department of Defense. <https://media.defense.gov/2025/Dec/23/2003849070/-1/-1/1/ANNUAL-REPORT-TO-CONGRESS-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA-2025.PDF>

¹⁵⁷ National Institute for Public Policy. (2022). Victory denial deterrence and a "Porcupine Strategy" for Taiwan (Journal of Policy & Strategy, Vol. 2, No. 2). National Institute Press. <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Chapter-3.pdf>

¹⁵⁸ Hunzeker, M. A., & Lanoszka, A. (2018). A question of time: Enhancing Taiwan's conventional deterrence posture. Center for Security Policy Studies, George Mason University. <https://csps.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A-Question-of-Time.pdf>; National Institute for Public Policy. (2022). Victory denial deterrence and a "Porcupine Strategy" for Taiwan (Journal of Policy & Strategy, Vol. 2, No. 2). National Institute Press. <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Chapter-3.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ Tu, A., & Shan, S. (2025, December 16). US bolstering first island chain deterrence: NSB report. Taipei Times. <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2025/12/16/2003848956>; Global Defense Corp. (2025, August 20).

Taiwan deploys 250KM Hsiung Feng III anti-ship missile. Global Defense Corp. <https://www.globaldefensecorp.com/2025/08/20/taiwan-deploys-250km-hsiung-feng-iii-anti-ship-missile/>

¹⁶⁰ Global Defense Corp. (2025, August 20). Taiwan deploys 250KM Hsiung Feng III anti-ship missile. Global Defense Corp. <https://www.globaldefensecorp.com/2025/08/20/taiwan-deploys-250km-hsiung-feng-iii-anti-ship-missile/>

Additionally, Taiwan is enhancing its denial capabilities through the use of rapid mine-laying ships to disrupt amphibious approaches and mobile air defense systems like the Stinger missile to counter aerial threats.¹⁶¹ These measures aim to make a cross-strait invasion prohibitively costly by exploiting the vulnerabilities of PLA forces during the transit and landing phases.¹⁶²

The US & Allies: The Strategic Arc



The "First Island Chain," stretching from Japan through Taiwan to the Philippines, serves as a critical geographic barrier for monitoring and restricting Chinese naval access to the open Pacific.¹⁶³ Within this arc, the U.S. and its allies are strengthening defense postures to address the "strategic dilemma" posed by the PLA's proximity to the theater versus the long logistical lines required for U.S. intervention. The U.S. Navy is responding to the threat of PLA long-range precision fires by implementing "Distributed Maritime Operations" (DMO), a concept that disperses forces to complicate adversary targeting while maintaining aggregate combat power.¹⁶⁴

Japan and the Philippines play pivotal roles in securing the northern and southern flanks of this strategic arc. Japan is fortifying its Southwest Islands, specifically deploying electronic warfare and air defense units to Yonaguni Island, located just 110 kilometers from Taiwan, to monitor the Miyako Strait. In the south, the Philippines has granted U.S. forces access to strategic sites under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), including locations in the Batanes islands near the Bashi Channel, less than 90 miles from Taiwan. These deployments, which have included the U.S. Marine Corps' NMESIS anti-ship

¹⁶¹ Defense Priorities. (2024). Target Taiwan: Prospects for a Chinese invasion. Defense Priorities. <https://www.defensepriorities.org/explainers/target-taiwan-prospects-for-a-chinese-invasion/>; National Institute for Public Policy. (2022). Victory denial deterrence and a "Porcupine Strategy" for Taiwan (Journal of Policy & Strategy, Vol. 2, No. 2). National Institute Press. <https://nipp.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Chapter-3.pdf>

¹⁶² Martin, B., Gunness, K., DeLuca, P., & Shostak, M. (2022). Implications of a coercive quarantine of Taiwan by the People's Republic of China (Report No. RR-A1279-1). RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA1200/RRA1279-1/RAND_RRA1279-1.pdf

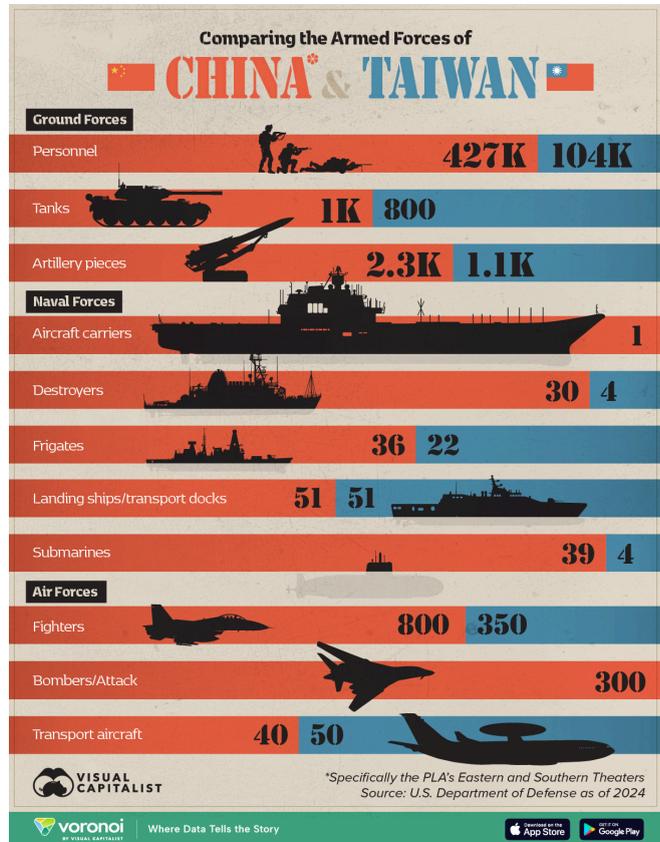
¹⁶³ O'Rourke, R. (2025, April 24). China naval modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy capabilities—Background and issues for Congress (CRS Report No. RL33153). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33153>; O'Hanlon, M. E., & Yeo, A. (2023). Geostrategic competition and overseas basing in East Asia and the first island chain. Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/FP_20230207_east_asia_basing_ohanlon_yeo.pdf

¹⁶⁴ O'Rourke, R. (2025, April 24). China naval modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy capabilities—Background and issues for Congress (CRS Report No. RL33153). Congressional Research Service. <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/RL33153>

system and Army mid-range missile capabilities, effectively extend the allied maritime denial envelope across the critical straits surrounding Taiwan.¹⁶⁵

This infographic alongside illustrates the significant quantitative disparity between the PLA's Eastern/Southern Theaters and the ROC Armed Forces. This overwhelming gap in conventional platforms (particularly in naval and air assets) underscores why Taiwan has shifted to the asymmetric "Porcupine Strategy" rather than seeking parity in a symmetric war of attrition:

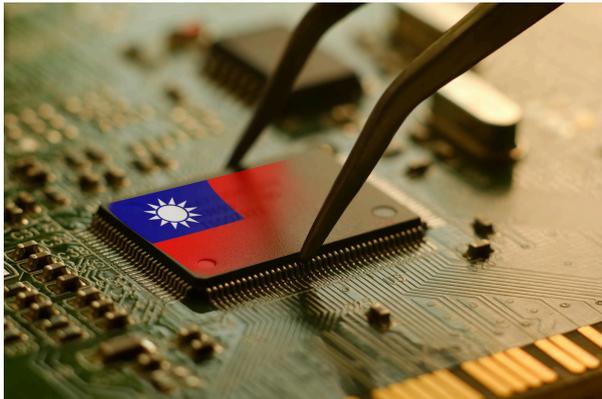
In sum, the military dimension of the Taiwan Strait is defined by a shrinking margin for error. While the PLA has achieved a quantitative overmatch capable of challenging US supremacy, Taiwan's asymmetric 'Porcupine' defense ensures that any amphibious invasion would be a long, bloody, and operationally complex undertaking. This stalemate creates a volatile security environment where the cost of military action remains prohibitively high—yet, as we will see, the price of conflict is not measured solely in military assets, but in the collapse of the global economic order.



¹⁶⁵ Honrada, G. (2025, November 27). Japan's Yonaguni arming up for a Taiwan war with China. Asia Times. <https://asiatimes.com/2025/11/japans-yonaguni-arming-up-for-a-taiwan-war-with-china/>; EurAsian Times. (2021). Just 110 km from Taiwan, Japan to deploy EW air-defense unit on Yonaguni as Tokyo-Beijing tensions escalate. EurAsian Times. <https://www.eurasiantimes.com/japan-defies-china-missiles-already-on-yonaguni-electronic/>; Marine Link. (2025, November 2). The narrow waterway at the heart of U.S. plans to choke China's navy. Marine Link. <https://www.marinelink.com/news/narrow-waterway-heart-us-plans-choke-531877/>; Chicago Quantum. (2025). Basco and Mavudis Islands, Batanes, Philippines. Chicago Quantum. <https://www.chicagoquantum.com/basco-mavudis-batannes-philippines.html#/>; Tu, A., & Shan, S. (2025, December 16). US bolstering first island chain deterrence: NSB report. Taipei Times. <https://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2025/12/16/2003848956>

THE ECONOMIC STAKES - THE SILICON SHIELD

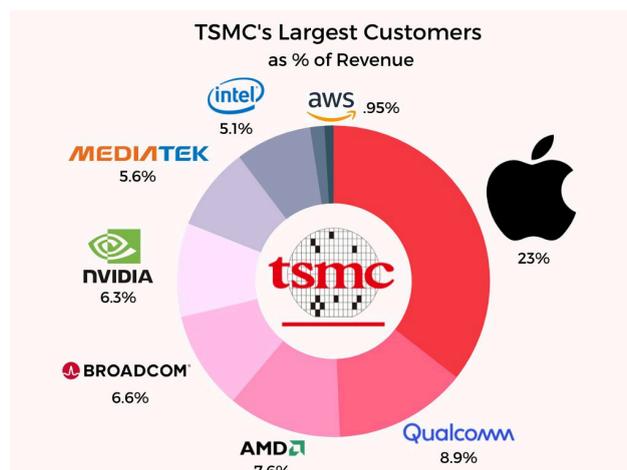
While the balance of missiles and warships dictates the possibility of conflict, it is a tiny wafer of silicon that dictates its consequences. Beyond the kinetic threat of invasion lies a silent deterrent that binds the entire global economy to the fate of this island. We must now turn our attention to the 'Silicon Shield'—the reality that Taiwan's most potent defense is not its military, but its irreplaceable role as the engine of the modern world.



The Silicon Shield: TSMC & The Global "Kill Switch"

The global economy's most profound vulnerability resides not in the oil fields of the Middle East or the financial exchanges of New York, but within a clustered network of fabrication facilities on the western coast of Taiwan. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) has established a near-total monopoly on the production of the world's most advanced logic semiconductors, specifically manufacturing approximately 92% of all logic chips smaller than 10 nanometers.¹⁶⁶ This concentration creates a "Silicon Shield" that functions less as a defensive rampart and more as a mechanism of mutually assured economic destruction, where the disruption of Taiwanese output would trigger a global industrial collapse. The United States is particularly exposed, relying on TSMC for 92% of its leading-edge semiconductor supply, creating a critical single point of failure for its technology and defense sectors.¹⁶⁷

The implications of this monopoly are distinct from historical commodity shocks because leading-edge semiconductors operate on a "just-in-time" efficiency model with virtually no idle global capacity or viable substitutes. Specifically, TSMC dominates the manufacturing of the 3nm and 5nm process nodes—the cutting-edge architectures required for the high-performance computing that



¹⁶⁶ Gitnux. (2026). *Semiconductor Industry Statistics*. Gitnux Market Data Report 2026.

<https://gitnux.org/semiconductor-industry-statistics/>; U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. (2025). *Made in China 2025: Evaluating China's Performance*. U.S. Congress.

<https://www.uscc.gov/research/made-china-2025-evaluating-chinas-performance>

¹⁶⁷ Robinson, D. (2024). *ASML said to have 'kill switch' for chipmaking machines*. The Register. https://www.theregister.com/2024/05/21/asml_kill_switch/

powers modern artificial intelligence, advanced smartphones, and autonomous military systems. American technology giants are entirely dependent on this specific output; firms such as Apple, NVIDIA, AMD, and Qualcomm have booked TSMC's capacity for these nodes years in advance.¹⁶⁸ Recent market analysis indicates a shift in the "guard," where NVIDIA is projected to consume more 3nm wafers than Apple by late 2027, highlighting how the AI boom has deepened the world's reliance on Taiwan's foundries.¹⁶⁹ Consequently, a blockade or invasion would not merely raise prices but would cause the immediate manufacturing paralysis of the world's most valuable companies.

Financial modeling suggests that a military conflict over Taiwan would trigger a global economic contraction exceeding \$10 trillion, or roughly 10% of global GDP.¹⁷⁰ This shock would dwarf the economic fallout of the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic combined.¹⁷¹ Because these advanced chips serve as the "golden screw" in everything from hyperscale data centers to automotive assembly lines, their absence would cause cascading failures across logistics, finance, and critical infrastructure.¹⁷² The sheer scale of this potential loss creates a scenario where the economic costs of war are so high that they theoretically deter aggression, yet simultaneously make the island an irresistible strategic prize.

Important Note From Your USG: Delegates should recognize that while missiles define the capacity for conflict, the semiconductor industry defines its consequences. This concept of the "Silicon Shield" represents a scenario of **Mutually Assured Economic Destruction**. A disruption in Taiwan does not merely imply higher consumer prices; it functions as a "kill switch" for the modern world, capable of paralyzing global banking, healthcare, and defense systems overnight.

*In committee sessions, successful delegates will not just discuss military maneuvers; they will utilize the threat of a **\$10 trillion economic collapse** as their primary diplomatic leverage. You must treat the security of these fabrication facilities not as a commercial trade issue, but as a matter of global survival comparable to nuclear non-proliferation.*

Here are some videos you can watch on The Silicon Shield: TSMC & The Global "Kill Switch":

 Taiwan's SECRET WEAPON against China - A History of TSMC

¹⁶⁸ Thompson, E. J. (2024). *Apple, Nvidia Secure Future with Taiwan Semi's Advanced Chips as AI Demand Soars*.

Benzinga. <https://intellectia.ai/news/stock/apple-nvidia-secure-future-with-taiwan-semis-advanced-chips-as-ai-demand-soars>

¹⁶⁹ Nunes, L. F. (2026). *TSMC's Record Quarter: The Numbers Wall Street Is Overlooking*. FS Grain.

<https://northerngrainmarketing.com/news/story/37082220/tsmc-s-record-quarter-the-numbers-wall-street-is-overlooking>

¹⁷⁰ Oleniak, L. (2024). *China's invasion of Taiwan could cost global economy \$10 trillion*. Bloomberg / UAENRUX.

<https://newsukraine.rbc.ua/news/china-s-invasion-of-taiwan-could-cost-global-1704796744.html>

¹⁷¹ MUFU. (2024). *The Economic Cost of a Taiwan War US-China Military Assets Taiwan's "Silicon Shield"* (Policy Note). MUFU Americas.

https://www.mufuamericas.com/sites/default/files/document/2024-01/Policy-Note_1_12_Elevated-Geopolitical-Risk-in-the-Taiwan-Strait.pdf

¹⁷² Oleniak, L. (2024). *China's invasion of Taiwan could cost global economy \$10 trillion*. Bloomberg / UAENRUX.

<https://newsukraine.rbc.ua/news/china-s-invasion-of-taiwan-could-cost-global-1704796744.html>

▶ The Global Chip War Explained in Detail: How TSMC Outsmarted China & the US.

▶ How a China attack on Taiwan could damage the economy

The "Scorched Earth" Strategy: Operation Broken Nest

To leverage this economic centrality into a survival strategy, US military scholars have proposed the "Broken Nest" concept. Drawing on a Chinese proverb—"Beneath a broken nest, how can there be any whole eggs?"—this theory argues that Taiwan must credibly demonstrate that an invasion would yield Beijing a "broken nest" rather than a high-tech asset. The strategy suggests that Taiwan should threaten to destroy its semiconductor industry in the event of an invasion, thereby rendering the island economically "unwantable" and neutralizing the primary economic incentive for conquest. While controversial among the Taiwanese public, this concept of "deterrence by punishment" aims to convince Chinese leadership that a forced unification would immobilize China's own

high-tech industries alongside the rest of the world.¹⁷³



While the "Broken Nest" theory advocates for physical destruction, a functional equivalent already exists in the form of "remote disablement" capabilities embedded within ASML's Extreme Ultraviolet (EUV) lithography machines. These machines, which are the size of city buses and cost over \$200 million each, possess built-in remote functions

that allow the manufacturer to effectively brick the systems. ASML has reassured Dutch and US officials that it retains the ability to remotely terminate the operation of these machines during a geopolitical crisis, effectively acting as a "kill switch".¹⁷⁴

The mechanics of this kill switch rely on the fact that modern EUV lithography is not a static tool purchase but a networked service requiring constant upkeep. The machines require continuous software updates, real-time diagnostic connectivity, and frequent replacement of proprietary spare parts to function.¹⁷⁵ Without ASML's satellite-linked support and "tacit knowledge" from on-site engineers, the machines quickly become inoperable. TSMC leadership, including former Chairman Mark Liu, has publicly noted that military

¹⁷³ McKinney, J. M., & Harris, P. (2021). *Broken Nest: Deterring China from Invading Taiwan*. The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters, 51(4). <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3089&context=parameters>

¹⁷⁴ Robinson, D. (2024). *ASML said to have 'kill switch' for chipmaking machines*. The Register. https://www.theregister.com/2024/05/21/asml_kill_switch/; The Straits Times. (2024). *ASML and TSMC can remotely disable chip machines if China invades Taiwan*. SPH Media. <https://www.straitstimes.com/business/asml-and-tsmc-can-remotely-disable-chip-machines-if-china-invades-taiwan>

¹⁷⁵ Norem, J. (2024). *TSMC's Lithography Machines Have a Remote Kill Switch in Case China Invades*. ExtremeTech. <https://www.extremetech.com/computing/tsmcs-lithography-machines-have-a-remote-kill-switch-in-case-china-invades>

force cannot control the fabs because the manufacturing process is a sophisticated, globally integrated operation that would be rendered "non-operable" the moment it is severed from the outside world.¹⁷⁶ This technical reality serves as a functional implementation of deterrence by denial, ensuring that even if the physical factories are captured intact, they would yield no manufacturing capability to the invader.

China's Semiconductor Vulnerabilities: The Paradox of Power

China faces an acute "Vulnerability Paradox": Beijing views unification as a political imperative, yet its economic modernization is fueled by the very silicon shield it threatens to shatter. China remains the world's largest importer of semiconductors, purchasing \$349.4 billion worth of chips annually—more than it spends on oil imports.¹⁷⁷ Despite massive state investment in its domestic chip industry, China still relies on Taiwan for the advanced logic chips required to train the AI models that underpin its economic and military modernization.¹⁷⁸

China's inability to simply seize and operate TSMC's fabs constitutes a major strategic hurdle. Even if the "kill switch" were bypassed, China lacks the domestic supply chain to keep the fabs running. Advanced semiconductor manufacturing requires a continuous flow of specialized chemicals, gases, and components from a supply chain dominated by the United States, Japan, and Europe; without these inputs, the cleanrooms would cease production almost immediately. Furthermore, the human capital required to run these facilities possesses "tacit knowledge" that cannot be easily coerced or replicated by occupying forces.¹⁷⁹

Attempts by China's domestic champion, SMIC, to replicate TSMC's capabilities highlight the severity of this technological gap. Due to US and Dutch export controls, China lacks access to ASML's EUV machines, forcing SMIC to rely on older Deep Ultraviolet (DUV) technology. While SMIC is reportedly working to complete 5nm chip production by 2025 using these older tools, the process requires complex, multi-patterning steps that degrade efficiency. Reports indicate that SMIC's production costs for 5nm chips are roughly 50% higher than TSMC's, with yields for 5nm processes estimated at only 30%—roughly one-third of TSMC's efficiency—making high-volume domestic production prohibitively expensive.¹⁸⁰ This technological lag means that if China destroys or isolates Taiwan's chip

¹⁷⁶ The Straits Times. (2024). *ASML and TSMC can remotely disable chip machines if China invades Taiwan*. SPH Media. <https://www.straitstimes.com/business/asml-and-tsmc-can-remotely-disable-chip-machines-if-china-invades-taiwan>

¹⁷⁷ Gitmux. (2026). *Semiconductor Industry Statistics*. Gitmux Market Data Report 2026. <https://gitmux.org/semiconductor-industry-statistics/>

¹⁷⁸ TrendForce. (2025). *SMIC Reported to Complete 5nm Chips by 2025, but Costs May Be 50% Higher Than TSMC's*. TrendForce Corp. <https://www.trendforce.com/news/2025/03/28/news-smic-reported-to-complete-5nm-chips-by-2025-but-costs-may-be-50-higher-than-tsmcs/>

¹⁷⁹ Robinson, D. (2024). *ASML said to have 'kill switch' for chipmaking machines*. The Register. https://www.theregister.com/2024/05/21/asml_kill_switch/

¹⁸⁰ TrendForce. (2025). *SMIC Reported to Complete 5nm Chips by 2025, but Costs May Be 50% Higher Than TSMC's*. TrendForce Corp.

industry, it effectively decapitates its own artificial intelligence progress, leaving it reliant on inferior, more expensive domestic alternatives.

Global Trade & Energy Security: The Invisible Infrastructure

Beyond the silicon supply chain, the Taiwan Strait represents one of the world's most critical arteries for physical and digital commerce. Research estimates that approximately \$2.45 trillion in trade—over one-fifth of global maritime trade—transited the Taiwan Strait in 2022, highlighting the waterway's enduring criticality. This waterway is essential for the energy security of US allies in East Asia. A blockade would force the expensive rerouting of shipping to the eastern side of Taiwan or through the Philippines, creating logistical bottlenecks that would severely impact energy and food security for Japan and South Korea, who rely on the Strait for significant portions of their imports.¹⁸¹

Equally critical is the "invisible infrastructure" of the internet. Taiwan acts as a central hub for subsea fiber-optic cables that carry over 95% of the region's data traffic.¹⁸² These cables are highly vulnerable to "gray-zone" warfare tactics—hostile acts that fall below the threshold of open war. Instances of Chinese-flagged vessels severing cables near Taiwan's outlying islands, such as Matsu and Penghu, have already occurred, serving as a dress rehearsal for a digital blockade.

The severing of these cables has moved beyond theoretical risk to demonstrated capability. In early 2023 and again in 2025, cables connecting Taiwan to its outlying islands were cut by Chinese vessels, disrupting internet, banking, and government communications for weeks.¹⁸³ Systematically cutting these cables during a conflict would not only isolate Taiwan digitally but would also disrupt global financial markets and military coordination across the Indo-Pacific.¹⁸⁴ This vulnerability underscores that the economic stakes of a Taiwan conflict extend beyond the loss of semiconductors to the potential fragmentation of the global digital economy.

In the final analysis, the 'Silicon Shield' represents the single most critical variable in the Taiwan Strait equation. The concentration of 92% of the world's advanced semiconductor manufacturing in Hsinchu has created a unique geopolitical paradox: it renders Taiwan indispensable to the West, theoretically ensuring its defense, while simultaneously marking it as an existential strategic objective for Beijing.

<https://www.trendforce.com/news/2025/03/28/news-smic-reported-to-complete-5nm-chips-by-2025-but-costs-may-be-50-higher-than-tsmcs/>

¹⁸¹ Funaiolo, M. P., Hart, B., Peng, D., Lin, B., & Verschuur, J. (2024). *Crossroads of Commerce: How the Taiwan Strait Propels the Global Economy*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).

<https://features.csis.org/chinapower/china-taiwan-strait-trade/>

¹⁸² Ocon, J., & Walberg, J. (2025). *China's Undersea Cable Sabotage and Taiwan's Digital Vulnerabilities* (Vol. 10, Issue 11). Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2025/06/taiwans-digital-vulnerabilities/>

¹⁸³ Saunders, H. (2025). *Taiwan's Internet Cable Problems Run Deep*. Domino Theory.

<https://dominotheory.com/taiwans-internet-cable-problems-run-deep/>

¹⁸⁴ Ocon, J., & Walberg, J. (2025). *China's Undersea Cable Sabotage and Taiwan's Digital Vulnerabilities* (Vol. 10, Issue 11). Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2025/06/taiwans-digital-vulnerabilities/>

Delegates must understand that this is not merely a commercial dispute; it is a scenario of Mutually Assured Economic Destruction. With a potential cost of \$10 trillion, a kinetic conflict would dismantle the global digital economy faster than any sanction or treaty could repair it. Thus, the security of these fabrication facilities serves as the world's primary 'kill switch,' dictating that the status quo—however fragile—may be the only alternative to global industrial collapse.

GREY ZONE WARFARE - WAR WITHOUT SHOOTING

If the 'Silicon Shield' makes a full-scale kinetic invasion an act of economic suicide, then Beijing's strategic alternative is clear: it must win without fighting. The prohibitive cost of shattering the 'Golden Screw' has forced the conflict into the shadows, transforming it from a threat of immediate annihilation into a strategy of gradual suffocation. We must now turn our attention to the 'Grey Zone'—a theater of conflict where sovereignty is eroded not by landing crafts, but by psychological pressure, cyber-attacks, and incremental coercion designed to force capitulation without triggering a global economic collapse.

The Incremental Invasion (Normalizing the Abnormal via ADIZ/Median Line)

The conflict currently unfolding across the Taiwan Strait is not merely a prelude to a potential invasion; it is an active, continuous "War Without Shooting." Beijing's primary strategy employs a "salami slicing" tactic (see 'Definition of Keyword' part.) designed to fundamentally alter the status quo through gradual, sub-threshold aggression. This approach forces Taiwan to exhaust its military resources and psychological resilience without triggering a full-scale kinetic response from the United States or its allies. By methodically increasing the frequency and proximity of its military operations, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has successfully normalized a military presence that would have been considered an act of war only a decade ago.¹⁸⁵

The erosion of the median line in the Taiwan Strait serves as the clearest visual metric of this escalation. This visualization seen alongside maps the overlapping Air Defense Identification Zones (ADIZ) and the de facto "median line" in the Taiwan Strait. While historically respected as a buffer zone that prevented accidental conflict, the visual data illustrates how the PLA has effectively nullified this boundary



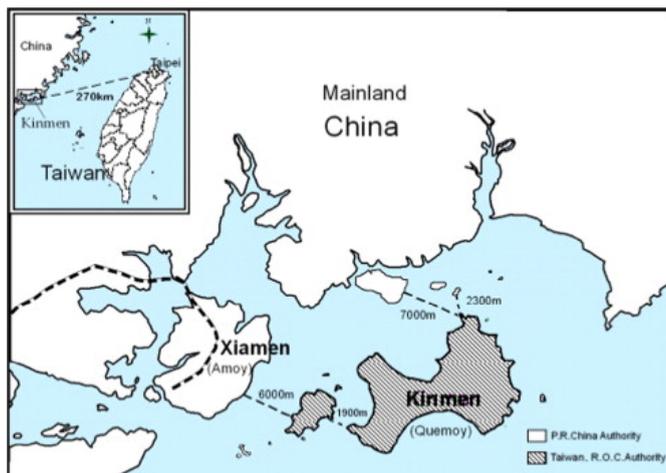
¹⁸⁵ Stares, P. B., & Sacks, D. (2025). *The Next Taiwan Crisis Won't Be Like the Last*. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/reports/next-taiwan-crisis-wont-be-last>

since 2022. By normalizing incursions across this line, Beijing is shrinking Taiwan's strategic depth and reducing the warning time for defenders from minutes to seconds.

For decades, this de facto boundary helped prevent accidental conflict, with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) refraining from crossing it between 1955 and 1999. However, following the visit of the U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August 2022, the PLA effectively erased this boundary. The escalation pattern is starkly visible in the statistics regarding Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) incursions: sorties rose from approximately 380 in 2020 to 972 in 2021, then nearly doubled to 1,738 in 2022 following the Pelosi visit.¹⁸⁶ By 2024, the number of tracked sorties had surged past 2,000, and in January 2025 alone, the PLA set a new record with 248 median line crossings in a single month. This trajectory indicates a shift from reactionary signaling to a sustained operational encirclement, utilizing "joint combat readiness patrols" to encircle Taiwan and squeeze its defensive reaction time.¹⁸⁷

Simultaneously, Beijing has weaponized its maritime law enforcement capabilities to challenge Taiwan's sovereignty. The implementation of the "China Coast Guard Law" in 2021 explicitly authorized the Coast Guard (CCG) to use weapons against foreign vessels,

transforming it from a policing agency into a tool of sovereignty enforcement.¹⁸⁸ This legal warfare was operationalized during the 2024 Kinmen boat incidents, where the CCG began boarding and inspecting Taiwanese tourist and civilian vessels.¹⁸⁹ This map seen alongside illustrates the strategic vulnerability of Kinmen, located just kilometers from the Chinese city of Xiamen (Amoy) yet over 200km from Taiwan. Its extreme proximity makes it a prime target for "Grey Zone" maritime harassment and



"quarantine" drills by the China Coast Guard, allowing Beijing to exert control without crossing the Taiwan Strait median line.

¹⁸⁶ Lewis, B., & Shattuck, T. J. (2024). *Breaking the Barrier: Four Years of PRC Military Activity Around Taiwan*. Foreign Policy Research Institute.

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2024/10/breaking-the-barrier-four-years-of-prc-military-activity-around-taiwan/>

¹⁸⁷ Tang, K. T. (2025). *Less Politics, More Military: The Outlook for China's 2025 Military Incursions into Taiwan's Airspace and Waters*. Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs.

<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/4176900/less-politics-more-military-the-outlook-for-chinas-2025-military-incursions-int/>

¹⁸⁸ Japan Ministry of Defense. (n.d.). *The Coast Guard Law of the People's Republic of China*.

https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/sec_env/ch_ocn/index.html

¹⁸⁹ Wikipedia. (2024). *2024 Kinmen Chinese motorboat capsizing incident*.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Kinmen_Chinese_motorboat_capsizing_incident

By asserting jurisdiction in the restricted waters of Taiwan's outlying islands, Beijing is enforcing a "quarantine" model, distinct from a blockade, intended to interdict commercial shipping under the guise of law enforcement. This strategy aims to strip Taiwan of its maritime jurisdiction and normalize PRC control over the strait without firing a shot, creating a "new normal" where Taiwan's sovereignty is eroded daily.¹⁹⁰

Cognitive & Cyber Warfare (The Invisible Battlefield & Economic Coercion)

Parallel to the physical encirclement is a relentless cognitive and digital siege managed largely by the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Work Department (UFWD). This apparatus has evolved beyond traditional propaganda, employing sophisticated "cognitive warfare" to fracture Taiwanese societal resolve from within. The UFWD actively recruits Taiwanese influencers and internet personalities, offering financial incentives to produce content that portrays the PRC as a benevolent power while minimizing its military aggression.¹⁹¹ These operations utilize "content farms" to flood Taiwan's information environment with disinformation, specifically promoting "US Skepticism" (*Yi Mei Lun*) narratives. These narratives are designed to frame the United States as an unreliable partner and depict the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as inducing war, thereby delegitimizing Taiwan's democratic institutions.¹⁹²

On the digital front, Taiwan faces a staggering volume of cyber aggression. In 2025, Taiwan's National Security Bureau (NSB) reported an average of 2.63 million daily cyber intrusion attempts against critical infrastructure, a significant increase from previous years.¹⁹³ The attacks have become highly targeted: the energy sector alone saw a tenfold increase (1,000%) in attacks in 2025, while emergency rescue services and hospitals saw a 54% rise in intrusion attempts.¹⁹⁴ Specific Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) groups, such as Volt Typhoon and Flax Typhoon, have moved beyond espionage to pre-positioning malware within critical sectors like water, energy, and telecommunications. Their objective is not just data theft but the capability to disrupt essential services and induce panic during a future kinetic conflict.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, groups like APT41 and Salt Typhoon have breached global

¹⁹⁰ Marco, A., & Peterson, N. (2026). *Charting a Course: Addressing Chinese Maritime Coercion Around Taiwan*. Center for International Maritime Security. <https://cimsec.org/charting-a-course-addressing-chinese-maritime-coercion-around-taiwan/>

¹⁹¹ Wang, R. (2025). *An Old Dog's New Tricks? China's United Front Work and Taiwanese Internet Personalities*. Prospects & Perspectives. <https://www.pf.org.tw/en/pfen/33-11154.html>

¹⁹² Tozzi, P. (2025). *China's Political Warfare: The Fight for Taiwan on the Information Battlefield*. Small Wars Journal. <https://smallwarsjournal.com/2025/02/19/chinas-political-warfare-the-fight-for-taiwan-on-the-information-battlefield/>

¹⁹³ Toulas, B. (2026). *Taiwan says China's attacks on its energy sector increased tenfold*. Bleeping Computer. <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/taiwan-says-chinas-attacks-on-its-energy-sector-increased-tenfold/>

¹⁹⁴ Toulas, B. (2026). *Taiwan says China's attacks on its energy sector increased tenfold*. Bleeping Computer. <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/taiwan-says-chinas-attacks-on-its-energy-sector-increased-tenfold/>

National Security Bureau. (2026). *Analysis on China's Cyber Threats to Taiwan's Critical Infrastructure in 2025*. <https://www.nsb.gov.tw/en/assets/documents/%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E%E7%A8%BF/9976f2e1-3a8a-4fa2-9a73-b0c80fa1f04.pdf>

¹⁹⁵ Toulas, B. (2026). *Taiwan says China's attacks on its energy sector increased tenfold*. Bleeping Computer.

<https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/taiwan-says-chinas-attacks-on-its-energy-sector-increased-tenfold/>; K Logix. (2024). *Chinese Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) Actors: APT40 and Volt Typhoon*. <https://www.klogixsecurity.com/hubfs/August%20Threat%20Brief%202024.pdf>

telecommunications infrastructure to track sensitive communications, feeding a global espionage system that supports the PRC's military objectives.¹⁹⁶

Economic coercion serves as the third pillar of this invisible battlefield, weaponizing trade dependencies to influence voter behavior. Beijing has demonstrated a willingness to impose arbitrary import bans on politically sensitive agricultural products, such as "pineapples and grouper fish," which disproportionately affect farmers in southern Taiwan—a traditional stronghold of the ruling party.¹⁹⁷ In December 2023, just one month before Taiwan's presidential election, China imposed sanctions on 12 petrochemical products, signaling a calculated effort to inflict economic pain to sway electoral outcomes.¹⁹⁸ These measures act as psychological attrition, forcing Taiwanese citizens to choose between economic stability and political autonomy.

Here are some videos you can watch on Cognitive & Cyber Warfare (The Invisible Battlefield & Economic Coercion):

▶ Taiwan Hit by 2.6M Daily Chinese Cyber Attacks in 2025 Record | WION World DNA

▶ AI Deepfake Sparks Debates over Chinese Interference in KMT Chair Election | Taiw...

▶ China's Taiwan Strategy: Invasion Logistics & Cognitive Warfare

The Humanitarian Dimension (Civilian Preparedness & The Refugee Crisis)

Perhaps the most critical yet overlooked aspect of this gray zone conflict is the humanitarian dimension, specifically regarding the logistical nightmare of Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) and the legal status of refugees. In the event of a blockade or quarantine, the evacuation of foreign nationals becomes a logistical impossibility. The evacuation logistics are complicated by Taiwan's substantial foreign population, which includes 891,000 Alien Resident Certificate



¹⁹⁶ National Security Agency. (2025). *NSA and Others Provide Guidance to Counter China State-Sponsored Actors Targeting Critical Infrastructure Organizations*. <https://www.nsa.gov/Press-Room/Press-Releases-Statements/Press-Release-View/article/4287371/nsa-and-others-provide-guidance-to-counter-china-state-sponsored-actors-targeti/>; CSO Online. (2025). *Salt Typhoon APT techniques revealed in new report*. <https://www.csoonline.com/article/4047953/salt-typhoon-apt-techniques-revealed-in-new-report.html>

¹⁹⁷ Hsiao, R., & Shoop, M. (2022). *PRC Applies Economic Pressure ahead of Taiwan's Local Elections*. Global Taiwan Brief. <https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/GTB-7.14-PDF.pdf>

¹⁹⁸ Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research. (2024). *Chinese Economic Coercion and Taiwan's Counter Measures*. <https://web.wtcenter.org.tw/Page/83/399068>

(ARC) holders and a significant number of migrant laborers.¹⁹⁹ Coordinating the extraction of these foreign nationals, alongside tens of thousands of U.S. citizens, would require a massive, coordinated Multinational Force (MNF) operation. Currently, no formal MNF NEO strategy exists, and coordinating such an extraction under the pressure of a maritime blockade or "quarantine" would require secure sea lanes and air corridors that currently do not exist. The reliance on the Bashi Channel and civilian infrastructure in the northern Philippines and Japan's Sakishima Islands would be critical, yet access to these facilities during a crisis remains politically and logistically complex.²⁰⁰ The maps seen alongside illustrate the critical maritime corridors—specifically the Bashi Channel to the south and Miyako Strait to the north—that would serve as the primary lifelines for a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). As part of the "First Island Chain," these narrow waterways would likely become immediate combat zones during a blockade, rendering the safe extraction of foreign nationals logistically near-impossible.

Furthermore, Taiwanese citizens face a profound "legal limbo" regarding their potential status as refugees. Because Taiwan is not a member of the United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) cannot operate officially within the country. Consequently, Taiwan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol.²⁰¹ This creates a dangerous legal vacuum: should Taiwanese citizens attempt to flee a conflict, they lack the automatic international legal protections afforded to refugees from recognized UN member states. This exclusion leaves them vulnerable; without a domestic refugee law, asylum seekers are currently processed on an ad-hoc, "case-by-case" basis, creating a severe gap in the international human rights framework that Beijing's strategy tacitly exploits. Without a recognized asylum law or UN protection, Taiwanese civilians fleeing war would effectively be stateless, dependent entirely on the ad-hoc political will of receiving nations rather than established international law.²⁰²

Here is a video you can watch on The Humanitarian Dimension (Civilian Preparedness & The Refugee Crisis):

 [Wargaming the Next Crisis: A Chinese Blockade of Taiwan](#)

In conclusion, the 'Grey Zone' is not merely a waiting room for war; it is a battlefield in its own right. Through the relentless normalization of military incursions and the weaponization of legal loopholes, Beijing is actively altering the status quo without firing a single shot. The 'salami slicing' tactics described in this section present a unique challenge to

¹⁹⁹ 台北時報. (2024, September 24). The movement for dual citizenship in Taiwan. *Taipei Times*. <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/feat/archives/2024/09/24/2003824255>

²⁰⁰ Dichoso, D. (2025). *Orchestrating the Exit: US-Japan-Philippines Cooperation in a Taiwan NEO*. Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2025/10/orchestrating-the-exit/>

²⁰¹ Lin, C. (2024). *Examining Refugee Protection in Non-Signatories to the Refugee Convention & Protocol: Lessons Learned For the Taiwan Context*. Sigur Center for Asian Studies.

<https://terp.elliott.gwu.edu/2024/04/16/04-25-2024-examining-refugee-protection-in-non-signatories-to-the-refugee-convention-protocol-lessons-learned-for-the-taiwan-context/>; Forced Migration Review. (2024). *Non-signatory States and the international refugee regime*. <https://www.fmreview.org/issue67/janmyr/>

²⁰² Kironaska, K. (2022). *Taiwan's Road to an Asylum Law: Who, When, How, and Why Not Yet?* Central European Institute of Asian Studies. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8743437/>

international law: How does the international community deter an invasion that arrives not as a sudden thunderclap, but as a slow, suffocating tide? Delegates must recognize that by the time a formal declaration of war is made, the strategic battle for Taiwan may already have been lost in the grey zone.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Political Freeze: Lai's "Pragmatic Independence" vs. Beijing's "Dead End" Rhetoric

Eighteen months into the administration of President Lai Ching-te, cross-strait communication has suffered a complete structural breakdown. Since his inauguration in May 2024, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has categorized President Lai as a "destroyer of cross-strait peace" and a "stubborn Taiwan independence advocate," enforcing a strategy of diplomatic isolation and military punishment.²⁰³ Beijing has systematically rejected all overtures for dialogue contained in Lai's October 2024 and 2025 National Day addresses. In his most recent address in October 2025, Lai reiterated that the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the PRC are "not subordinate to each other," a stance Beijing condemns as a "new two-state theory" leading to a "dead end".²⁰⁴



Consequently, official cross-strait mechanisms remain frozen. While Beijing signaled a tentative willingness to allow limited tour groups to travel to Taiwan in late 2025, the initiative collapsed after Taipei insisted that such exchanges must be preceded by formal government-to-government negotiations, which Beijing refuses to grant.²⁰⁵ As of January 2026, large-scale cross-strait tourism remains suspended. Complicating matters further, the Lai administration has accelerated the "T-Dome" initiative—a multi-layered air defense network modeled on Israel's Iron Dome—supported by a defense budget target of 5% of GDP by 2030. Beijing views this fortification not as defense, but as a provocation intended to "drag Taiwan into a perilous situation of military conflict".²⁰⁶

²⁰³ SPF. (2025). *Analysis of "Joint Sword 2024B"*. Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

<https://www.spf.org/spf-china-observer/en/document-detail058.html>

²⁰⁴ SPF. (2025). *Analysis of "Joint Sword 2024B"*. Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

<https://www.spf.org/spf-china-observer/en/document-detail058.html>; Dotson, J. (2026). The PLA's "Justice Mission-2025" Exercise Around Taiwan. Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2026/01/pla-justice-mission-2025/>

²⁰⁵ CFR. (2025). China in the Taiwan Strait: January 2025. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/articles/china-taiwan-strait-january-2025>

²⁰⁶ Grand Pinnacle Tribune. (2025). Taiwan Unveils T Dome Air Defense Plan Amid China Tensions. <https://evrimagaci.org/gpt/taiwan-unveils-t-dome-air-defense-plan-amid-china-tensions-508799>

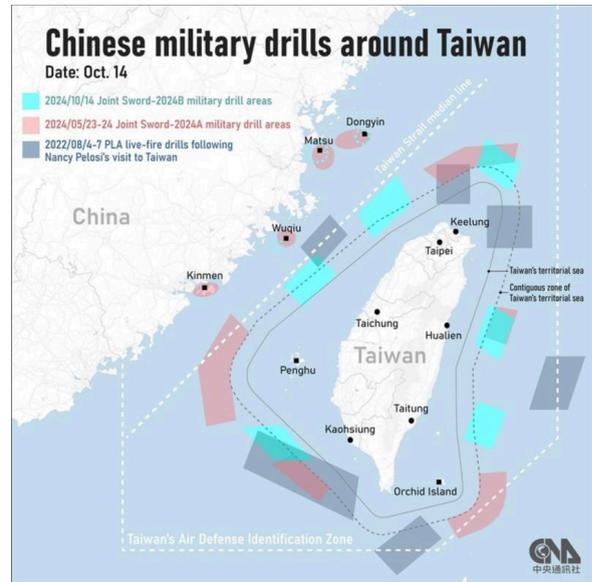
Military Normalization: The Shift from "Joint Sword-2024B" to Constant Quarantine Drills

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has successfully operationalized the "Anaconda Strategy"—a method of slow strangulation intended to squeeze Taiwan's sovereign space and exhaust its defenders without immediately triggering a full-scale war. This operational shift was catalyzed by "Joint Sword-2024B" in October 2024. That exercise fundamentally altered the status quo by deploying the China Coast Guard (CCG) as a pivotal force in blockade operations for the first time, with CCG formations conducting "law enforcement" patrols inside Taiwan's restricted waters to simulate the interdiction of commercial vessels.²⁰⁷

By 2025, these tactics escalated into a routine "punishment" cycle, culminating in the "Justice Mission-2025" exercise conducted on December 29–30, 2025. This drill represented a significant escalation in three specific areas:

1. Proximity: For the first time, the PLA fired long-range rockets (likely PHL-16s) into Taiwan's contiguous zone (within 24 nautical miles of the coast), directly threatening the ports of Keelung and Kaohsiung.²⁰⁸
2. Coast Guard Aggression: The CCG deployed 14 vessels, patrolling within 1.6 nautical miles of Taiwan's outlying islands (Wuqiu and Matsu) and, for the first time, patrolling waters around Pratas Island (Dongsha) during a blockade simulation.
3. Blockade Rehearsal: The exercise utilized 130 air sorties and 18 naval vessels to simulate the severance of Taiwan's energy imports, specifically targeting Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) shipments to force an energy crisis.²⁰⁹

As of January 2026, the median line of the Taiwan Strait has been effectively erased. PLA aircraft conducted over 2,000 sorties across the line in 2025, and the PLA Navy (PLAN) now maintains a permanent picket east of Taiwan to deny access to US and allied forces.²¹⁰



²⁰⁷ SPF. (2025). *Analysis of "Joint Sword 2024B"*. Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

<https://www.spf.org/spf-china-observer/en/document-detail058.html>; Marco, A. & Peterson, N. (2026). Charting a Course: Addressing Chinese Maritime Coercion Around Taiwan. Center for International Maritime Security. <https://cimsec.org/charting-a-course-addressing-chinese-maritime-coercion-around-taiwan/>

²⁰⁸ Dotson, J. (2026). The PLA's "Justice Mission-2025" Exercise Around Taiwan. Global Taiwan Institute. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2026/01/pla-justice-mission-2025/>

²⁰⁹ Sleiman, N. (2026, January 1). *Special Report: Surprise PRC Military Exercise Around Taiwan*. Institute for the Study of War. <https://understandingwar.org/research/china-taiwan/china-taiwan-special-report-december-31-2025/>

²¹⁰ CFR. (2025). China in the Taiwan Strait: January 2025. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/articles/china-taiwan-strait-january-2025>; Dotson, J. (2026). The PLA's "Justice

The Tech Stranglehold: The "Antimony Shock" and the Battle for 2nm Chips

The global defense industrial base remains fractured by the "Antimony Shock" of late 2024. Following the US expansion of semiconductor controls, China retaliated in December 2024 by banning the export of antimony—a critical mineral essential for the production of armor-piercing ammunition, night vision goggles, and infrared sensors—to the United States.²¹¹ Because China controls nearly 48% of global antimony production, the ban caused prices to surge 200% and severely disrupted Western defense supply chains throughout 2025.²¹² Although Beijing technically suspended the ban in November 2025 for one year pending trade negotiations, strict licensing requirements remain in force, leaving Western defense contractors in a state of high volatility and supply insecurity as of January 2026.²¹³

Simultaneously, the semiconductor war has bifurcated the global market. In response to the US "December 2024 Packet," which restricted China's access to High-Bandwidth Memory (HBM) chips and advanced manufacturing equipment, Taiwan formally aligned with US containment efforts.²¹⁴ In June 2025, Taiwan added Huawei and SMIC to its export control entity list, requiring government approval for any high-tech exports to these firms.²¹⁵ This move cut off a critical avenue for Huawei's "Ascend" series AI processors. However, the efficacy of these controls is under scrutiny following the "DeepSeek Shock," where a Chinese firm successfully trained a competitive AI model using legacy chips, causing a massive valuation drop for US chipmakers like Nvidia and signaling that China is successfully adapting to the technology blockade.²¹⁶

Here are some videos you can watch on these topics and the relationship between Taiwan and China overall:

Mission-2025" Exercise Around Taiwan. Global Taiwan Institute.
<https://globaltaiwan.org/2026/01/pla-justice-mission-2025/>

²¹¹ CSIS. (2024). China Imposes Its Most Stringent Critical Minerals Export Restrictions Yet Amidst Escalating U.S.-China Tech War. Center for Strategic and International Studies.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-imposes-its-most-stringent-critical-minerals-export-restrictions-yet-amidst>

²¹² CSIS. (2024). China Imposes Its Most Stringent Critical Minerals Export Restrictions Yet Amidst Escalating U.S.-China Tech War. Center for Strategic and International Studies.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/china-imposes-its-most-stringent-critical-minerals-export-restrictions-yet-amidst>; TRADIUM.

(2024). After gallium and germanium: China introduces export restrictions for antimony.

<https://tradium.com/market-insight/after-gallium-and-germanium-china-export-requirements-antimony/>

²¹³ Pillsbury. (2025). China Suspends Export Controls on Certain Critical Minerals and Related Items. Pillsbury Winthrop

Shaw Pittman LLP.
<https://www.pillsburylaw.com/en/news-and-insights/china-suspends-export-controls-certain-critical-minerals-related-items.html>

; Mining Technology. (2025). China suspends ban on gallium, germanium, antimony exports to US.

<https://www.mining-technology.com/news/china-suspends-ban-exports-us/>

²¹⁴ Allen, G. C. (2024). Understanding the Biden Administration's Updated Export Controls. CSIS.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/understanding-biden-administrations-updated-export-controls>

²¹⁵ TechHQ. (2025). Taiwan chooses sides in tech cold war, cuts off China's chip giants.

<https://techhq.com/news/tech-cold-war-taiwan-blacklists-huawei-smic/>

²¹⁶ Lind, J. & Mastanduno, M. (2025). Hard Then, Harder Now: CoCom's Lessons and the Challenge of Crafting Effective Export Controls Against China. Texas National Security Review.

<https://tnsr.org/2025/09/hard-then-harder-now-cocoms-lessons-and-the-challenge-of-crafting-effective-export-controls-against-china/>; Hiciano, L. (2025). How Taiwan's Chip Industry Navigates US Industrial Policy and Export Controls. Global Taiwan Institute.

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STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS



China (PRC)

The semiconductor industry is witnessing intense competition between China and Taiwan, both vying for a larger share of the global semiconductor market, valued at over \$400 billion. While China focuses on significant investments in the industry, Taiwan emphasizes research and development. Each country

possesses unique strengths and weaknesses, leading to continuous rivalry in the foreseeable future. China stands as the world's largest semiconductor market, having received substantial government investments and subsidies. In contrast, Taiwan ranks as the second-largest semiconductor market and houses prominent companies like TSMC and UMC. This rivalry has led to a trade war, with tariffs imposed on semiconductor imports by both countries.

The Sino-Taiwanese conflict represents an important geopolitical tension in East Asia. The relationship between China and Taiwan is experiencing intense competition over the electronics sector, including semiconductors and electronic chips. Taiwan has a large role in the high-tech and electronics industry, which makes it a target of China's economic and

technological hegemony strategies. China seeks to achieve superiority in these industries and gain control over the global supply chain, which gives it great strategic power. Its policy is to try to increase its influence on Taiwan, both by diplomatic pressure and by constant military threats. China seeks to achieve "national unity" and restore Taiwan under its control. This geopolitical escalation is increasing simultaneously with the rivalry between China and the USA. The United States stands by Taiwan through its political and military support, which further aggravates the tension between the two states. This competitiveness manifests itself in multiple areas, including technology, security and economics.²¹⁷



United States (US)

The U.S.-Taiwan deal aimed at expanding chip production capacity in the U.S. is unlikely to fully wean Washington off the island's most advanced semiconductors anytime soon, several analysts told CNBC, leaving the so-called "silicon shield" largely intact for now. Taiwan dominates global chip

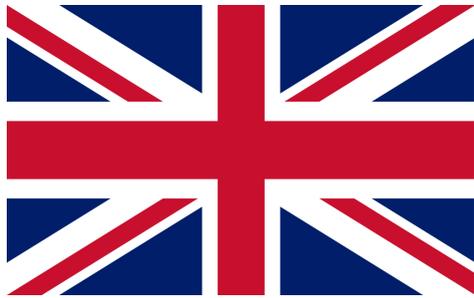
production, with the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company producing most of the world's advanced chips. Nearly one-third of global demand for new computing power is estimated to be fabricated in Taiwan.

The island's central role in the global semiconductor supply chain has made preserving its de facto autonomy — and deterring any Chinese attack — a strategic priority for the U.S. and its allies, an idea referred to as the "Silicon Shield." Beijing claims territorial control over the democratically-governed island. As part of a trade deal struck Thursday, the Taiwanese government promised to guarantee \$250 billion in credit to its chip and technology companies to expand their production capacity in the U.S. Taiwanese companies will also enjoy higher quotas for tariff-free imports of their chips into the U.S. In return, Washington would lower its levies on most goods from Taiwan to 15% from 20%, and waive tariffs on generic drugs and ingredients, aircraft components and natural resources unavailable domestically.

The goal is to bring 40% of Taiwan's entire semiconductor supply chain to the U.S., Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told CNBC on Thursday. But experts doubt the plan would be easy, given Taipei's hard line on keeping its most advanced technology at home. Taiwan's "silicon shield" will remain strong through the end of the decade, with the world's most critical advanced capacity concentrated on the island, said Sravan Kundojjala, an analyst at SemiAnalysis. Taiwanese authorities restricted TSMC's overseas fabrication plants

²¹⁷ Hamil, M. (2023). *Semiconductor competition between China and Taiwan*. In *Proceedings of the 33rd International RAIS Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities* (pp. 173–182). Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies. <https://rais.education/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/0316.pdf>

from operating technologies at least two generations behind those developed domestically, known as the N-2 rule.²¹⁸



United Kingdom (UK)

Navigating its post-Brexit "Global Britain" strategy, the United Kingdom has executed a decisive tilt toward the Indo-Pacific, balancing deep security commitments with a hardening economic stance toward Beijing. As noted by the [Hague Centre for Strategic Studies \(2022\)](#), London views the security of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific as indivisible, evidenced by the deployment of Carrier Strike Groups to the region to enforce freedom of navigation and the deepening of defense ties through the AUKUS trilateral partnership. While less manufacturing-intensive than some peers, the UK's critical infrastructure remains vulnerable to supply chain shocks; consequently, the government has actively utilized the National Security and Investment Act to block Chinese acquisitions of British semiconductor assets to protect national security interests.²¹⁹ London's primary objective in this committee is to uphold the rules-based international order and secure maritime trade routes, ensuring that a Taiwan contingency does not unravel the global trading system upon which its economy depends.



France

As the sole European Union member with a permanent military presence in the Indo-Pacific, France pursues a distinct strategy of "strategic autonomy," rejecting automatic alignment with Washington while firmly opposing unilateral changes to the status quo. According to the [Groupe d'études géopolitiques \(2025\)](#), Paris emphasizes "sovereignty partnerships" with non-aligned powers like India and Indonesia to offset reliance on superpowers, positioning itself as an alternative security provider that refuses to be drawn into a binary bloc confrontation. Economically, a disruption in the Taiwan Strait would critically impact France's high-tech aerospace and defense industries, which rely on advanced logic chips despite efforts to bolster EU semiconductor autonomy.²²⁰ Therefore, France's primary objective is to maintain its status as a stabilizing, independent power, protecting its vast

²¹⁸ *CNBC International*. (2026, January 19). *What the U.S.–Taiwan chip deal means for Taiwan's silicon shield and global supply chain*. CNBC International.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2026/01/19/us-taiwan-chip-deal-silicon-shield-tsmc-trump-tapei-ai-semiconductor-supply-chain.html>

²¹⁹ Gibson Dunn. (2024). 2023 Year-End Sanctions and Export Controls Update.

<https://www.gibsondunn.com/2023-year-end-sanctions-and-export-controls-update/>

²²⁰ Vision of Humanity. (2025). The World's Growing Reliance on Taiwan's Semiconductor Industry.

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/the-worlds-dependency-on-taiwans-semiconductor-industry-is-increasing/>

exclusive economic zones and overseas territories from coercion while preventing a conflict that would shatter global supply chains.

Russia



The Russian Federation has cemented a "no limits" partnership with Beijing, serving as a strategic spoiler that challenges US hegemony while relying heavily on China for economic survival amid Western sanctions. According to the [Center for European Policy Analysis \(2025\)](#), while Moscow explicitly supports China's territorial claims over Taiwan and conducts joint naval exercises to stretch Allied resources, the relationship remains transactional rather than a formal mutual defense treaty. The "TSMC Factor" is critical here: following the invasion of Ukraine and subsequent sanctions, Russia has become desperate for semiconductors to maintain its military-industrial complex, forcing it to rely on illicit imports via transshipment hubs like Kazakhstan and Chinese suppliers for over 89% of its microchip imports.²²¹ Consequently, Moscow's primary objective is to erode US global influence by supporting Chinese revisionism, ensuring continued economic lifelines and military-technical cooperation essential for its own war efforts.

Japan



Viewing a Taiwan contingency as an existential "survival-threatening situation," Japan has shifted from its traditional pacifist posture toward active deterrence, doubling defense spending and reinforcing its alliance with the United States. Defense Priorities (2025) notes that Tokyo links Taiwan's security directly to its own, fearing that a Chinese takeover would compromise Japan's southern trade routes and territorial integrity, prompting it to strengthen quasi-alliances with Australia and the Philippines. The economic stakes are exceptionally high, as Japan supplies approximately 29% of the global market for wafer fabrication equipment; a TSMC shutdown would be catastrophic for Japan's industrial base, particularly its automotive sector which relies on legacy chips.²²² Japan's primary objective is to deter Chinese aggression through a massive

²²¹ Ruth, O. (2025, January 10). *The Impact of Sanctions and Alliances on Russian Military Capabilities*. Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/impact-sanctions-and-alliances-russian-military-capabilities>; Faragasso, S., Giveh, M., & Szyrka, A. (2025, December 3). *Case Study: Millions of Dollars' Worth of Tier One Common High Priority Items Exported from China to Russia*. Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS). <https://isis-online.org/isis-reports/case-study-millions-of-dollars-worth-of-tier-one-common-high-priority-items-exported-from-china-to-russia>

²²² Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). (2023). *Mapping the Semiconductor Supply Chain: The Critical Role of the Indo-Pacific Region*. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/mapping-semiconductor-supply-chain-critical-role-indo-pacific-region>

buildup of counterstrike capabilities and by internationalizing the Taiwan issue to prevent a *fait accompli*.²²³



South Korea

The Republic of Korea faces an acute strategic dilemma, balancing its "ironclad" security alliance with the United States against its massive economic dependence on China. This position has been further complicated by severe domestic instability following President Yoon Suk Yeol's failed martial law

declaration in December 2024 and subsequent impeachment proceedings, which have critically constrained Seoul's ability to project power abroad.²²⁴ As a global powerhouse holding 20% of the semiconductor foundry market, South Korea competes with Taiwan but relies on the same stable global supply chains for materials; a conflict would devastate its electronics export sector and disrupt the raw materials it imports from China.²²⁵ Seoul's primary objective is to prevent a conflict that would force a binary choice between its security guarantor and primary economic partner, while ensuring maintained deterrence against North Korea amid its own leadership vacuum.



Philippines

As a geographic frontline state, the Philippines has pivoted sharply back to the US alliance under the Marcos Jr. administration, granting expanded base access under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) to deter Chinese expansionism.

As reported by Defense Priorities (2025), Manila views a Taiwan conflict as an immediate threat not only to its northern territories but specifically to the safety of over 150,000 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) currently residing in Taiwan, a demographic reality that makes neutrality nearly impossible.²²⁶ Economically, the Philippines serves as a key hub for semiconductor assembly, testing, and packaging (ATP); a blockade would sever the flow of

²²³ Taiwan News. (2026). US joins EU, Japan, Philippines, and Australia in condemning Chinese drills around Taiwan. <https://taiwannews.com.tw/news/6275137>

²²⁴ Comparative Connections. (2024). China - Korea Relations, May – December 2024.

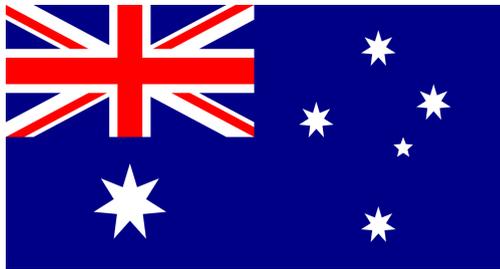
<https://cc.pacforum.org/?s&frommo=5&fromyr=2024&tomo=12&toyr=2024&relations=23&pt=date>

²²⁵ Bao Tran. (2026). Top Semiconductor Manufacturing Countries in 2020-2030: Production and Export Stats.

<https://patentpc.com/blog/top-semiconductor-manufacturing-countries-in-2020-2030-production-and-export-stats>

²²⁶ Center for a New American Security (CNAS). (2025). Regional and Global Responses to a Taiwan Contingency. <https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/taiwan-contingency-final.pdf>

wafers, halting its electronics export sector which is a critical economic driver.²²⁷ Therefore, Manila's primary objective is to leverage the US alliance to protect its sovereignty and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) while avoiding automatic entrapment in a war where it would become a primary target.



Australia

Canberra views the current strategic environment as the most complex since World War II, committing to [AUKUS](#) and [the Quad](#) to counterbalance China's coercive power and maintain a "strategic equilibrium." While not guaranteeing military

intervention, Australia hosts US bombers and marines to complicate Chinese operational planning, signaling that a war over Taiwan would likely implicate the [ANZUS](#) alliance.²²⁸

Lacking domestic fabrication capacity, Australia is entirely dependent on imported semiconductors; a Taiwan shutdown would cripple its digitized economy and defense capabilities, exposing severe supply chain vulnerabilities.²²⁹ Consequently, Australia's primary objective is to deter conflict through high-tech collective defense while maintaining lucrative resource trade with China for as long as possible.



India

India practices a strategy of "multi-alignment," deepening security ties with the West [vis-à-vis](#) China to secure its land borders while maintaining strategic autonomy and a partnership with Russia. As reported by [The Wire \(2026\)](#), New Delhi opposes unilateral changes in the Taiwan Strait and links regional

stability to its own economic interests, though its primary security focus remains the Himalayan border dispute with China. With ambitions to become a semiconductor hub—investing over \$10 billion in new fabs—India currently relies heavily on imports; a Taiwan crisis would derail its "Make in India" technology goals and critical infrastructure upgrades.²³⁰ India's primary objective is to prevent Chinese hegemony in Asia by

²²⁷ Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). (2023). Mapping the Semiconductor Supply Chain: The Critical Role of the Indo-Pacific Region.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/mapping-semiconductor-supply-chain-critical-role-indo-pacific-region>

²²⁸ Defense Priorities. (2025). Target Taiwan: Limits of allied support.

<https://www.defensepriorities.org/explainers/target-taiwan-limits-of-allied-support/>

²²⁹ ASEAN Regional Forum. (2023). *Annual security outlook 2023*. ASEAN Regional Forum.

<https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/ASEAN-REGIONAL-FORUM-ANNUAL-SECURITY-OUTLOOK-2023-final-ver.pdf>

²³⁰ Bao Tran. (2026). Top Semiconductor Manufacturing Countries in 2020-2030: Production and Export Stats.

<https://patentpc.com/blog/top-semiconductor-manufacturing-countries-in-2020-2030-production-and-export-stats>

strengthening the Quad and diversifying supply chains, without entering formal military alliances that limit its strategic autonomy.²³¹



Singapore

A "price-taker" in international relations, Singapore maintains a delicate neutrality, hosting US logistics support while deepening economic integration with China to ensure regional stability. [Oxford Analytica \(2025\)](#) highlights that while strictly adhering to a "One China" policy, Singapore maintains a unique, decades-long military training agreement with

Taiwan and aggressively promotes ASEAN centrality to avoid binary choices. As a major global hub contributing 11% to the global semiconductor equipment market, Singapore is deeply integrated with Taiwan's ecosystem; a conflict would be economically catastrophic for its trade-dependent economy.²³² Singapore's primary objective is to ensure the survival of the open, rules-based trading system on which its economy depends, preventing great power conflict from disrupting maritime trade routes.²³³



Germany

Berlin is shifting from a mercantilist China policy to one of "de-risking," viewing China as a systemic rival while balancing heavy economic dependence on the Chinese market. Germany has increased its symbolic military presence in the Indo-Pacific, deploying the frigate *Bayern* and subsequent naval

assets to the South China Sea to signal alignment with international law, despite internal divisions on economic decoupling.²³⁴ The German automotive and industrial sectors face an existential threat from any disruption in the Taiwan Strait; a chip shortage would induce a massive industrial recession, prompting Berlin to aggressively subsidize local fabrication

²³¹ The Washington Quarterly. (2025). Global Swing States and the New Great Power Competition.

https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.gwu.edu/dist/1/2181/files/2025/07/GibbsMckinley_TWO_48_2.pdf

²³² Bao Tran. (2026). Top Semiconductor Manufacturing Countries in 2020-2030: Production and Export Stats.

<https://patentpc.com/blog/top-semiconductor-manufacturing-countries-in-2020-2030-production-and-export-stats>

²³³ Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). (2023). Mapping the Semiconductor Supply Chain: The Critical Role of the Indo-Pacific Region.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/mapping-semiconductor-supply-chain-critical-role-indo-pacific-region>

²³⁴ Asia in Review. (2021). China 2021 May-Aug. German-Southeast Asian Center of Excellence for Public Policy and Good Governance (CPG). <https://cpg-online.de/home/publications/asia-in-review/asia-in-review-ea-china-2021-may-aug/>; Center

for a New American Security (CNAS). (2025). Regional and Global Responses to a Taiwan Contingency.

<https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/taiwan-contingency-final.pdf>

plants to build resilience.²³⁵ Germany's primary objective is to reduce critical dependencies on China without severing the trade relationship that underpins the German export model.



Lithuania

Lithuania acts as a "values-based" vanguard in Europe, having defied Chinese economic coercion to deepen diplomatic and economic ties with Taiwan, framing the island as a fellow democracy facing authoritarian threats. [The Global Taiwan Institute \(2025\)](#) notes that Vilnius explicitly challenged Beijing's diplomatic constraints by withdrawing from the "17+1" bloc and allowing a "Taiwanese" representative office, linking the defense of Taiwan to the defense of Ukraine against expansionism. By leveraging its pro-Taiwan stance, Lithuania seeks to attract Taiwanese investment in its own high-tech sectors, specifically its niche laser manufacturing industry, to build economic resilience against Chinese pressure.²³⁶ Its primary objective is to signal resilience against authoritarian coercion, linking Russia and China, and to secure US and Taiwanese support for its own security.



United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The United Arab Emirates pursues a "balanced" foreign policy, strengthening ties with the US while leveraging its new membership in the expanded BRICS alliance to hedge against Western pressure.²³⁷ Abu Dhabi avoids taking sides, utilizing Chinese technology like Huawei despite US pressure, while relying on US security guarantees, viewing the Taiwan issue through the lens of economic pragmatism.²³⁸ As a major consumer of chips for its diversification into AI and technology, the UAE is vulnerable to supply shocks and US export controls targeting leakage to China.²³⁹ The UAE's primary objective is to position itself as a neutral connectivity node in a multipolar world, avoiding entanglement in great power proxy conflicts to protect its economic diversification.

²³⁵ Vision of Humanity. (2025). The World's Growing Reliance on Taiwan's Semiconductor Industry. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/the-worlds-dependency-on-taiwans-semiconductor-industry-is-increasing/>

²³⁶ Global Taiwan Institute. (2025). Patience and Perseverance: Lessons from Lithuania's Engagement with Taiwan. <https://globaltaiwan.org/2025/03/patience-and-perseverance-lessons-from-lithuanias-engagement-with-taiwan/>

²³⁷ Rabdan Security & Defense Institute (RSDI). (2025). UAE's 'Balanced' Diplomacy in the Resurgent BRICS. <https://rsdi.ae/en/publications/uaes-balanced-diplomacy-in-the-resurgent-brics>

²³⁸ Atlantic Council. (2025). What Would a Taiwan Strait Crisis Mean for the UAE? <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/what-would-a-taiwan-strait-crisis-mean-for-the-uae/>

²³⁹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. (2023). Hong Kong's Technology Lifeline to Russia. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2023/05/hong-kongs-technology-lifeline-to-russia>



Brazil

Under President Lula, Brazil champions "Active Non-Alignment" and the Global South, emphasizing multipolarity and refusing to isolate China, its largest trading partner. A prominent BRICS member, Brazil criticizes US "hegemony" and sanctions, viewing the Taiwan issue as an internal Chinese matter to be handled without interference.²⁴⁰ Brazil relies heavily on

imported chips for its agribusiness and industrial sectors; a supply shock would trigger severe inflation and economic contraction, yet it lacks the domestic capacity to substitute imports.²⁴¹ Brazil's primary objective is to promote a multipolar order where the Global South has greater agency, using BRICS to dilute Western financial dominance while maintaining trade with all sides.

The following section outlines the strategic positions and objectives of the Council Members regarding the situation in the Taiwan Strait:

China (People's Republic of China – PRC)

- **Alignment:** Strongly aligned against Taiwan's political autonomy; views Taiwan as an inseparable part of China.
- **TSMC Link:** No direct control; highly dependent on Taiwan's semiconductor output for advanced chips but restricted by sanctions.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Severe disruption to China's tech sector, AI development, and advanced manufacturing.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Regain control over Taiwan while preventing permanent loss of access to advanced semiconductor technology and avoiding total economic isolation.

United States

- **Alignment:** Strongly aligned with Taiwan (unofficially); opposes Chinese military action.
- **TSMC Link:** Critical supplier for U.S. tech, defense, and AI industries; limited domestic alternatives.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Major damage to technology, defense, and automotive sectors.

²⁴⁰ CEBRI. (2025). Brazil, the BRICS and Active Non-Alignment. <https://cebri.org/revista/en/artigo/202/brazil-the-brics-and-active-non-alignment>

²⁴¹ The Washington Quarterly. (2025). Global Swing States and the New Great Power Competition. https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.gwu.edu/dist/1/2181/files/2025/07/GibbsMckinley_TWO_48_2.pdf

- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Prevent Chinese control over TSMC, maintain freedom of navigation, and secure global chip supply chains.

United Kingdom

- **Alignment:** Politically aligned with the U.S. and supportive of Taiwan's stability, though avoids formal recognition.
- **TSMC Link:** Indirect dependence through global tech and defense supply chains.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Serious disruption to high-tech manufacturing and defense industries.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Preserve supply chain stability and uphold international law while avoiding direct military escalation.

France

- **Alignment:** Supports Taiwan's stability but prioritizes strategic autonomy rather than full alignment with the U.S.
- **TSMC Link:** Moderate dependence via European automotive and aerospace industries.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Significant harm to automotive and defense manufacturing.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Protect European industrial capacity and prevent escalation into a global conflict.

Russia

- **Alignment:** Politically aligned with China; does not support Taiwanese independence.
- **TSMC Link:** Minimal direct access due to sanctions.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Limited immediate impact; long-term tech stagnation worsens.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Support China diplomatically while exploiting global instability to weaken Western influence.

Japan

- **Alignment:** Strongly aligned with Taiwan due to security and economic interests.
- **TSMC Link:** Extremely high dependence; hosts TSMC manufacturing investments.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Collapse of electronics, automotive, and robotics industries.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Ensure Taiwan's security and maintain uninterrupted semiconductor supply.

South Korea

- **Alignment:** Cautiously aligned with the U.S. and Taiwan but seeks to avoid provoking China.
- **TSMC Link:** Competes with TSMC (Samsung) but still dependent on its advanced chips.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Major shock to tech and automotive sectors.

- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Protect semiconductor industry leadership and avoid economic retaliation from China.

Philippines

- **Alignment:** Aligned with the United States and indirectly supportive of Taiwan.
- **TSMC Link:** Indirect dependence via global electronics supply chains.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Disruption to electronics manufacturing and exports.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Preserve national security and maintain U.S. military support.

Australia

- **Alignment:** Firmly aligned with the U.S. and supportive of Taiwan's security.
- **TSMC Link:** Indirect dependence for defense and technology sectors.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Major defense and tech setbacks.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Secure Indo-Pacific stability and protect trade routes.

India

- **Alignment:** Strategically neutral; wary of China and quietly supportive of Taiwan's stability.
- **TSMC Link:** Highly dependent on imports for advanced semiconductors.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Severe impact on tech, telecom, and automotive sectors.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Reduce Chinese dominance and secure alternative semiconductor supply chains.

Singapore

- **Alignment:** Officially neutral; prioritizes regional stability.
- **TSMC Link:** Heavy dependence as a semiconductor logistics and tech hub.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Severe disruption to high-tech industries.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Maintain supply chain continuity and avoid escalation.

Germany

- **Alignment:** Supports Taiwan's stability while avoiding confrontation with China.
- **TSMC Link:** Critical dependence for automotive and industrial manufacturing.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Near collapse of automotive sector.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Protect industrial output and economic stability.

Lithuania

- **Alignment:** Strongly supportive of Taiwan politically.
- **TSMC Link:** Minimal direct economic dependence.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Limited economic impact.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Defend democratic values and resist Chinese coercion.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- **Alignment:** Neutral; balances relations with both China and the West.

- **TSMC Link:** Indirect dependence through tech imports.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Manageable but damaging to diversification efforts.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Protect economic diversification and global trade stability.

Brazil

- **Alignment:** Officially neutral; leans toward China economically.
- **TSMC Link:** Indirect dependence for industrial and agricultural technology.
- **Impact if TSMC Stops:** Moderate disruption to industry.
- **Primary Objective in Crisis:** Maintain trade relations and avoid global economic shocks.

UN MECHANISM & PROCEDURAL WARFARE

As explained with great detail previously in the “*Introduction to the Committee*” (see page 8), the UNSC is a body that holds its power and progresses according to the UN Charter, specifically Chapter V. The specific powers granted to the Security Council for the discharge of these duties are laid down in Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII. The scope that the Taiwan Strait situation falls under is Chapter VII, “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression”. This chapter highlights that the Council determines the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression, and makes recommendations or decides on the measures to be taken in accordance with the Charter to maintain or restore international peace and security.²⁴² But how would these mechanisms really work about the issue of the Taiwan Strait?

The UNSC’s Scope on the Issue according to the UN Charter

For the Council to take action, the issue must be determined to constitute a threat or breach of international peace and security. Article 39 directly enables this, along with the power to implement various measures. The question remains whether the situation in the Taiwan Strait can be characterized as such.

Given the potential for large-scale military conflict and the threat of Beijing's use of force in the event of a formal declaration of independence by Taiwan, the question of whether mainland China is prohibited under Article 2(4) of the Charter or under customary law from using force against Taiwan is significant. Whether any threat of the PRC's use of force against Taiwan would constitute a violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter depends on both the interpretation of the prohibition on the use of force and Taiwan's international legal status.

²⁴² United Nations. (1945). *United Nations Charter (full text)* | *United Nations, Art.39*. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

Article 2(4) prohibits the use of force by UN members in their international relations. Hence, it is argued that because Taiwan is not a member state of the UN and is part of China, it cannot be inconsistent with the UN Charter for the PRC Government to use force in order to resist a secessionist attempt by Taiwan, as the Charter mandates the observance of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Accordingly, the use of force by the PRC would be governed by domestic Chinese law and the law concerning non-international armed conflicts, and would not constitute a breach of Article 2(4).

The UN Security Council (United Nations, Security Council; 'UNSC') has broadly interpreted the notion of the 'threat to international peace and security' in Article 39 as a precondition for taking measures under Chapter VII, including measures to promote domestic and regional peace. Hence, it can be argued that the stipulation of Article 2(4) applying in the 'international relations' of Member States has 'similarly widened so as to implicitly recognize contested states as being protected against the threat or use of force by their original states'.²⁴³

The argument that Taiwan is not a member state of the UN and is part of China further prevents the UNSC from intervening in the area, according to Article 2(7).

However, while Article 2(7) serves as a formidable barrier regarding domestic jurisdiction, the Security Council's internal voting procedures present an even more complex structural hurdle to any substantive action regarding Taiwan.

The Veto Reality and the "Double Veto" Trap

Any attempt to pass a binding resolution that would alter the status quo or recognize Taiwan's status would inevitably face the insurmountable obstacle of the veto power held by the Permanent Five (P5) members. As established in Article 27(3) of the Charter of the United Nations, decisions on all matters other than procedural ones must be made by an affirmative vote of nine members, which must include the "concurring votes of the permanent members." Consequently, the People's Republic of China, as a permanent member, possesses the power to cast a negative vote that would unilaterally defeat any substantive proposal.

Furthermore, a deeper legal trap exists known as the "Double Veto." As detailed in *Chapter IV VOTING*²⁴⁴, a dispute may arise regarding whether a specific vote (such as adopting the agenda) is procedural or substantive. Historically, the "San Francisco Statement" and subsequent practice suggested that the preliminary decision to classify a vote as procedural requires the concurrence of the P5. This means China could potentially veto the *classification* of the move as procedural (the first veto) to ensure it remains substantive, and then veto the resolution itself (the second veto). However, recent practice cited in *Highlights of Security Council Practice 2022*

²⁴³ Björn Ahl (2020). Taiwan. *Max Planck Encyclopedias of International Law [MPIL]*, Art. 25&26.

²⁴⁴ United Nations. (1949). Chapter IV VOTING. In *Official Records of the Public Meetings* (pp. 143–177). https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/sites/default/files/en/sc/repertoire/46-51/46-51_04.pdf

indicates that the Council has successfully resisted this maneuver in modern times, ruling that agenda adoption is purely procedural and thus immune to the veto, provided nine votes are secured.

Bypassing the Blockade (The Procedural Battle)

To circumvent this substantive deadlock, proponents of a discussion must pivot to the "procedural" loophole found within the Council's voting rules. According to Article 27(2) of the Charter, decisions on procedural matters require only an "affirmative vote of nine members," and crucially, the veto power of the permanent members does not apply to these decisions. The strategic battleground, therefore, shifts to the "adoption of the agenda," which, under Rule 9 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure, constitutes the first item of every provisional agenda.

While permanent members can veto the final outcome or resolution resulting from a debate, they cannot unilaterally veto the adoption of the agenda itself if nine members vote in favor. As documented in *Highlights of Security Council Practice 2022*²⁴⁵, the inclusion of items in the agenda is classified as a procedural matter. For instance, in 2022, the Council held a procedural vote on the adoption of the agenda regarding threats to international peace and security (Ukraine); despite the objection of a permanent member (the Russian Federation), the motion was carried because it secured the necessary nine votes. By utilizing this mechanism, a coalition of nine Council members can force a public discussion on the issue, ensuring the matter is "seized" by the body.

The "Informal" Bypass (Arria-Formula and AOB)

If the "procedural battle" for a formal meeting proves too politically costly or fails to garner nine votes, the strategy shifts to informal governance settings. As analyzed in *Behind Closed Doors: Informal Governance and Agenda-Setting*²⁴⁶, the Council often utilizes "[Arria-formula](#)" meetings to bypass the formal agenda entirely. These are informal, confidential gatherings that allow Council members to hear from individuals, non-state actors, or high-level government representatives without the constraints of the Charter's formal rules. Crucially, Arria-formula meetings do not require a procedural vote to convene, and no member holds a veto over them; they can be organized by a single member state.

Additionally, the Council utilizes "Informal Consultations of the Whole" (ICW). While these are private, members can raise "Any Other Business" (AOB) to discuss sensitive topics that are not on the formal agenda. As noted in *Behind Closed Doors*, this mechanism has been used to discuss contentious issues like Kashmir or Myanmar when formal consensus

²⁴⁵ *Highlights 2022 | Security Council*. (n.d.). <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/highlights-2022>

²⁴⁶ Kasperek, S. I. (2023). *BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: INFORMAL GOVERNANCE AND AGENDA-SETTING IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL* [PhD dissertation]. Temple University Graduate Board. <https://scholarshare.temple.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/57a18da1-bbbb-4c6d-a771-8635d56e0016/content>

was impossible. This offers a "backdoor" for Taiwan-related discussions to enter the Council's record, effectively engaging the body without triggering a formal veto showdown.

The Participation Trap (Rule 37 vs. 39)

Once a meeting (formal or informal) is secured, the challenge shifts to inviting Taiwanese representatives. The standard mechanism for state participation is **Rule 37** of the *Provisional Rules of Procedure*²⁴⁷, which applies to "any Member of the United Nations." Since Taiwan is not a UN Member State, it is ineligible under this rule. To overcome this, the Council must utilize **Rule 39**, which empowers the Council to invite "members of the Secretariat or other persons," whom it considers competent for the purpose, to supply information.

As noted in *Taiwan Imbroglia: A Brazen Violation*²⁴⁸, there is also a precedent involving **Article 32** of the Charter, which mandates that any state which is not a member of the United Nations *shall* be invited to participate in discussions relating to a dispute to which it is a party. The Security Council utilized this in the 1950s to invite a representative of the People's Republic of China before it held the UN seat. While China would fiercely contest Taiwan's status as a "state" under Article 32, the Rule 39 "other persons" designation remains a procedurally viable option that has been used to invite diverse actors ranging from civil society experts to non-state representatives.

The Emergency Exit (Uniting for Peace and the Veto Initiative)

If procedural maneuvers succeed in generating debate but a substantive resolution is subsequently vetoed by China, the Security Council reaches a constitutional dead end. At this juncture, the strategy shifts to **General Assembly Resolution 377 A (V)**²⁴⁹, known as "Uniting for Peace." As detailed in the resolution and *What is the Uniting for Peace resolution?*²⁵⁰, if the Council fails to exercise its primary responsibility due to a lack of unanimity among permanent members, the General Assembly shall consider the matter immediately. This allows the Assembly to make recommendations for collective measures, including the use of force.

²⁴⁷ *Provisional Rules of Procedure | Security Council - the United Nations.*

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/repertoire/provisional-rules-procedure>

²⁴⁸ Manesh, S. & Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian. (2008). Taiwan imbroglia: a brazen violation of U.N. charter and its basic principles. In *Taiwan International Studies Quarterly* (Vol. 4, Issue 1, pp. 201–247) [Journal-article].

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²⁴⁹ Wikipedia contributors. (2026b, January 22). *United Nations General Assembly Resolution 377 (V)*. Wikipedia.

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²⁵⁰ *What is the Uniting for peace resolution? - Ask DAG!* (n.d.). <https://ask.un.org/faq/177134>

Furthermore, under the new "Veto Initiative" (General Assembly Resolution 76/262) described in *Crisis and Change at the United Nations*²⁵¹, any use of the veto by a P5 member in the Security Council now automatically triggers a meeting of the General Assembly within ten days. This mechanism ensures that a Chinese veto on Taiwan would not silence the issue but rather immediately elevate it to the plenary of the entire United Nations membership, forcing a global debate and demanding accountability for the veto.

CONCLUSION

Distinguished Delegates,

The dossier before you presents a reality that is as fragile as it is volatile. We stand in January 2026, at a moment where the Taiwan Strait has transformed from a geopolitical flashpoint into the central nervous system of the global order. As we have explored, this is no longer just a question of territorial sovereignty; it is a crisis that entangles the global economy through the "Silicon Shield," challenges international law through "Grey Zone" warfare, and threatens millions of lives through a potential humanitarian catastrophe. The status quo that maintained peace for decades is crumbling under the weight of blockade drills, cyber-attacks, and diplomatic freezes. The "Ambiguity" of the past is being replaced by the dangerous "Clarity" of conflict. Your task in this committee is not merely to restate positions or draw red lines. Your mandate is to innovate. You must find a mechanism to de-escalate a conflict where the cost of war is \$10 trillion and the cost of failure is unthinkable. The world is watching not to see who will win a war, but who has the wisdom to prevent one.

The floor is yours. Good luck.

²⁵¹ *Crisis and Change at the United Nations: Non-Amendment Reform and Institutional Evolution*.
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QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. How can the international community facilitate direct de-escalation dialogue between Beijing and Taipei while respecting the constraints of UN General Assembly Resolution 2758?
2. Does the "One China Principle" legally permit the People's Republic of China to use force against Taiwan as a measure of "domestic enforcement," or does Article 2(4) of the UN Charter (prohibition of force) supersede this claim?
3. What are the acceptable terms for a long-term interim political agreement (status quo freeze) between Beijing and Taipei that preserves stability without forcing a settlement on sovereignty?
4. How can Taiwan's meaningful participation in technical international organizations (such as the WHO or ICAO) be secured to ensure global safety without violating the "One China" framework?
5. How should the international community respond to Beijing's 2024 judicial guidelines threatening the death penalty for "diehard separatists" when applied to Taiwanese nationals outside mainland China?
6. How should the international community define and respond to "Grey Zone" warfare tactics (e.g., aggressive Coast Guard patrols, ADIZ incursions) that intentionally fall below the threshold of armed conflict?
7. What is the specific operational and legal distinction between a "maritime quarantine" (law enforcement action) and a "blockade" (act of war) in the Taiwan Strait, and how should nations respond differently to each?
8. What specific Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) or "Hotline" protocols can be mandated between the PLA and ROC Armed Forces to prevent a minor collision from spiraling into a kinetic war?
9. Is the establishment of a maritime buffer zone or a limited Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in the Taiwan Strait a feasible solution, and which neutral body would monitor it?
10. How can the security of the "First Island Chain" be maintained without provoking further military encirclement or justification for aggression?
11. What binding measures can be adopted to ensure the neutrality and physical protection of Taiwan's semiconductor foundries (TSMC) to prevent a "scorched earth" scenario or a global tech collapse?
12. How can the global economy coordinate to mitigate the impact of a potential \$10 trillion financial shock resulting from a blockade of the Taiwan Strait?
13. What protections can be put in place for the critical undersea fiber-optic cables (carrying 99% of regional data traffic) to prevent them from being severed during a "grey zone" operation?
14. How can supply chains for critical minerals (e.g., Gallium, Antimony) be secured against geopolitical weaponization and export bans?
15. Should economic coercion tactics, such as the unilateral suspension of trade agreements (ECFA) or bans on agricultural imports, be classified as threats to regional peace?

16. Given that Taiwan relies on imported Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) for 40% of its energy and holds limited reserves, what specific maritime corridors can be mandated to prevent an energy collapse during a quarantine?
17. In a scenario where the island's power grid is severed by cyber-attacks, how can the safety of Taiwan's nuclear reactors be guaranteed against meltdown without external power sources?
18. What protocols should be in place to mitigate the environmental disaster of a potential oil spill or maritime combat in the biodiverse waters of the Taiwan Strait?
19. What logistical frameworks are required to execute a Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) for over 100,000 foreign nationals in Taiwan in the absence of formal diplomatic relations?
20. How can the UNHCR mandate be adapted to provide legal protection and status to potential Taiwanese refugees, given that Taiwan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention?
21. What specific maritime routes (e.g., via the Bashi Channel) can be designated as inviolable "Humanitarian Corridors" to ensure the flow of food and medicine during a blockade?
22. How can the safety of Taiwan's 23 million civilians be guaranteed under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) if Beijing classifies the conflict as an "internal rebellion" rather than an international war?
23. Does the Taiwan Strait constitute "internal waters" as claimed by the PRC, or is it an "international strait" with high-seas freedoms under UNCLOS, and how does this affect foreign naval transit?
24. Given the existential threat of invasion, how can the international community ensure that Taiwan does not seek to develop an indigenous nuclear deterrent?
25. If a ceasefire is negotiated, what international guarantees can be provided to prevent political retribution against Taiwanese leadership and military personnel?

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