

UNITED STATES -TAIWAN SECURITY COOPERATION: ANALYSING ITS SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The Taiwan question is one of the flashpoints in the relations between the US and China. The visit of US officials to Taiwan makes China furious and this can even lead to military confrontation in the Asia-Pacific. Many experts believe that if a war were to break out between these two great powers, the US and China, it would be catastrophic to peace and order in the world today especially with what is going on in Ukraine. On record, Taiwan is said to belong to China; The United States does not recognise the claim. Nevertheless, the US's assistance to Taiwan in all possible ways incites China's anger because they regard such actions as American interference. Following the conclusion of the Cold War, the US comes up with a strategy that was somewhat ambiguous towards Taiwan as a strategy of containing China's expansion. What they do is that they offer to defend Taiwan which in turn causes panic in China. The present study tries to maintain that the increased strains in relations between the two countries have a high likelihood that they will result in a military conflict.

Keywords: *Taiwan, China, Containment Strategy, One China Policy, Security cooperation*

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INTRODUCTION

The level of security collaboration between the United States and Taiwan and its effect on China has gone through changes concerning strategic, historical as well as geopolitical factors. After the end of the Second World War and the conclusion of the Chinese civil war, it was Taiwan whose security advocacy had grown in the United States' support to contain the spread of communism in eastern part of Asia. This support was formalised with the Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954 ensuring US Defense of Taiwan providing protection from factors external to Taiwan but particularly from the new people's republic of China (PRC). When such recognition was completed in 1979, the US switched its policy of recognising the Republic of China that was located in Taiwan to that of the People's Republic of China of mainland Beijing. In spite of this change, Taiwan remained informally armed, and military sales were not entirely ceased. This insurance, boosted by growing worries in the Taiwan straits and a more expansive China is becoming more and more important over time.

In the decades of 1980s and 1990s, the US-Taiwan security relations tended to adjust with the evolving world order and domestic political change in Taiwan where such ties based on similar beliefs of democracy were formed. This policy continued into further deepening of such cooperation saw in the first years of the 21st century where US arms regarded towards strengthening Taiwan's defense and going along with equilibrium of power in the region were a target. Due to the US-Taiwan security cooperation, China regards this as encroaching on its territory and sovereignty. It engaged in military modernisation, economic coercion and other instruments designed to isolate Taiwan. This trilateral relationship poses strategic complexities for regional peace and security in East Asia. The US strategic aims on Taiwan includes many things that cover general interest of self-employed, stability in the region and support for democracy in Taiwan. With China being more assertive, the US-Taiwan security cooperation still remains an essential piece in the balance of power and for deterring aggression from the PRC.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the book *Taiwan at a tipping point: the democratic progressive parties return to power* (Copper, 2017), the author examines the evolution of the US-Taiwan security relationship and the importance of long-term efforts by both sides to overcome past challenges and take advantage of opportunities for mutual gain and stability in the region. The increasing security engagement between the US and Taiwan has raised concerns in Beijing, which sees it as a direct threat to the One China policy. The book also discusses how US arms sales to and increased military engagement with Taiwan contribute to China's protection concerns (Zheng, 2018).

The world is changing from unipolarity to multipolarity and with changing dynamics of world; the foreign policy of United States is also changing. For this reason, the United States is now seeking to establish good relations with South Asian countries as a matter to confront China. The book '*Why China-Taiwan Relations are so tense*' (Maizland, 2023) emphasises the deep relationship between China and Taiwan; particularly the similarities in culture, languages, and the China claimed that Taiwan isn't a separate country but a sub-part of China. Cross-strait relations between Taiwan and Mainland China are relatively stable and stagnant, with no major breakthroughs or big conflicts. Romberg (2017) also argues that despite occasional conflicts and diplomatic threats, both sides have, to a certain extent, accepted the status quo, without making significant progress towards achieving legal independence or reunification. It also argues that the Taiwan Strait situation is relatively unstable and uncertain. Both China and Taiwan are essentially holding steady without making major moves or engaging in major conflicts. It's as if they're waiting and being cautious to avoid major clashes.

The book covers a wide range of topics, including historical context, geopolitical dynamics, economic cooperation, regional dynamics and diplomatic challenges. The book argues that while there are many opportunities for US-China rapprochement, addressing challenges and building trust between the two countries will be essential for its

success. The book highlights several challenges that could hinder the rapprochement between the US and China. The book also discusses the former President of America specifically the willingness of the Trump administration to confront long-standing norms in relations with Taiwan, heightened tensions with China, and difficult security environment in the Taiwan Strait (Goldstein, 2020).

The book '*U.S. Security Cooperation with Taiwan*' by Michael S. Chase (2005) is a comprehensive outline of how the US and Taiwan cooperate on security issues, even though the two countries do not have diplomatic relations. The book covers topics such as arms sales, military exchanges, and talks between the two countries, all with the aim of protecting Taiwan, particularly in light of China's claims on the island. The focus of the book is on how they balance security and diplomacy, particularly as the United States unofficially supports Taiwan. The book examines the tensions and issues that arise from this relationship and how it impacts the stability of the Taiwan Strait. The book is useful for readers who wish to gain a better understanding of this vital relationship and its implications for Asia-Pacific (Chase, 2005).

The security cooperation between the United States and Taiwan does not only effect china but also the stability of United States and the entire Asia- Pacific region too. The article "Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense" by Lindsay Maizland helps us understand why China and Taiwan have such a difficult relationship. It explains the history and ongoing issues that make them tense, like China considers Taiwan as part of its territory, while Taiwan sees itself as a separate country. The existing literature provides helpful insights into the dynamics of United States-Taiwan security cooperation and its implications for China, but still some issues should be discussed. Like mostly scholars discuss their historical relations and the reasons of the close relations between us and Taiwan (Maizland, 2021).

Although the security cooperation between the United States and Taiwan has been thoroughly examined, new research reveals other aspects worth considering. Tsai and Wang (2021), for example,

discuss how third-party nations like Australia and Japan are increasingly influencing the security dynamics between the United States and Taiwan. By strengthening a unified front against China's expansionism, the authors contend that the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) indirectly favours Taiwan and further complicates regional power dynamics. These multilateral partnerships highlight Taiwan's importance in the context of larger Indo-Pacific plans.

In the same way, Lin (2022) explores the psychological aspect of cross-strait tensions, examining how China's military posture fosters an environment of ambiguity that affects Taiwan's security plans and intensifies the need for American assistance. U.S.-Taiwan collaboration is a crucial pillar for preserving public morale and deterrence, as the study highlights how Taiwan's people view Chinese threats and how this perception influences the government's policy decisions.

In their analysis of the relationship between economic and security policy, Zhao and Chen (2023) point out that trade agreements and semiconductor partnerships are examples of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation that goes beyond military assistance. According to their analysis, one of Taiwan's non-traditional but crucial components of its strategic significance to the United States is its crucial role in the global supply chain, especially in the semiconductor industry. The authors emphasise that economic interdependence also serves as a disincentive to open conflict.

Additionally, Huang (2024) offers a thoughtful analysis of how Taiwan's internal political shifts impact its ties with China and the United States. The study looks into Taiwan's changing internal policies, which strengthen its alliance with Washington while escalating tensions with Beijing. For example, Taiwan has increased defense spending during pro-independence regimes. Huang comes to the conclusion that a significant factor in U.S.-China-Taiwan relations is still Taiwan's political situation.

Recent studies examine the ramifications of developing technology in addition to these factors. Li and Kumar (2024), for example, examine how cyber warfare and artificial intelligence (AI) affect U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation. The authors contend that cooperative efforts to combat Chinese cyber threats are becoming just as important as conventional military drills, with cyber security alliances guaranteeing Taiwan's defense against possible assaults.

Patel (2023) concludes by talking about how changing internal politics in the United States have affected Taiwan policy and how bipartisan support for Taiwan has remained strong despite the Democratic and Republican administrations' divergent stances. Patel highlights that despite political differences, Taiwan's strategic significance ensures that security cooperation will continue even if the U.S. administration changes.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The correlation of the military alliances between the United States and Taiwan bears out implications for how China chooses to react to the security scenario within the region. All these use Realism and Neo-realism to help, understand these interactions, and the rest of the world at large.

Realism and Neo-Realism

Realism holds that the international system is anarchic in nature, where every state acts to ensure its own national security and power. Classical realism, expressed by Hans Morgenthau (1948), sees state action as driven by human nature and an emphasis on a constant struggle for power. US support of Taiwan is viewed as a strategic effort to balance China's rising strength; likewise, Taiwan aligns itself with the US to reinforce its defense against China's claims of sovereignty. Kenneth Waltz's concept of neo-realism changes the focus from human character to the structure of the international system, emphasizing how the system's anarchic nature forces nations to act in such a way that their existence is secured.

Waltz and other defensive realists would argue that states seek security through power to preserve the status quo while offensive realists like John Mearsheimer would posit that states seek dominance through power at the expense of others. Applying realism and neo-realism to mutual security between the US and Taiwan demonstrates the utility of such theories of international politics. Realism provides the main explanation as to why the US will remain committed to Taiwanese security as a means to check Chinese power. Neo-realism, specifically offensive realism, shows us how the US makes such calculations to begin with.

Offensive Realism and US-Taiwan Relations

Offensive realism is, therefore, a viable framework within which to base the analysis of US-Taiwan security cooperation. States are described as power maximizers in Mearsheimer's theory (2014). The deliberate efforts of the United States in providing military aid to Taiwan are aimed at denying China regional hegemony and hence threatening U.S. position in the Asia Pacific (Mearsheimer, 2014). In response, China increases its military build-up and further develops anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities to confront external threat.

Defensive Realism and the Security Dilemma

The defensive realist approach emphasizes the security problem, which is that efforts by one state to improve its security often end up threatening others. For example, consider the case of the US deciding to supply more armed forces support to Taiwan, to deter China from making an invasion bid. In this way, US actions aimed at improving its own security are more broadly interpreted by China as threatening, sparking a tendency to reciprocate by improving China's military capabilities as well. The result is a downward spiral of escalating mutual distrust that destroys rather than enhances security – classic security dilemma (Glaser, 1997).

The Role of Hegemony and Balance of Power

Hegemony and balance of power are cornerstones of realism as well as neo-realism. The US-Taiwan security engagement is component of the US strategy to balance China's rise and check the region from falling under Chinese hegemony. Aiding Taiwan is intended to help build a counterweight to the increasingly expanding powers and influence of China in East Asia. China's response with increased military capability and assertiveness is also reflective of a core assumption of realism that states enhance their security because they are threatened by other states' attempts to dominate (Yoshihara & Holmes, 2011).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Taiwan (or 'Formosa' as it was once called) is a small island in east Asia, located between the Philippines and Japan, to the east of China, and separated from China by the Taiwan Strait in the east at the junction of the East and South China Seas (Bush, 2017). Its strategic position places it within the first island chain, a series of pro-US island states and territories, including Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines (Fairbank, 1978). Due to its strategic position, Taiwan is located within the first island chain of pro-U.S. island states and territories optimal (i.e. Japan, South Korea, the Philippines). Despite its complicated international status, Taiwan reigns self-governing over its territorial sovereignty and islands of Taiwan, Penghu, Matsu and Kinmen and its 23 million inhabitants (Taylor, 2009).

Taiwan's past contains interactions between the native population and colonial societies like the Dutch and the Japanese. In 1684, Taiwan was annexed by China, having experienced significant Chinese migration beginning in the 16th century. The Qing dynasty dominated Taiwan until 1895, when it ceded the island to Japan after losing a war with them, which underscored its failure to modernize effectively. The Qing collapse laid the foundation of the Republic of China (ROC) established by Sun Yat-sen in 1912, and eventually Chiang Kai-shek took leadership of the party Kuomintang (KMT)

(Chang, 1997). During World War II, the US joined forces with the ROC to combat Japan's control of Taiwan for almost half a century. The bilateral agreements after the war, including the Cairo Declaration (1943) and the Potsdam Declaration (1945), confirmed the return of Taiwan to China (Ling, 2002). Yet, the Chinese Civil War between Chiang and Mao Zedong's Communists reignited while US initially trying to mediate (U.S. Department of State, 2021). The 1947 February 28 massacre was an indication of KMT unpopularity in Taiwan (Shirk, 2007). Chiang and his supporters retreated to Taiwan when they lost control of mainland China for Communist, believing that he would establish a new bastion through which the rule over mainland could be restored. The withdrawal began a long and often contentious relationship with the new government of China (the People's Republic) which considers Taiwan to be its wayward province as part and parcel under The One-China Principle (Kerr, 1965).

During the early Cold War, US policy toward Taiwan changed, especially after Washington entered Korea in 1950-1964. Fearing Communist expansion, the US deployed its Seventh Fleet to patrol in Taiwan Strait and signed a mutual defense with treaty with Nato. Nevertheless, the US continued to back Chiang's Taiwan as a crucial anti-Communist ally despite his authoritarian style of governing (Christensen, 2011). The US-Taiwan relationship faced challenges as the US sought to normalize relations with the PRC during the 1970s. President Nixon's visit to China in 1972 marked a significant shift, leading to the US recognizing the PRC in 1979 and severing official diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Despite this, the US continued to support Taiwan through the Taiwan Relations Act, ensuring its security and stability while navigating complex relations with China (Tucker, 2009).

Taiwan: A Top Concern in US-PRC Normalisation Dialogue

The US and China signed the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972, which read: The United States acknowledges that Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is; one China and that Taiwan is a

part of China but he produced. The US stressed the peaceful settlement of Taiwan-related issues. The US broke diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1978, recognizing the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the "sole legitimate government of China," but continued to sell arms (Rubinstein, 2007).

The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) was created by Congress in 1979 through the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to oversee unofficial relations and emphasize the significance of peace and stability in the area. It required the United States to sell weapons to Taiwan for protection and tied US relations with China to resolving the Taiwan situation peacefully (Rubinstein, 2007).

In 1982, under Reagan's administration, the US agreed to decrease weapons sales to Taiwan if China maintained a peaceful stance. Reagan's Six Assurances to Taiwan consisted of no specified deadline for halting arms sales, no intervention in the relationship between Taipei and Beijing, and no alteration to the TRA. These promises underscored the US dedication to protecting Taiwan and maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait (Congress.gov, 2021).

The US One China policy, which includes three joint communiqués, the TRA, and the Six Assurances, demonstrates a dedication to diplomatic ties with the PRC while also safeguarding Taiwan's military strength. This strategy has been transformed, with notable adjustments during the leadership of Trump and Biden, enabling increased interaction with Taiwanese authorities. The US believes that cross-strait matters should be settled peacefully, with Taiwan's agreement, while also avoiding Chinese pressure and preventing Taiwan from acting independently (Bush, 2004).

US-Taiwan Cooperation: A Threat to China's Regional Security

China sees the relationship between the US and Taiwan as a direct challenge to its sovereignty, regional security, and reunification efforts. This belief originates from Taiwan's important position in the initial island chain, a group of US-aligned territories that may limit

China's military strength. Military collaboration between the US and Taiwan, through activities such as arms trade and defense assistance, enhances Taiwan's ability to protect itself, which counters China's efforts towards reunification. Even though the US acknowledges the PRC as the only government of China, it continues to have close unofficial relationships with Taiwan, which includes supplying weapons as outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act. China views these actions as threats to its sovereignty and security, resulting in increased tensions and a strong military reaction to prevent potential external dangers. China's efforts are made more complex by Taiwan's move towards democracy and resistance to reunification, as well as the United States' strategic goal of opposing Chinese dominance in East Asia by backing Taiwan, leading to increased geopolitical tensions in the region (United States Institute of Peace, 2019).

US-Taiwan Security Cooperation: Implications for China

The US-Taiwan security alliance significantly influences China and impacts every facet of its strategic, political, economic, and military endeavours (Lawrence, 2024). As a matter of fact, from China's viewpoint, the steadiness of the relationship between the USA and Taiwan is perceived as a danger to the stability of the region. This collaboration enhances Taiwan's capacity to defend itself and thwart any military actions from China against Taiwan; however, it also escalates military tensions in the region and contributes to the potential for miscalculation and aggression (Javed, 2022). Promoting the security of Taiwan fortifies Taiwan's position as an autonomous entity and calls into question China's enduring assertions regarding the island. This backing constitutes a significant source of strain in the relations between the United States and China, resulting in increased discord and diminishing prospects for collaboration on a range of global matters. Sanctions imposed on American corporations engaged in arms transactions. Such measures may interfere with trade and investment and impact the economic stability of the area (Chen, Sun, & Wen, 2018). China perceives this as a direct challenge to its military and strategic objectives. This interaction is a component

of a more extensive US strategy aimed at countering China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region. China acknowledges that US military assistance to Taiwan provides it with a misleading sense of security, stimulates separatism, and undermines its opportunities for conflict resolution (Maizland, 2023).

This is perceived as a matter of nation-building in China rather than as a geopolitical or ideological concern in the United States. China ought to endorse the formation of the Asia-Pacific security community and motivate the United States to take the lead in this initiative. The blend of public trust in the military and the aspiration to protect Taiwan signifies the significance of this approach. The journey towards Taiwan's independence has been characterized by a partnership with the United States since the Cold War, and this dedication to leadership is essential for Taiwan's confidence in this geographical area (Malinconi, 2023).

China faces numerous challenges that impact its strategic, political, economic, and military pursuits. China perceives such collaboration as a significant threat to its regional objectives and national sovereignty. The increasing defense capabilities of Taiwan, along with the fortification of U. S. regional institutions, confront China's influence and complicate its efforts to fulfil its aspirations in East Asia. The persistent conflict illustrates security, negotiation, and power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region and highlights the wider regional competition between China and the United States (Maizland, 2023).

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

United States Strategic Interests in Taiwan

The US has a variety of strategic interests in Taiwan based on geopolitical factors, stability in the region, and common democratic principles. These passions have developed as time passes, showing the shifting interactions in global politics and the increasing confidence of China.

Geopolitical Considerations

The United States views Taiwan's strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region as vital. Taiwan is located where the East and South China Seas meet, and it is part of the original island chain that plays an important role in constraining China's maritime goals. China would gain significant strategic benefits by having control over Taiwan, such as increased Pacific Ocean access and more influence over important sea lanes (Christensen, 1996). Therefore, the United States sees Taiwan as an essential part of its plan to uphold a power balance in the region and counter Chinese dominance.

Regional Stability

The stability of the Taiwan Strait is crucial for regional peace and security, and the United States is committed to upholding it through military resources and joint exercises (Scobell, 2000). By bolstering Taiwan's defensive capabilities, the US hopes to deter potential Chinese aggression and preserve a stable security environment in East Asia.

Shared Democratic Values

Taiwan's democratic leadership aligns with the US's commitment to democracy and human rights, solidifying its partnership since the late 1980s. The US supports Taiwan's autonomy and democratic values amid threats.

China's Strategic Calculations

China's response to the US-Taiwan security collaboration is influenced by strategic concerns such as sovereignty, regional influence, and military balance. These are discussed as bellow:

Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity

China views Taiwan as a crucial part of its territory and is committed to reunifying it. The US-Taiwan security collaboration poses a threat to China's territorial integrity, prompting China to implement

strategies like upgrading its military, imposing economic strain, and isolating Taiwan diplomatically.

Regional Influence and Hegemony

China's goals go beyond reunifying with Taiwan to establishing dominance in East Asia. Gaining control of Taiwan would greatly improve China's strategic position, allowing for more effective power projection in the region. The US-Taiwan security cooperation is viewed as a hindrance to these aspirations, as it bolsters the US-led security framework in the Asia-Pacific region (Waltz, 1993). China's strategic planning includes balancing US influence by enhancing its military capacities, establishing key alliances, and strengthening its presence in contested regions like the South China Sea.

Military Balance and Deterrence

China is working to modernize its military by developing anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities to prevent US military dominance and discourage interference in the Taiwan Strait. China aims to tilt the military balance in its favour through improvements in its naval, missile, and cyber capacities to hinder US intervention in a Taiwan crisis (Shambaugh, 2004). The reasoning behind these actions is based on the realist concept of gaining power and deterring threats, showing China's commitment to protecting its interests and avoiding outside influence.

US-Taiwan Security Cooperation: Implications for Regional Security

The US-Taiwan security cooperation and China's strategic calculations significantly impact East Asia's security, potentially leading to increased military action, influencing neighbouring relationships, and affecting the region's geopolitical situation.

Potential for Military Escalation

The US-Taiwan relationship poses a security dilemma, with one party's security efforts seen as threats by others. Modern military

equipment, drills, and events in the Taiwan Strait increase the risk of mistakes and accidental clashes. For instance, there is a greater possibility of close contacts with Chinese forces, which could unintentionally turn into military conflicts, due to the regular presence of American aircraft and navy ships in the Taiwan Strait. Similar to this, China's military exercises close to Taiwan, which are intended to demonstrate its power, could be mistaken for invasion drills, leading to defensive measures that increase tensions.

Impact on Regional Alliances

The US-Taiwan security collaboration influences regional alliances, with Asian countries like Japan, South Korea, and Australia adapting their strategies. The US's commitment to Taiwan boosts regional security, while China's boldness encourages cooperation (Glaser, 2010).

For instance, in response to common concerns about China's behaviour, Japan has increased defense spending and strengthened ties with the US. Through programs like AUKUS, Australia has also improved its relationship with the US, demonstrating a shared commitment to preserving Indo-Pacific stability. In the meantime, South Korea is carefully modifying its strategy to strike a balance between its security pledges to the US and its economic relations with China.

Broader Geopolitical Dynamics

The US-Taiwan security partnership is influenced by geopolitical forces beyond the Taiwan Strait, with competition in technology, trade, and military power affecting East Asia's strategic environment. Understanding US and China's interests and calculations regarding Taiwan is crucial for understanding global affairs (Posen, 1984).

US-Taiwan Security Cooperation: Strategic Implications for China

Neo-realism does much to clarify the paired strategic responses that China exhibits toward security cooperation between the United States

and Taiwan: military modernization and assertiveness in the South China Sea aimed at countering US influence and coercion, and military modernization and assertiveness across the Taiwan Strait aimed at deterring any US intervention. While the former is paying attention on increasing China's capability to deny US and allied operational freedom in the South China Sea, thereby deterring allied support for Taiwan, giving second place to A2/AD is indicative of a Taiwan Strait focus – by building, for instance, destroyers, fire-control radars, precision strike munitions and other weapons systems, China can increase the likelihood of cost-imposing measures in the strait by advancing its capability to challenge the US air force (Cole, 2006).

Perspectives from ASEAN Countries on U.S.-Taiwan Security Cooperation

ASEAN countries face strategic challenges due to their proximity to the Taiwan Strait, economic ties with China, and US security presence. Tensions could disrupt regional stability and global trade, while economic interests could be jeopardized by strong US or Taiwan ties.

The ASEAN countries show different views on the impact of security cooperation in the United States and its influence on regional stability. Vietnam believes that partnership is a necessary balance between self-confidence in China, reflecting its historical excitement with Beijing (Michaels, 2022). The Philippines has a mutual defense treaty with the US, and its growing partnership with Taiwan is seen as a deterrent against Chinese aggression. However, internal divisions and concerns over regional stability in Taiwan could lead to instability, affecting security and economic growth (Cruz, 2023). Singapore balances relations with the U.S. and China, recognizing Taiwan's strategic importance but promoting dialogue to de-escalate tensions. It supports a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, promoting regional peace (Tan, 2021). Malaysia and Thailand emphasize ASEAN's importance in regional security and peaceful resolutions while avoiding polarization in the U.S.-China rivalry, focusing on economic development and security cooperation (Ali, 2022). ASEAN

members such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Brunei have close economic and political connections with China due to their reliance on Chinese investment and aid. These countries typically avoid backing US-led initiatives that risk China's interests, notably those involving Taiwan (Smith, 2022). Myanmar's military government sees China as a strategic partner, relying on its backing to strengthen its regime in the face of international isolation. Brunei aligns with China on economic issues, hoping to profit from Chinese investments and regional commerce (Nguyen, 2023; Tan, 2021). This dynamic demonstrates how economic dependencies impact political alignments within ASEAN, frequently causing member nations to prefer bilateral relations with China over collaboration with the United Nations on critical geopolitical matters.

Fragmentation and Strategic Adaptation: ASEAN's Response to Tensions in the Taiwan Strait

A number of causes, including internal political difficulties, the growing influence of middle powers, and Taiwan's economic interests, have fractured ASEAN's position on regional security concerns, especially U.S.-Taiwan cooperation (Chheang, 2022). ASEAN nations are growing more worried about non-traditional security risks associated with elevated tensions in the Taiwan Strait. This includes cyber security issues that could affect local economies and infrastructures, as well as supply chain vulnerabilities, especially in the technology sector (Huang, 2023).

Within ASEAN, the younger generation is actively forming fresh geopolitical viewpoints. Digital diplomacy promotes involvement and goodwill toward Taiwan's regional role, while pro-democracy movements are gaining momentum and promoting a positive perception of Taiwan's democratic principles (Bui, 2023). ASEAN nations are creating covert plans to safeguard their interests in reaction to the growing U.S.-Taiwan collaboration. This entails presenting U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation as a component of a larger global power struggle, investigating adaptable regional alliances to counter current challenges, and broadening defense

partnerships to lessen an excessive dependence on any one state (Nguyen, 2023). The area is made more complex by worries about the U.S. and China's technology decoupling, which makes ASEAN countries reevaluate their strategic alliances (Chung, 2023). Additional obstacles are brought about by the changing global order, as ASEAN nations attempt to maintain regional peace while navigating a quickly changing geopolitical environment.

Recent Update of Evolving U.S.-Taiwan Security Cooperation and Its Implications for China

China's strategic calculations are significantly impacted by the changing security cooperation between the United States and Taiwan. Recent legislative initiatives, such as a proposed \$300 million expenditure for military goods and training in the Fiscal Year 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (CNA, 2024), show a commitment to strengthening military support as the U.S. continues to support Taiwan's defense capabilities. This financing is a component of a larger plan to bolster Taiwan's defenses and stave off a possible Chinese assault.

China views the security cooperation between the United States and Taiwan as a direct threat to its territorial integrity and sovereignty. In addition to giving Taiwan more confidence, the growing military cooperation also makes Chinese citizens anxious about the possibility of American engagement in a confrontation. The "strategic ambiguity" that surrounds U.S. pledges makes China's military planning more difficult. Although the United States has not made a clear commitment to defend Taiwan, U.S. officials' words indicate that they are willing to assist Taiwan in several ways, which may cause Chinese leadership to misjudge the situation (Brookings Institution, 2023). Furthermore, China might feel pressured to react with greater military preparedness and aggressiveness in the Indo-Pacific if the United States expands its military presence there and encourages Taiwan to take part in important military drills like the Rim of the Pacific exercise (CNA, 2024). An increasingly militaristic atmosphere in the Taiwan Strait could result from this tit-for-tat

dynamic.

Non-traditional security challenges like cyber security are growing more and more important in addition to conventional military concerns. Taiwan's reliance on cutting-edge technologies puts it at risk of cyber-attacks that could destroy its infrastructure and economy as the United States and China compete technologically. In light of escalating tensions, the United States' emphasis on bolstering Taiwan's cyber security capabilities is crucial for both Taiwan's defense and preserving regional stability (Council on Foreign Relations, 2024).

As these dynamics develop, ASEAN nations are keeping a careful eye on how U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation may impact their own security alliances and plans in a geopolitical environment that is changing quickly. The ramifications of this collaboration go beyond immediate military issues; they also influence regional power dynamics and economic ties, forcing Southeast Asian countries to reevaluate their stances in the face of mounting pressure from both Beijing and Washington.

CONCLUSION

The security coordination between the United States and Taiwan reflects the intricate interplay of strategic goals, historical tensions, and geopolitical pressures, which have an impact on China. Theoretical principles of realism and neo-realism provide useful insights into the motivations and behaviours of the key characters. The United States has strategic interests in Taiwan that include geopolitical considerations, regional stability, and democratic values. China's strategic aims revolve around sovereignty, regional influence, and maintaining a military balance in response. This trilateral relationship has a significant impact on regional security, influencing military escalation potential, regional alliance dynamics, and the larger geopolitical landscape. The Taiwan question remains a key component in influencing the future of international relations and regional security in East Asia, as the rivalry between the United States

and China heats up.

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