

One Country, Two Systems: Navigating the Cross-Strait Problem

Jane Wagner

INT 498 Senior Seminar - International Security

Dr. Hyun-Binn Cho

April 12, 2021

## **Introduction**

The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), or Taiwan, have had separate governments since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Since then, Taiwan has had the benefit of de-facto independence. In April of 1979, the United States, under President Jimmy Carter, ended diplomatic ties with the ROC on Taiwan. In order to protect U.S. security and commercial interests, the United States passed the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), which addressed the matter of maintaining diplomatic relations with China, while preserving all significant relations with Taiwan. In addition to maintaining unofficial relations with Taiwan, the TRA allows the United States to sell defensive weapons to the ROC. The TRA provides the legal basis for the unofficial relationship between the United States and Taiwan. According to the TRA, the United States does not support Taiwan independence, but is committed to helping Taiwan maintain its defensive capability. Further, the United States "insists on the peaceful resolution of cross-strait differences, opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by either side, and encourages both sides to continue their constructive dialogue on the basis of dignity and respect" (TRA). Relations between Taiwan and the United States have been strong, particularly since the democratization of Taiwan in the 1990s.

Tensions between China and Taiwan have escalated in recent years and Beijing has not rejected the use of force to unify with Taiwan. The rise in power of President Xi Jinping of China, the modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and the recent passing of the National Security Law by Beijing in Hong Kong leaves the people of Taiwan worried about the future of their nation, but it also has implications for the United States. "The shift in China's foreign policy and the PLA's modernization threatens to challenge the credibility of U.S.

security assurances and alliances in the region, making the cultivation and strengthening of the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, and the network of U.S. bilateral alliances in the region an urgent imperative.” (Thompson 2020, p.2)

According to a statement released by the White House, during his first phone conversation with President Xi Jinping of China, President Biden conveyed concern with Beijing’s recent behavior, “President Biden underscored his fundamental concerns about Beijing’s coercive and unfair economic practices, crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and increasingly assertive actions in the region, including toward Taiwan”(Whitehouse.gov).

In this paper, I plan to examine whether or not the issue of sovereignty between China and Taiwan can be resolved peacefully. Specifically, I examine whether the United States should honor or end its commitment to protect Taiwan against the possibility of Chinese aggression. I intend to argue that the United States must honor its assurance to Taiwan because not doing so would raise serious concerns among U.S. allies about the reliability of U.S. security guarantees and undermine alliances essential to U.S. security. Furthermore, abandoning Taiwan would lead China to a more aggressive foreign policy, thereby further reducing U.S. security in the region.

### **Background**

Taiwan, formerly known as Formosa, has a long and complicated history. For the purposes of this paper, I will begin by introducing Taiwan’s background in order to facilitate a greater understanding of the current status of these nations’ relationships. Taiwan was returned to China in October 1945, after Japan lost the Sino-Japanese War and was forced to relinquish the island back to China. Four years later, at the end of the Chinese Civil War, defeated Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan, along with two million Nationalist exiles.

The Nationalist Party, also called Kuomintang (KMT) claims to be the only legitimate government of all of China and set up the same system of government that existed on the mainland. Meanwhile, Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China and established a new communist system of government, based on the U.S.S.R.

During the Cold War, Taiwan became a strategic location to the United States. At the beginning of the Korean War, U.S. President Truman asserted that Taiwan was a neutral territory and sent U.S. troops to the Taiwan Strait. At this time, the U.S. also began contributing fiscal aid to Taiwan. In 1954, tensions between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan resulted in armed conflict over the islands of Quemoy and Matsu in the Taiwan Strait. This conflict became known as the first "Taiwan Strait Crisis." In response to Chinese attacks on the territory, the United States and Taiwan sign a mutual defense agreement. The accord is seen as an assurance by the U.S. to aid Taiwan if the island is attacked by China.

The second Taiwan Strait crisis occurred in August 1958, when China again attacked the islands of Quemoy and Matsu. U.S. President Eisenhower responded by sending U.S. Naval forces to the Taiwan Strait, and considered using nuclear weapons against China. The confrontation is averted when China halts bombing after conducting high-level talks with the United States. In October, 1958, U.S. Secretary of State John Dulles visited Taiwan and, along with Chiang Kai-shek, and the two once again asserted U.S. support for Taiwan.

Relations between the United States and China remained strained for the next decade or so, complicated by Cold War propaganda, trade embargos, and diplomatic silence. By 1971, however, China's relations with the Soviet Union was deteriorating and China's Chairman Mao believed improved relations with the United States would serve as a deterrent to the Soviet

Union. During the 1971 World Table Tennis Championship held in Nagoya, Japan, the U.S. team certainly was not anticipating an invitation to visit China. This event garnered a considerable amount of media attention and was deemed an indicator of the United States and China making headway toward a stronger relationship. The U.S. reciprocated the gesture by welcoming the Chinese team to the United States the following year. The visit, termed “Ping Pong Diplomacy,” signals a thaw in U.S. China relations. Six months later, in October, 1971, the United Nations General Assembly shifted diplomatic recognition to Beijing and the ROC government was driven out. In February, 1972, Richard Nixon became the first U.S. President to visit mainland China. Nixon’s weeklong trip led to the formation of diplomatic relations between the two countries and the signing of the Shanghai Communique, which managed to evade the question of Taiwanese sovereignty. The document states that “the United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. ... [The U.S.] reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan.” (Lindley)

In 1979, the United States and China announced that they were to institute formal diplomatic relations, with the United States asserting that the government of the PRC was the only lawful government of China. The U.S. agreed to maintain unofficial relations with Taiwan, but terminated the mutual defense treaty signed in 1954. One condition of the agreement with China was that “neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region of the world and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or groups of countries to establish such hegemony” (Joint Communique 1978). Months later, the U.S. Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), declaring unofficial ties with Taiwan. The legislation allowed

for arms to be sold to Taiwan and maintained the United States' right to resist "any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan." (TRA).

In July 1987, Taiwanese President Chiang Ching-Kuo- son of Chiang Kai-shek- officially decreed an end to martial law. Although the impact of four decades of military suppression of constitutional rights was not completely erased overnight, this was the first great step toward Taiwan's emerging as a democracy. Chiang Ching-kuo passed away in 1988 and was succeeded by his Vice President Lee Teng-hui - the first Taiwan national to become President. Lee proceeded to expedite the momentum of democratic reforms, and removed restrictions on visiting China. He was elected in 1990 again to serve a six-year term as President.

Across the strait in 1989, student-led demonstrations were held in Tiananmen Square, calling for democracy, freedom of speech, press, and more rights overall. The government responded by sending their troops, who ended up killing, assaulting, and arresting the protestors. The deadly response to the protests, known in China as the "June Fourth Incident," led to U.S. sanctions against China and a halt in the transfer of military technology. This brutal crackdown on the pro-democracy movement, coupled with the resurgence of the Chinese hard-liners, leads to a surge of support in Taiwan's parliamentary elections for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which advocated independence from the mainland.

In June, 1995, China began a series of missile tests and live-fire drills in the Taiwan Strait. The first attack was in response to Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States. Tensions between the PRC and ROC escalated in the following months, especially in the months preceding the first presidential election in the ROC in March, 1996, when the PRC launched another set of missiles toward Taiwan. The United States responded by sending two

aircraft carrier battle groups to the region. U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry asserted that the U.S. military response was a warning that the “United States has a national interest in the security and stability in the Western Pacific region. We have a powerful military force there to help us carry out our national interests.” (Ross 2002,56)

After over a century as a British colony, Hong Kong was returned to Chinese sovereignty in July of 1997. Later, in December 1999, Portugal returned their colony Macau as well. China stated they would allow both the special administrative regions a great deal of autonomy under the "one country, two systems" framework. Under this system, Hong Kong and Macau were allowed to maintain their own social, economic, and legal systems, but Beijing was to be responsible for their diplomacy and military defense.

In June of 1998, while visiting China for a summit meeting with President Jiang Zemin, President Clinton set forth a Taiwan policy, which became known as the "three no's." The policy laid out three points: 1) the United States did not support independence for Taiwan; 2) there would be no support for a two-China or "one China, one Taiwan" policy and; 3) no support for Taiwan's admittance into any international organization that requires statehood for membership (Lindley).

In March 2000, the Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shui-bian won Taiwan's presidency, marking the Nationalist Party's first loss of power. Chen had previously spoken in support of Taiwanese independence, but took on a more conservative campaign, claiming that an official declaration of independence was not imperative because Taiwan was already sovereign.

President Bush dropped Clinton's "three no's" policy on Taiwan in March of 2001. During a press briefing, the spokesman for the State Department stated that they will ‘adhere to a

one-China policy'. This announcement caused many to believe that the Bush administration was to take a hard stance with China and a more supportive view of Taiwan. This belief was further established in late April 2001 when Bush approved arms sales to Taiwan. Bush claimed that the U.S. would do "whatever it took" for Taiwan to defend itself. China accused the U.S. of violating agreements to maintain relations solely with Beijing and that the U.S. was encouraging pro-independence sentiment in Taiwan by allowing Chen Shui-bian to unofficially visit New York in May 2001. Most likely angered by the recent progressions in the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, China carried out military exercises imitating an attack on Taiwan. This was the largest exercise since the PCR had sent missiles near Taiwan's coast in 1996. Although representatives in Washington, Taipei, and Beijing claimed the drills were nothing more than routine, Beijing implied that they intended to threaten Chen Shui-bian not to promote Taiwanese independence (Lindley).

### **III A Grand Bargain**

In a controversial proposal, Charles Glaser recommended that the United States should mediate a "Grand Bargain" with China, ending its commitment to protect Taiwan against Chinese aggression. Glaser argued that, in return for geopolitical accommodations offered by the United States, China would "peacefully resolve its maritime and land disputes in the South China and East China Seas, and officially accept the United States' long-term military security role in East Asia." (Glaser 2015, p.50) Glaser contended that the current U.S. policy was focused too heavily on maintaining the status quo in the region, but this approach is not sustainable. Glaser argued that if the United States ends its commitment to Taiwan, it would reduce the likelihood of war between the United States and China over Taiwan's status. According to Glaser, U.S. support for Taiwan is the leading source of China's wariness about U.S. objectives in the region and that



by ending its support of Taiwan, the U.S. could perhaps reduce the growing military competition between the two countries. (71)

Glaser reasoned that dispute over the sovereignty of Taiwan is the key issue between the United States and China, and though the two have other conflicts, this is the main impediment to stable relations. According to Glaser, “the most direct benefit of ending the U.s. Commitment to Taiwan would be a reduction in the probability of war between the United States and China over Taiwan’s status” (69). Glaser stated that the U.S. policy was meant to prevent Taiwan from declaring independence and specifies that the U.S. will not defend Taiwan if it does. However, Glaser maintains that, in the event of an attack on Taiwan by China, it may not be clear which party instigated the clash. As the United States has limited sway over Taiwan’s policy decisions, the commitment to defend Taiwan puts the U.S. in an unfavorable position. (69)

Finally, Glaser argues that the U.S. ending of its commitment to Taiwan would go a long way toward slowing the growing military competition between China and the United States. According to Glaser, the PRC is concerned that a conflict between the United States over Taiwan would interfere with critical maritime routes in the region. The importance of the sea lines of communication (SLOC) is crucial to China and other countries in the territory, and China fears that U.S. intervention in a conflict with Taiwan would threaten its access to its SLOCS. In addition to calming China’s worry over access to SLOC, U.S. accommodation with regard to Taiwan would indicate that the United States’ objectives in the sector are limited. (72)

#### **IV In Defense of Taiwan**

In a critique of Glaser’s work, Easley maintains that Glaser’s proposal is neither feasible or desirable, and that such accommodations would not serve U.S. interests. Further, he argues, there are other areas of conflict between the U.S. and China, in addition to Taiwan's sovereignty.

Matters such as cyber security, trade disputes, and human rights issues are potential points of conflict between not only the United States and China, but are of concern to the rest of the world as well. U.S. abandonment of Taiwan would not resolve these other significant problems. Easley suggests that “rather than alleviate frictions, a grand bargain would likely motivate beliefs that China could eventually dismantle the U.S. security architecture in Asia, emboldening actors on the Chinese side to pursue their interests more assertively” (180)

One of Easley’s main objections to Glaser’s proposal is the consequences the United States’ forsaking Taiwan would have on U.S. allies in the region, including Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Australia. The United States’ defense of Taiwan is a strong gauge of its reliability to assist and protect U.S. allies in the region. Glaser himself admits that this issue is a significant risk of the grand bargain, but asserts that the United States could manage this risk by committing additional and larger forces to the region (Glaser 82). However, Easley maintains that a grand bargain of accommodation on the Taiwan issue would not only erode trust among U.S. allies, it would likely have a more concrete effect. According to Easley, “a grand bargain with China would not only degrade U.S. soft power and alliances; it could drive Asian countries to unilateral enhance their own defenses, fueling an arms race and further diminishing security in the region” (183). Haas and Sacks agree with this conclusion, stating that allies, such as Japan and South Korea, would deduce that the United States is pulling out of the region and are an unreliable ally. The authors suggest that such an accommodation would lead U.S. allies in the region to “either accommodate China, leading to the dissolution of U.S. alliances and the crumbling of the balance of power, or they would seek nuclear weapons in a bid to become strategically self-reliant. Either scenario would greatly increase the chance of war in a region that is central to the world’s economy and home to most of its people. (Haas 5) Easley concludes that

“if the United States strengthens its promotion of international norms - including peaceful evolution of cross-strait relations that respect Taiwan’s democracy - American interests and regional stability are much more likely to be secured than by betting on a U.S.-China grand bargain.” (Easley 2016, p.185)

In another commentary about the viability of geopolitical accommodations regarding Taiwan, Tucker and Glaser challenge the proposition that the United States should jettison Taiwan in order to improve relations with China. The authors demonstrate that, not only would such an accommodation fail to improve relations between the two countries, it “would prove to an increasingly confident China that Washington has become weak, vacillating, and unreliable” (Tucker 24). This claim supports Easley’s argument that such an accommodation would diminish U.S. credibility as a partner in the region. Additionally, the authors claim that such a compromise would likely spur China to act more aggressively in its foreign policy. Tucker and Glaser conclude that a grand bargain with China would not improve U.S.-China relations: “Careful examination of these variables leads us to conclude that the United States should neither abandon nor reduce its commitments to Taiwan, but strengthen them” (24).

As stated above, China’s change in policy in Hong Kong has increased concern in Taiwan about their status. The passage of the Hong Kong national security law in June, 2020, is seen by many as a warning to Taiwan. Tian Feilong, associate professor at Beihang University’s Law School in Beijing, said the Hong Kong security law could be a template for solving the issue of Taiwan sovereignty. “I believe that in the future, you could just change the name of the Hong Kong national security law, and substitute instead ‘Taiwan national security law,’” said Tian (Graham-Harrison).

The rise in power of President Xi, the strengthening of the PLA, and the landslide reelection of President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan in 2020, all seem to be bringing the cross-strait conflict to a head, with a peaceful reunification seeming less and less likely. If the United States doesn't defend Taiwan, unchecked Chinese aggression would threaten peace and stability in the region. "There would likely be uncontrolled militarization across the region as U.S. security guarantees are devalued and collective security is abandoned." (Thompson, p. 17)

### **Economic Significance**

Beginning on March 1, 2021, China banned all pineapple imports from Taiwan. They claimed the decision was made purely for biosecurity reasons, stating there were pests discovered in the pineapples. Taiwan stands firm that this move was purely political, that China is using their economic power to coerce Taiwan. Despite the fact that the PRC never ruled Taiwan, Beijing considers it to be a province of China, so they will ultimately do whatever it takes to derail Taiwan's independence. China remains Taiwan's largest trading partner and is their largest importer of Taiwanese fruits. According to Taiwan's Council of Agriculture, of the approximate 400,000 tons of pineapples produced in Taiwan annually, 10% are exported, with about 40,000 to 50,000 tons of those exports sold in China (Council of Agriculture; 2021). Government data shows that in 2020 alone, 97% of Taiwan's pineapple exports went to China's market (OSAC; 2021), and 99.79% of them passed customs' inspection. So that leads Taiwan to reasonably suspect that this is no more than an intimidation tactic. Without PRC sales, Taiwanese farmers face a possible surplus of pineapples, which may cause prices to plunge. Not only is the ban of pineapples an aggressive economic sanction, but it also can be interpreted as an attack on Taiwanese nationalism. The Taiwanese people hold great pride in their pineapples, with pineapple cake - 鳳梨酥 - being one of the most representative of Taiwan's souvenirs. In

response, Taiwan has sought to expand and strengthen its market activities and has begun a campaign- called “Freedom Pineapples” on Twitter- asking locals to buy and eat domestic pineapples to make up for any losses. Online support quickly poured in from international netizens. The de facto United States and Canadian embassies in Taipei have posted photographs of their top diplomats posing with praising the quality of the fruit. Although the majority of the support from the world’s democracies has been moral and not economic as of now, there is some noteworthy activity taking place (Lai; 2021). Australia in particular signed a deal approving Taiwan's market access request for decrowned pineapples in March 2020. The importing of pineapples will start in May, 2021 (Council of Agriculture; 2021), even with a limited demand for imports of the fruit. Evidence that the Biden administration is taking a more pro-Taiwan stance is manifested in the plan to bring allies together in China. In a joint statement, the leaders of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue announced their support for an Indo-Pacific region “anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion”(White House; 2021). This very public global backlash indicates a growing sense of solidarity with Taiwan as a victim of Chinese economic threats.

Beijing has a history of enacting economic sanctions during international disputes. Their use of unilateral sanctions have typically been intended to either show their displeasure regarding a specific event or to advance their objectives. Examples include the trade sanctions placed on Vietnam (suspended its preferential trade agreements, imposed strategic quotas on particular imports and exports to the denial of low-cost trans-shipment) due to anti-China nationalistic policies and border clashes in the late 70s (Path; 2012); restricting Norweigen salmon in response to the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize given to a Chinese dissident (Chen, Garcia; 2016); and, most recently, imposing tariffs on Australian products such as wine, coal and barley, in an

attempt to cause significant economic damage and put pressure after Canberra passed a law against foreign interference and forbade Huawei Technologies from Australia's 5G network (Gibson Dunn; 2021).

As mentioned earlier, there is concern that China will exploit its leverage in the expanding cross-strait economic relationship to pressure Taiwan politically. For example, Beijing limited the number of Chinese tourists allowed to travel to Taiwan in 2016- the year pro-independence candidate Tsai Ing-wen was elected president. Taiwan's tourist industry suffered as a result, leading to civil unrest. China hopes that Taiwanese government will feel that the sanctions placed on them will bring about a negative impact that far outweighs any benefit they could possibly derive from implementing a particular policy or engaging in an action that irritates the PRC. Taiwan is more dependent on the mainland market than the mainland is dependent upon Taiwan, which is a source of concern in Taiwan and in the United States. Taiwan is one of the largest trade partners of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau; 2021). Closer trade relations between Taiwan and the United States would be a positive for both Taipei and Washington. Taiwan is known as one of the Four Asian Tigers - Asian countries that underwent rapid industrialization and continue to maintain exceptionally high growth rates. Taiwan's economy grew 3.11% in 2020 (National Statistics; 2021), outpacing the GDP growth of the PRC. If Taiwan is unable to strengthen its trade relationships outside of the one it has with China, it may be forced to lean further toward China, which would be in China's favor toward a unified state. The freedoms enjoyed in Taiwan correspond to the values appealing to the United States, so maintaining the stability and viability of Taiwan's economy is important to the American economy. Additionally, from a strategic standpoint, staying true to its commitment to the people of Taiwan is critical for the U.S.'s interests; which include keeping the balance of power in their

favor, promoting democracy, maintaining access to foreign markets and cooperative economic and political relations. Backing down in the face of a rising China would cause doubt toward U.S. credibility and commitment with other nations, particularly those of that region.

### **Current Events**

The Trump administration increased U.S. support for Taiwan more than any time since 1971 (Blackwill 19). In 2019, the Department of Defense approved more than \$10 billion in defense sales to Taiwan— such as M1A2 Abrams tanks and F-16 Fighting Falcon fighters — to strengthen its force. John C. Rood, undersecretary of defense for policy, said "We are supporting their development of more mobile, survivable and asymmetric capabilities," Rood said. "The ultimate goal is to develop a more combat credible force."(Vergun)

According to Blackwill, United States support for Taiwan is stronger than it has been in decades, both with the members of Congress and the American people. Congress passed the Taiwan Travel Act in 2018, followed by the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI Act) and the Taiwan Assurance Act in 2020. The former is meant to broaden the scope of U.S.-Taiwan relations, as well as to spur other nations to strengthen both official and unofficial ties with Taiwan. According to U.S. Senator Jim Risch (R-Idaho), the latter “helps pave the way for the United States to advance a relationship with Taiwan in light of today’s – not 1979’s – geopolitical situation” (U.S. Committee Foreign Affairs).

China has been facing increased scrutiny in recent months, due to human rights violations, particularly in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang) and Tibetan-populated areas (Tibet). PRC authorities subjected Uighurs, Kazakhs and other predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in Xinjiang to invasive surveillance, random detention, and

involuntary indoctrination. The United States, the European Union, Britain and Canada imposed sanctions on Chinese officials on Monday for human rights abuses in Xinjiang, the first such coordinated Western action against Beijing under new U.S. President Joe Biden. (Reuters)

The current situation between China and Taiwan is escalating rather quickly and the risk of conflict is at its highest level in decades. In the past few months, China has been conducting regular military incursion into Taiwan's air defense identification zone. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said Taiwan's peace and stability is key to the region and that Japan will cooperate with the United States to calm rising tensions between China and Taiwan. "It is important for Japan and the United States to cooperate and use deterrence to create an environment where Taiwan and China can find a peaceful solution," Suga said on a television talk show Sunday. Japan considers China's growing activity to be a security threat and opposes Beijing's claim to the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands, called Diaoyu in China, in the East China Sea and its increased activity in the disputed area (Yamaguchi).

#### **IV Solutions**

China has become more aggressive in furthering its interests under President Xi Jinping. Constitutional changes made in 2018 removed term limits, effectively allowing Xi to remain in power for life, and he has made clear his intentions toward Taiwan and reunification. Xi's status and ambitions, coupled with the re-election of President Tsai in Taiwan in 2020, have brought a greater sense of urgency to the cross-strait situation. U.S. policy toward Taiwan's defense has been oriented around the principle of strategic ambiguity, as outlined in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, for decades. This strategy has worked as a deterrence to keep China from attacking Taiwan. China has also employed this strategy, in that it has refused to renounce the use of force against Taiwan. Additionally, this ambiguity has an effect on Taiwan as well.



Without a concrete assurance from the United States to defend it, Taiwan is unlikely to provoke Beijing by declaring independence. (Haass 3)

However, Haass and Sacks state that it is time for the United States to end the strategy of ambiguity and instead adopt “a policy of strategic clarity: one that makes explicit that the United States would respond to any Chinese use of force against Taiwan” (2) The authors do not suggest the the United States officially recognize Taiwan or sign a mutual defense treaty, rather a reiteration of present American policy. The authors suggest that the United States take steps to bolster deterrence, such as the station of additional air and naval forces in the region and make “preparing for a Taiwan contingency a top priority for Department of Defense planners” (7). They also advise that Congress pass a law imposing severe sanctions on China in the event of an attack on Taiwan and try to encourage its Asian and European allies to do the same. In addition, the authors suggest that the United States should help Taiwan preserve its democracy, assist with election security and cyberdefense, as well as seek a free trade agreement with the island (8).

Blackwill and Zelikow disagree with Haass’ endorsement of a policy of strategic clarity and advocate for the continuation of strategic ambiguity. However, they assert that the current U.S. strategy is too weak to deter, or if necessary, to react to Chinese coercion or aggression. The authors argue that the Biden administration should adjust and make clear its strategy to prevent war over Taiwan and “propose a realistic strategic objective for Taiwan, and the associated policy prescriptions, to sustain the political balance that has kept the peace for the last fifty years” (3). They advocate in favor of the United States maintaining its One China policy, confirming that it is not trying to change Taiwan’s status. In addition, the authors advise that the United States and its allies devise a plan for the disruption and mobilization that could follow a wider war, but without expecting that such a war would or should escalate to the Chinese,

Japanese, or American homelands. (3) The authors encourage Japan and other allies in the region to adopt the U.S.-Taiwan policy, supporting Taiwan's position in international organizations that do not require statehood for membership, and firmly establish a bilateral trade agreement with Taiwan (vi).

The solution of improved U.S.-Taiwan trade as a means to help the island maintain economic autonomy is a common thread among proposed solutions to the dilemma. Tucker proposes the United States should advance talks with Taipei to increase U.S.-Taiwan trade, which would reduce Taiwan's isolation from regional and global trading partners, and prevent further dependence on China (34).

## **V Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan is becoming a major flashpoint for a possible war involving not only China, Taiwan, and the United States, but likely other major powers, such as Japan and North Korea. American allies in the region and elsewhere see U.S. defense of Taiwan as a bellwether. If the United States doesn't defend and maintain its commitment to Taiwan, what are the implications for their relationship? Neither China, the United States, nor Taiwan is satisfied with the status quo, but maybe that's what they need to accept and work to maintain. The Biden administration has been busy dealing with the pandemic and internal issues such as racism, immigration, and a growing political divide. However, the United States will likely have to address the Taiwan issue, sooner rather than later.

Glaser's proposal of a "grand bargain" is not an acceptable strategy for reasons explained above. As Ross states, the rise of China means U.S.- China relations will become more difficult and antagonistic, "no matter how accommodative or confrontational U.S. policy is" (Ross 2019, 86). Policy experts disagree on strategies involving the cross-strait dilemma, though most would

agree that the United States should not end its commitment to Taiwan, as outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act. No matter what the Biden administration comes up with, there is consensus amongst all parties that the goal should be to prevent a war. The cost of military action is too high. Zhao sums it up succinctly: “Although there is no precedent to guide economic and geostrategic competition between the two largest and deeply intertwined economies and heavily militarized great powers, the U.S. and China must find a balance of interests with each other and avoid violent confrontation that serves the interests of neither.” (517)

## References

- Blackwill, R., & Zelikow, P. (2021). *The United States, China, and Taiwan: A Strategy to Prevent War* (pp. 1-90, Rep. No. 90). New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations.  
doi:chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbfdmadadm/https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report\_pdf/the-united-states-china-and-taiwan-a-strategy-to-prevent-war.pdf
- Branch, F. T. D. D. (2021, February). *U.S. International Trade Data*. Top Trading Partners - February 2021.  
<https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/toppartners.html>.
- Chen, X., & Garcia, R. J. (2016). Economic sanctions and trade diplomacy: Sanction-busting strategies, market distortion and efficacy of China's restrictions on Norwegian salmon imports. *China Information*, 30(1), 29–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203x15625061>
- Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan, R.O.C. (Taiwan). (n.d.). 農業統計資料查詢.  
<https://agrstat.coa.gov.tw/sdweb/public/trade/tradereport.aspx>.
- Easley, L., Kim, P., & Glaser, C. L. (2016). Grand Bargain or Bad Idea?: U.S. Relations with China and Taiwan. *International Security*, 40(4), 178-191.
- GDP: Preliminary Estimate for 2020Q4 and Outlook for 2021*. National Statistics Republic of China (Taiwan). (2021, February 20).  
<https://eng.stat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=46903&ctNode=3274>.
- Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP. (2021, February 5). 2020 Year-End Sanctions And Export Controls Update. Los Angeles, CA.

- Glaser, C. L. (2015). A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice Between Military Competition and Accommodation. *International Security*, 39(4), 49-90.  
doi:10.1162/ISEC\_a\_00199
- Goldstein, A. (2020). China's Grand Strategy Under Xi Jinping: Reassurance, Reform, and Resistance. *International Security*, 45(1), 164-201. doi:10.1162/isec\_a\_00383e
- Graham-Harrison, E., & Davidson, H. (2020, October 02). After Hong KONG: China sets sights on Solving 'the Taiwan problem'. Retrieved April 1, 2021, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/02/after-hong-kong-china-taiwan-invasion-armed-forces>
- Haass, Richard, and Sacks, David. (2020) American Support for Taiwan Must Be Unambiguous. *Foreign Affairs*, 99(5).
- Lindley, Richard and Oxley, Chris. (2001). Dangerous straits. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/china/>
- Path, K. (2012). China's Economic Sanctions against Vietnam, 1975-1978. *The China Quarterly*, 212, 1040–1058.
- Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad." (2021, March 12). Briefing Room- Statements and Releases.  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.
- Ross, R. S. (2019). What does the rise of China Mean for the United States? In *China Questions: Critical Insights into a Rising Power*. HARVARD UNIV Press.
- Ross, R. S. (2000). The 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility, and the Use of Force. *International Security*, 25(2), 87-123. doi:10.1162/016228800560462

- Ross, R. S. (2002). Navigating the Taiwan strait: Deterrence, Escalation Dominance, and U.S.-China Relations. *International Security*, 27(2), 48-85.  
doi:10.1162/016228802760987824
- Taiwan and Australia Sign “Agricultural Working Group -Terms of Reference,” Deepening Bilateral Agricultural Cooperation and Trade Relations. Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan, R.O.C.(Taiwan). (2021, March 3).  
[https://eng.coa.gov.tw/theme\\_data.php?theme=eng\\_news&id=626&print=Y](https://eng.coa.gov.tw/theme_data.php?theme=eng_news&id=626&print=Y).
- Thompson, D. (2020). The Rise of Xi Jinping and China's New Era: Implications for the United States and Taiwan. *Issues and Studies - Institute of International Relations*, 56(1), 2040004. doi:10.1142/S1013251120400044
- Tucker, N. B., & Glaser, B. (2011). Should the United States Abandon Taiwan? *The Washington Quarterly*, 34(4), 23-37. doi:10.1080/0163660X.2011.609128  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-eu-sanctions/west-sanctions-china-over-xinjiang-abuses-beijing-hits-back-at-eu-idUSKBN2BE2MC>
- United States. Congress. Conference Committees 1979. (1979). Taiwan relations act : conference report to accompany H.R. 2479. [Washington] :[U.S. Govt. Print. Off.]
- United States Committee on Foreign Relations. (2020, December 21). *Risch Applauds Passage of BELARUS, Taiwan Legislation in BIPARTISAN Omnibus package*. Foreign.Senate.gov.  
<https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/chair/release/risch-applauds-passage-of-belarus-taiwan-legislation-in-bipartisan-omnibus-package#:~:text=The%20Taiwan%20Assurance%20Act%20helps,the%20U.S.%20Department%20of%20State>.

Vergun, D. (2019, December 5). *U.S. Bolsters Indo-Pacific Alliances in Face of Threats*. U.S.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.

<https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/2032957/us-bolsters-indo-pacific-alliances-in-face-of-threats/>.

Yamaguchi, M. (2021, April 04). ABC news. Retrieved April 05, 2021, from

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/japans-pm-aims-calm-china-taiwan-tension-us-76863596>

Zablocki, C. (1979, April 10). H.R.2479 - 96th Congress (1979-1980): Taiwan Relations Act.

Retrieved April 02, 2021, from

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479>

Zhao, S. (2019). Engagement on the Defensive: From the Mismatched Grand Bargain to the Emerging US-China Rivalry. *The Journal of Contemporary China*, 28(118), 501-518.

doi:10.1080/10670564.2018.1562730

總統府：中禁台鳳梨非善意 不會得台灣人民支持. Overseas Community Affairs Council,

Republic of China (Taiwan). (2021, February

21).<https://www.ocac.gov.tw/OCAC/Pages/Detail.aspx?nodeid=3214&pid=2343146>

1.