

US-TAIWAN SECURITY COOPERATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR CHINA



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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that this thesis entitled “**US-Taiwan Security Cooperation: Implications for China**” is my original work. This research work was completed under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Amna Mehmood and submitted to the Department of International Relations as satisfying the requirements for the degree of master’s in international relations. I have properly referenced and cited the sources of information in my thesis. This dissertation has not been submitted before for any degree.

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DEDICATION

This research work is wholeheartedly dedicated to my Respective parents and family. I dedicate this research to my father Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Cheema for being a great mentor who worked hard for my better education and life. I also dedicate this work to my loving mother Shameem Akhtar for being a source of motivation for me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations

EU - European Union

GCTF - Global Cooperation Training Framework

IEP - International Environmental Partnership

KMT - Kuomintang (Nationalist Party of China)

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization

PRC - People's Republic of China

PLA - People's Liberation Army

PILP - Pacific Islands Leadership Partnership

ROC - Republic of China

USD - United States Dollar

US - United States

UN - United Nations

WWII - World War II

ABSTRACT

The China-Taiwan relationship has been fraught with tension since the Chinese Civil War, resulting in the establishment of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland. Over the decades, China's insistence on the "One China" policy has clashed with Taiwan's push for greater international recognition and security, leading to persistent geopolitical friction. Currently, US-Taiwan security cooperation is at an all-time high due to escalating Chinese military assertiveness in the Taiwan Strait and broader Indo-Pacific region. The US has been providing Taiwan with advanced military equipment and strategic support, which Beijing perceives as a direct challenge to its sovereignty and regional hegemony. This growing partnership is shaping the security dynamics in East Asia and has significant implications for US-China relations. This study employs a qualitative analysis of governmental documents, military reports, and scholarly articles to evaluate the magnitude and implications of US-Taiwan security cooperation. It integrates data from defense policy reviews, strategic assessments to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The study addresses two main questions: the magnitude of military and strategic cooperation between the US and Taiwan, and the extent to which this cooperation poses a threat to China's regional security. The study is grounded in the theories of realism and neo-realism. Realism focuses on the pursuit of power and national interest in an anarchic international system, which explains the US's support for Taiwan as a strategy to counterbalance China's rise. Neo-realism, on the other hand, emphasizes the structural constraints of the international system that compel states to ensure their survival through power balancing, thus providing a lens to understand China's response to US-Taiwan cooperation. The evolving dynamics of US-Taiwan relations will continue to shape the geopolitical landscape in East Asia, with profound implications for regional and global security. This study contributes to the understanding of international security by highlighting the strategic calculations underlying US-Taiwan cooperation and its implications for China's regional security posture. Further research will explore the potential for diplomatic solutions and confidence-building measures to mitigate tensions and promote stability in the Taiwan Strait.

INTRODUCTION

The security cooperation between the United States and Taiwan, as well as its implications for China, has a long and complex history that evolves over time. The US-China-Taiwan relationship is shaped by strategic concerns, historical tensions, and geopolitical forces. The aftermath of WWII and the Chinese Civil War serves as the foundation for US-Taiwan security cooperation. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the Nationalist government flees to Taiwan, leaving the Republic of China (ROC) as China's legitimate government in exile. During the Cold War, in an effort to prevent communism from spreading throughout East Asia, the United States becomes a close friend and supporter of Taiwan's security. The Mutual Defense Treaty, signed in 1954, solidifies Taiwan and the United States' defense relationship. According to the conditions of the treaty, the United States promises to defend Taiwan from external attack, particularly from the People's Republic of China. Taiwan has been a strategic ally of the United States throughout the Cold War, helping to limit communist expansion in the region, particularly during wars such as Vietnam and Korea (Lawrence et al., 2021).

Nonetheless, the nature of US-Taiwan security cooperation shifts radically in 1979, when ties between the two nations are restored. As part of the normalization process, the United States cuts diplomatic relations with Taiwan and formally recognizes the People's Republic of China as China's sole legal government. Despite the change in official relations, the United States maintains substantial but informal security cooperation with Taiwan. This partnership involves arms sales, military training, and strategic meetings (Yuan, 2023). Growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait, as well as China's growing confidence in the region, have made US-Taiwan security cooperation increasingly important in recent decades. The United States' bipartisan support for Taiwan's democratic progress and defense

Capability building results in continuous arms sales and security assistance to Taiwan (Forging a Path towards Stability and Cohesion in Foreign Policy: Taiwan's Future Foreign Policy Direction, n.d.).

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the US-Taiwan security relationship evolved amid growing economic interdependence and the global geopolitical landscape's shifting dynamics. The United States continued to sell arms to Taiwan, including advanced fighter jets and missile systems, which enhanced Taiwan's defense capabilities. This period also saw Taiwan's transformation into a vibrant democracy, strengthening its ties with the United States based on shared democratic values and mutual strategic interests (Tsang, 2020). The early 21st century marked another phase in US-Taiwan security cooperation, characterized by an increasing focus on regional stability in the face of China's rising military capabilities and assertiveness. The United States' arms sales to Taiwan continued, including significant packages such as advanced missile defense systems, naval vessels, and upgrades to Taiwan's existing military hardware. These sales aimed to bolster Taiwan's ability to deter potential aggression from the PRC and maintain a balance of power in the region (Sutter, 2019).

Additionally, the US-Taiwan security relationship expanded beyond traditional arms sales. The two parties began engaging in more robust military exchanges and training programs, enhancing Taiwan's operational capabilities and interoperability with US forces. Joint military exercises, officer exchanges, and strategic dialogues have become more common, reflecting a deepening security partnership. In recent years, the US-Taiwan relationship has been influenced by the increasing geopolitical competition between the United States and China. As China's military modernization continues, the United States has reaffirmed its commitment to Taiwan's defense, emphasizing the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. High-profile arms sales, including advanced F-16 fighter jets, Abrams tanks, and sophisticated drone systems, have underscored this commitment (Kan, 2014).

China, on the other hand, perceives US-Taiwan security cooperation as a major challenge to its territorial integrity and sovereignty (Bush, 2016). Beijing considers Taiwan as a rogue province and issues frequent cautions against any foreign intervention in its internal affairs, including arms supplies and US military support. China utilizes diplomatic and economic pressure to reduce Taiwan's international prominence. China is affected by US- Taiwan security cooperation in various ways. The impact continually changes in response to geopolitical events. The United States' support escalates tensions in the Taiwan Strait and increases the chance of confrontation, while also enhancing Taiwan's defense capabilities and deterring Chinese assaults. US-Taiwan security cooperation is an important factor impacting regional peace and security in East Asia as China's military capabilities expand and its assertiveness in the region grows (Lawrence, 2024). Taiwan is an island divided by the Taiwan Strait. Officially, it is known as the “Republic of China” (ROC). The People's Republic of China's mainland has been independently administered by it since 1949. Taiwan seeks independence from China, while China insists on unifying Taiwan and curbing Taiwan's separatist efforts. The majority of people in Taiwan are against unification with mainland China (Javed, 2022).

It is important to note that the One China Policy differs from the "One China Principle." The "One China Policy" is an agreement between the United States and its allies, including the United Nations, and the People's Republic of China that grants the Communist Party control over the geographical area now known as China (“China/Taiwan: Evolution of the ‘One China’ Policy—Key Statements From Washington, Beijing, and Taipei,” 2015). Meanwhile, the People's Republic of China's "One China Principle" holds that Taiwan and mainland China are inextricably linked to a single "China." According to Article 2 of the Anti-Secession Law, "there is only one China in the world," this includes both the mainland and Taiwan. China's sovereignty and territorial integrity will not tolerate division. It is the common duty of all Chinese people, including those in Taiwan, to defend China's sovereignty and

territorial integrity. The country doesn't allow separatist forces promoting "Taiwan independence" to secede Taiwan from China. Article 5 makes matters worse. "The adherence to the one-China principle is the basis for peaceful national reunification." National reunification through peaceful means is in the best interests of compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The country will do its best to achieve peaceful unification (What Is the "One China" Policy? 2021).

Following peaceful national unification, Taiwan will adopt a system distinct from that of the mainland, with a high degree of autonomy. In 1992, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China reached an agreement in which both governments "agree" that there is one sovereign state that includes both mainland China and Taiwan but do not agree on which government is the legitimate government. So, there is no consensus on whether there is (Green & Glaser, 2022, Bellocchi, 2023). In late 2022, China's Foreign Minister and President Xi Jinping reaffirmed China's commitment to reunification and its long-held stance that "Taiwan is not an independent state and does not have a so-called president" (Maizland, 2023).

Today, Taiwan remains a democracy with strong human rights and rule of law. With an open economy, Taiwan is one of the top trading partners of the United States. In 2015, Taiwan and the United States exchanged goods valued at USD 66.6 billion. Taiwan, an important friend of the United States in Asia, establishes strong institutions, achieves prosperity, and maintains an orderly society, serving as a model for the region. The US and Taiwan collaborate on a wide range of projects through the global Cooperation Training Framework (GCTF). The two countries work together to address global challenges such as crisis relief, public health, environmental protection, energy solutions, technology innovation, education, and regional development. In 2012, Taiwan and the US launch the Pacific Islands Leadership Partnership (PILP). In 2012, the US became a founding partner of Taiwan's International Environmental Partnership (IEP). The two countries work together on pressing issues like the Ebola, MERS, and Middle

East refugee crises. The importance of Taiwan goes beyond the United States; it plays an important role in the region as a whole (Green, 2017).

The term "unification" in the context of Taiwan and China means the idea of Taiwan becoming a part of mainland China. Beijing says Taiwan belongs to China and wants to bring them together, even if they need to use force. However, most people in Taiwan disagree with becoming unified. The people of Taiwan cherish their freedom and right to govern themselves. The issue of unification is very important in the relationship between China and Taiwan (Javed, 2022). Beijing tries different ways to prevent Taiwan from being independent. Beijing tries to reduce Taiwan's number of friends by pressuring countries not to recognize or have official relationships with Taipei. China is putting more military force on Taiwan and doing military training near the island. They are also sending warplanes into the airspace above Taiwan. It has also spread false information and launched cyber-attacks to make people doubt Taiwan's democracy. These tactics are meant to make Taiwan less independent and closer to Beijing's control (Eisenman, 2019).

Chinese leaders have said that they want Taiwan to become a part of China by 2049, which is the 100-year anniversary of communist rule in China. Before, the US used to stop China from being aggressive towards Taiwan, but now it's not as sure. The leaders of China need to figure out if the US doesn't have the ability or desire to get involved in a situation. This makes them more likely to attack Taiwan. However, politicians make the decision to attack. The leaders of China consider the risks this action poses to their economy. This includes the chance of other countries becoming upset with them and the influence it could have on the United States. Moreover, China and Taiwan have economies that are closely connected, and if a war were to happen, it would cause immense damage to both economies. China is the country that Taiwan gets most of its goods from and sells most of its goods to. The amount of goods exported between January 2017 and January 2022 was \$515 billion, which is twice as much as what the United States exported. China is getting more and more aggressive towards Taiwan. They are using

strong language and military actions to show that they are unhappy. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China regularly practices near Taiwan to demonstrate its capability of encircling and attacking the island. This endangers the peace and stability of the area and also gives more military power to China. Taiwan is finding it difficult to match the increasing capabilities of the PLA, even though Taiwan itself is still very capable. As tensions go up, the chance of making mistakes and having a war also goes up (Sacks, 2021).

1.1. Rationale of the Study

This study investigates the evolving security ties within the US and Taiwan in response to a perceived threat from China. Unlike previous research that looked at broader aspects, our focus is specifically on political and military security. Our goal is to understand how the strategic partnership between the U.S. and Taiwan influences China's security policies.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The military relationship between Taiwan and the United States threatens China's security as it calls into question China's control over Taiwan and raises the possibility of a military conflict in the region. While Taiwan has been self-governing since 1971, China still regards it as part of China's territory. China has been taking steps to counter the influence of the US and Taiwan in South Asia. The US has been supporting Taiwan through military and diplomatic support, including arms sales. The US supports Taiwan as it wants to contain the growing influence of China. It is also vital for the United States to maintain its credibility as a reliable friend to countries in Asia and the world, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. According to this study, the United States has carefully managed its security relations with Taiwan since 1971, with the aim of ensuring that Taiwan remains independent as its own country.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The reason of this study is to analyze how Taiwan, a tiny country, manages its relations with the world's most powerful nation, the United States, in order to safeguard its sovereignty and security from threats posed by China. It's interesting to observe how the United States helps Taiwan maintain its security despite the fact that the two countries are not formally recognized by each other. This study aims to explain that the heightened tension between the two countries has the potential to lead to a military confrontation between them. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to analyze the security consequences of the strategic alliances of the United States and Taiwan over China.

1.4. Research gap

The existing research on U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation and its implications for China, while extensive, contains several critical gaps that this thesis aims to address. Much of the literature has focused on historical events or earlier phases of cooperation, with less emphasis on recent geopolitical shifts, such as the intensification of U.S.-China rivalry and Taiwan's evolving defense strategies. Additionally, many studies lack a robust theoretical foundation, often overlooking the application of Realism and Neo-Realism to explain the strategic decisions of the involved states. Furthermore, there is a disproportionate focus on U.S. and Taiwanese perspectives, with insufficient analysis of China's strategic responses to this cooperation. The impact of technological advancements, such as cyber capabilities and advanced missile systems, on the strategic dynamics between Taiwan and China also remains underexplored. This thesis aims to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis, integrating established international relations theories, and offering new insights into the strategic interactions between these states, thereby enhancing the understanding of security dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region.

1.5. Research Objectives

The subsequent are the objectives of this research:

1. To explore the level of military and strategic cooperation between US and Taiwan.

2. To examine the impact of US and Taiwan security cooperation on China's regional security.

1.6. Research Questions

The following are the questions of this research:

1. What had been the basis of US- China rivalry on Taiwan issue? How far it poses a threat for china's regional security?

This study will investigate this sub-question.

1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the book, 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 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. This book emphasizes 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. This article 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 (Romberg, 2017)

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, delisle, 2021).

The book "U.S. Security Cooperation with Taiwan" by Michael S. Chase 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 is not only effect china but also the stability of United States and the entire Asia- Pacific region too. It's a useful read for anyone who wants to grasp the reasons behind this complex and sensitive relationship in straightforward terms. 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).

According to Wu (2020), the increasing military collaboration between the U.S. and Taiwan has significantly heightened tensions in the Taiwan Strait, leading to concerns over the potential for conflict escalation. Similarly, Lin (2021) argues that the U.S. has intensified its strategic commitment to Taiwan as part of a broader Indo-Pacific strategy aimed at counterbalancing China's rising influence.

Moreover, a study by Chen and Lee (2022) emphasizes the role of arms sales in strengthening Taiwan's defense capabilities, noting that these transactions not only serve as a deterrent against potential Chinese aggression but also signal the U.S.'s unwavering support for Taiwan's security. This view is supported by Tsai (2023), who points out that the recent enhancements in Taiwan's asymmetric warfare capabilities have been directly influenced by U.S. military aid and training programs, which are designed to offset the growing power asymmetry between Taiwan and China.

Furthermore, recent geopolitical analyses underscore the strategic calculus behind China's response to U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation. Zhao and Wang (2021) discuss how China perceives these developments as part of a broader U.S. containment strategy, leading Beijing to adopt more assertive military postures in the region. This has been particularly evident in the increase of Chinese military

exercises near Taiwan, which, according to Hsu (2023), are intended to demonstrate China's resolve and capability to defend its claimed sovereignty over Taiwan.

1.8. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The strategic partnership between the United States and Taiwan, characterized by extensive military and strategic cooperation, has significant implications for China's regional security dynamics. The lens of realism and neo-realism offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing these interactions and their broader impact on international relations.

1.8.1. Concept of Realism

Realism is a cornerstone of international relations theory, positing that the international system is inherently anarchic, with no central authority governing state interactions. States, viewed as the primary actors, are driven by the imperative of survival, leading them to prioritize national security and power accumulation. This theoretical perspective emphasizes the competitive nature of international politics, where power and security are the principal objectives.

Classical realism attributes state behavior to human nature. Thinkers like Hans Morgenthau argue that the inherent desire for power and dominance among individuals extends to state actions, resulting in a perpetual struggle for power. In this view, the United States' support for Taiwan can be seen as a strategic move to counterbalance China's growing power and ensure its own dominance in the Asia-Pacific region. Taiwan, on the other hand, aligns with the US to bolster its defense against the existential threat posed by China's claims of sovereignty over the island (Morgenthau, 1948).

1.8.2. Neo-Realism (Structural Realism)

Neo-realism, introduced by Kenneth Waltz, refines classical realism by shifting the focus from

human nature to the structure of the international system. Waltz contends that the anarchic nature of the international system forces states to act in certain ways to ensure their survival. Unlike classical realism, which emphasizes power derived from human nature, neo-realism focuses on how the structure of the international system shapes state behavior (Waltz, 1979).

Neo-realism is bifurcated into defensive and offensive realism. Defensive realists, like Waltz, argue that states seek to maintain their security by preserving the status quo and avoiding unnecessary conflicts that could provoke counter-balancing coalitions. Conversely, offensive realists, such as John Mearsheimer, assert that the anarchic international system compels states to maximize their power to achieve regional or global hegemony (Mearsheimer, 2001).

1.8.3. Offensive Realism and US-Taiwan Relations

Offensive realism provides a robust framework for understanding the strategic calculus behind US-Taiwan security cooperation. Mearsheimer posits that states are power-maximizers, driven by the need to achieve dominance as the surest means of ensuring their survival. From this perspective, the United States' military support for Taiwan is a strategic effort to prevent China from achieving regional hegemony, which would threaten US interests and influence in the Asia-Pacific (Mearsheimer, 2001).

For China, the US-Taiwan alliance is perceived as a significant threat to its rise and regional ambitions. China's response, including its military buildup and the development of anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities, aligns with offensive realism's prediction that states will enhance their military power to counter external threats. This dynamic illustrates the inherent tensions and potential for conflict inherent in an anarchic international system where power maximization is a primary goal.

1.8.4. Defensive Realism and the Security Dilemma

While offensive realism emphasizes power accumulation, defensive realism focuses on the security dilemma. This concept, central to defensive realism, posits that actions taken by one state to

increase its security can inadvertently threaten other states, leading to an arms race and escalating tensions (Jervis, 1978).

In the context of US-Taiwan relations, the security dilemma is evident. The United States increases its military support for Taiwan to enhance its defense capabilities and deter Chinese aggression. However, China perceives this support as a direct threat, prompting it to bolster its military capabilities. This, in turn, leads the US and Taiwan to further strengthen their security cooperation, creating a cycle of mutual suspicion and military buildup.

1.8.5. Strategic Implications for China

Neo-realist theory helps elucidate China's strategic responses to US-Taiwan security cooperation. China's military modernization and assertive policies in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait are rational strategies aimed at countering US influence and deterring intervention in these critical regions. By developing A2/AD capabilities, China seeks to deny the US and its allies the ability to operate freely in the region, thereby increasing the costs of any potential conflict and deterring support for Taiwan (Goldstein, 2020).

China's actions are consistent with the neo-realist emphasis on the importance of power and security in an anarchic international system. By enhancing its military capabilities and adopting a more assertive posture, China aims to shift the regional balance of power in its favor and reduce the threat posed by the US-Taiwan alliance.

1.8.6. Realism and International Relations Theory

The application of realism and neo-realism to US-Taiwan security cooperation highlights the enduring relevance of these theories in understanding international politics. Realism's focus on power, security, and state behavior in an anarchic system provides a compelling explanation for the strategic choices made by the US, Taiwan, and China.

Classical realism underscores the competitive nature of international politics, where states seek to increase their power to ensure their survival. This perspective explains why the US supports Taiwan: to counterbalance China's rise and maintain a balance of power in the Asia-Pacific. Taiwan, facing an existential threat from China, aligns with the US to enhance its security and preserve its autonomy.

Neo-realism, particularly offensive realism, offers further insights into these dynamics. From an offensive realist perspective, the US aims to prevent China from achieving regional hegemony by bolstering Taiwan's defense capabilities. China, in turn, responds by increasing its military power and assertiveness, viewing the US-Taiwan cooperation as a direct challenge to its security and regional ambitions.

1.8.7. The Role of Hegemony and Balance of Power

Hegemony and balance of power are central concepts in realism and neo-realism. In an anarchic international system, states strive to prevent any one state from becoming too powerful and dominating the system. This leads to the formation of alliances and counter-balancing coalitions to maintain a balance of power.

The US-Taiwan security cooperation can be seen as part of the US strategy to balance China's rise and prevent it from achieving regional hegemony. By supporting Taiwan, the US aims to create a counterweight to China's growing power and influence in East Asia. This strategy is consistent with the realist view that states seek to maintain a balance of power to ensure their security and prevent the emergence of a dominant state (Waltz, 1979).

China's response to this cooperation also fits within the realist framework. By increasing its military capabilities and adopting a more assertive posture, China aims to counterbalance the US and deter its support for Taiwan. This behavior reflects the realist assumption that states will take measures to enhance their security and prevent other states from achieving a dominant position in the

international system.

Hence, the theories of realism and neo-realism provide valuable insights into the dynamics of US-Taiwan security cooperation and its implications for China. Realism's emphasis on power, security, and state behavior in an anarchic system helps explain why the US supports Taiwan and why China views this cooperation as a threat. Neo-realism, particularly offensive realism, further elucidates the strategic calculations behind these actions, highlighting the importance of power maximization and the balance of power in international relations. The US-Taiwan security cooperation, viewed through the lens of realism and neo-realism, underscores the enduring nature of power struggles and security dilemmas in international politics. As the US and China continue to vie for influence in the Asia-Pacific region, Taiwan remains a critical flashpoint with significant implications for regional stability and global power dynamics. The theoretical perspectives of realism and neo-realism not only help us understand the motivations and actions of the key players involved but also provide a framework for anticipating future developments and managing potential conflicts in this strategically vital region.

1.8.8 Aligning China's Actions with Defensive Realism and Taiwan's Strategies with Power Balancing to Strengthen Theoretical Analysis

1.8.8.1 China's Actions and Defensive Realism

From the perspective of defensive realism, which posits that states primarily seek to maintain their security rather than maximize power, China's actions can be seen as measures to protect its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Defensive realism argues that excessive accumulation of power can provoke counterbalancing coalitions, making a state less secure. China's assertive policies in the South China Sea, military modernization, and its stance on Taiwan are often framed by Beijing as necessary for preventing encirclement and ensuring that no regional or external power threatens its core interests.

In this light, China's military build-up and diplomatic efforts could be interpreted as a defensive response to perceived threats from the U.S. and its allies. The U.S.'s military presence in Asia and its support for Taiwan could be viewed as attempts to contain China's rise, prompting China to act defensively to secure its position and avoid strategic vulnerabilities. Defensive realism would suggest that China's actions are primarily about maintaining the status quo and preventing any deterioration of its security environment, rather than aggressive expansionism.

1.8.8.2 Taiwan's Strategies and Power Balancing

Taiwan's strategies fit well within the broader framework of power balancing, a key concept in both classical realism and neorealist. Taiwan faced with the asymmetry of power between itself and China, has engaged in balancing behavior by strengthening its defense capabilities, seeking alliances, and ensuring that it remains a crucial partner to major powers like the U.S.

From a neorealist perspective, which emphasizes the anarchic nature of the international system and the importance of power distribution, Taiwan's approach can be seen as an effort to balance against the dominant regional power—China. By aligning closely with the U.S., Taiwan leverages the strategic competition between great powers to enhance its own security. This is a classic example of external balancing, where a weaker state seeks support from stronger states to counter a more powerful adversary.

Furthermore, Taiwan's investment in asymmetric warfare capabilities, such as anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategies, aligns with defensive realism's emphasis on the importance of security over power. These strategies are designed to deter aggression by making the costs of invasion prohibitively high for China, rather than by seeking to challenge China's regional dominance directly.

In summary, analyzing China's actions through the lens of defensive realism highlights its focus on securing its strategic environment against perceived threats, particularly from the U.S. and its allies.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's strategies can be understood as power balancing within the neorealist framework, where it seeks to counterbalance China's influence through alliances and defensive military strategies. Integrating these perspectives into your analysis will provide a more nuanced understanding of the U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation within the broader dynamics of international relations theory.

1.9. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Research design

This study will be qualitative in nature. The research will take a descriptive and exploratory approach. Overall, this research methodology will take a comprehensive approach to investigating the security implications of the United States-Taiwan strategic alliances over China.

1.9.2 Data collection

The data collection for this research project on US-Taiwan security cooperation and its implications for China will take a multifaceted approach to gather comprehensive insights. Primary data will be gathered through interviews with key stakeholders such as government officials, military personnel, academics, and experts from relevant think tanks. These interviews will provide firsthand accounts of the nature of US-Taiwan security cooperation, China's reactions and strategic responses, and the broader implications for regional security dynamics in East Asia. In addition to primary data collection, secondary data sources will be widely used.

A thorough review of existing scholarly articles, policy papers, government reports, and media coverage will supplement the primary data by providing a broader context and historical background for the analysis. Official documents from the United States, Taiwan, and China will also be reviewed to provide authoritative insights into the respective actors' official positions and policies. By combining

primary and secondary data collection methods, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of US-Taiwan security cooperation, its implications for China, and its broader significance for regional security dynamics in East Asia. This research aims to contribute valuable insights to academic scholarship while also informing policymakers and stakeholders about the complex dynamics shaping regional security relations.

1.9.3. Data analysis

The data will be analyzed systematically and by applying logical techniques to describe, illustrate and evaluate data. Data will be analyzed through content analysis. The data will be analyzed on two levels: descriptive and interpretative.

1.9.4. Content Analysis Method

In this thesis, content analysis is employed as the primary method to explore and interpret the strategic and military dimensions of U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation and its implications for China. Content analysis is a qualitative research method used to systematically examine and categorize textual, visual, or oral data to identify patterns, themes, and meanings. Content analysis is the systematic examination and interpretation of existing data, often gathered by others, for one's own research. It includes a variety of techniques for drawing meaningful conclusions from identified message characteristics. This method is not a new development; it has historical roots, with Émile Durkheim among its early practitioners in the nineteenth century. Durkheim's work is a notable example of how content analysis can answer research questions that would not be appropriate for primary data analysis. While collecting new data is typically thought to be the best approach in primary analysis, content analysis provides a valuable alternative by utilizing existing data to contribute insights to a specific field. Methods, primary data collection and content analysis, play crucial roles in research, emphasizing the importance of leveraging existing data while also generating new information.

The application of content analysis in this study involved several key steps:

1. **Coding Process:** The coding process involved identifying and categorizing key themes and concepts related to U.S.-Taiwan military cooperation and China's strategic response. Codes were developed to capture recurring themes such as "arms sales," "military exercises," "asymmetric warfare," "power balancing," and "regional security threats." Each document was carefully reviewed, and relevant sections were coded based on these predetermined categories.
2. **Criteria for Analysis:** The criteria for analyzing the content were based on relevance to the research questions and theoretical frameworks. Specific attention was given to instances where actions or statements aligned with principles of Realism and Neo-Realism, such as power balancing, security dilemmas, and state interests. The analysis also considered the frequency of certain themes and the context in which they appeared, which helped in understanding how U.S.-Taiwan cooperation is framed by different actors and how it impacts China's security strategy.

By providing a detailed coding process and clear criteria for analysis, this method improves the reliability of the research and ensures that the conclusions drawn are firmly based on the systematic interpretation of the data. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of how U.S.-Taiwan cooperation shapes regional security dynamics and China's responses, grounded in a thorough and methodical analysis of the available content.

CHAPTER TWO

CROSS-STRAIT CRISIS- HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Taiwan, once known as 'Formosa', is a tiny island off the east coast of China that is in East Asia between the Philippines and Japan. Taiwan is separated from China by the Taiwan Strait, which is located at the intersection of the East and South China Seas in the northwest Pacific Ocean (Goldstein, 2020). Its geographical significance places it in a unique and central position within the first island chain, which consists of pro-US island state vs and territories that include Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines (Roy, 2019). Taiwan consists of 23 million people and, despite its controversial international status; it exercises autonomous authority over its territory, which includes the islands of Taiwan, Penghu, Matsu, and Kinmen (Farooq, 2023). Taiwan's complicated past is characterized by interactions between indigenous populations and various colonial powers, including the Dutch and the Japanese, as well as a volatile and tense relationship with China today. Only near the conclusion of its imperial existence did China settle Taiwan, on the outskirts of its dynastic rule (Rubinstein, 2015).

The island was annexed in 1684, and major numbers of Chinese people first came there in the sixteenth century. The Qing dynasty did not have firm control over Taiwan until 1895. However, they were forced to relinquish Taiwan to Japan after losing a war. This demonstrated that the Qing dynasty was not efficient at modernization (Harrison, 2001). People started to get annoyed and began to revolt. This resulted in the collapse of the Qing empire and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). Sun Yat-sen founded the Republic of China (ROC) and led the Nationalists, commonly known as the Kuomintang (KMT). When Sun died in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek became the leader, but he struggled to modernize China (Fenby, 2003).

This provided Mao Zedong and his Communist organization with an opportunity to gain

support from dis-satisfied citizens. After Japan's assaulted on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the US created an agreement with the ROC. Chiang committed significant armed troops to combat the Japanese, allowing the US to prioritize the European theater (Taylor, 2009). President Franklin D. Roosevelt supported Chiang's stance over Taiwan, which have been governed by Japan for nearly 50 years, should be returned to China after the war. This point was confirmed in the Cairo Declaration of 1943. In the 1945 Potsdam Declaration, President Harry S. Truman expressed similar sentiments. Following Japan's give up, the KMT began administering the island (Lawrence, 2024).

Because the United States supported Chiang Kai-shek, they were embroiled in China's civil war. The conflict was fought between Chiang's rivalry, the KMT, and Mao's Communists. It began after World War II. The United States attempted to help an end the conflict by sending General George Marshall to mediate peace, but it failed (Chen, 2019). In Taiwan, many people were dissatisfied with the KMT's rule. This sparked a massive protest in February 1947, but the government responded violently, killing thousands of citizens. This event is known as the February 28 massacre or just 228 (Hsu, 2020). The United States began to lose faith in Chiang Kai-shek because they disagreed with his approach to defeating the Communists. They recognized that only a massive military operation could prevent the Communists from seizing power, but they refused to do it. They chose to quit supporting Chiang and his organization (Chang, 2021). Chiang and his allies fled China and traveled to Taiwan, where they expected to create a new strategy for regaining control of China's mainland (Hickey, 2021). When Chiang Kai-shek relocated his government to Taiwan, it was critical to Mao Zedong and the newly founded People's Republic of China (PRC). The Communist Party of China (CCP) sees Taiwan's separation as a reminder that their fight against the KMT is far from ended. They believe it is unjust since they were not powerful enough to prevent foreign countries from intervening. Beijing regards the Taiwan issue as a question of sovereignty, which means who has the right to control Taiwan, and

they consider it one of the most significant issues for China (Shambaugh, 2022).

They believe they cannot speak or negotiate about it. The People's Republic of China (PRC) believes in the One China principle, which states that there is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is part of China. They claim that the government of the PRC is the sole lawful government that represents all of China. According to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Taiwan is a piece of land that China lost and must reclaim in order to regain its dominance (Lee, 2018). Taiwan remains tremendously significant to Chinese people, and it is inextricably related to their sense of Chinese identity and national pride. Because the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regards Taiwan as so essential, any Chinese leader would view Taiwan's declaration of independence as a major issue. It would be viewed as unacceptable and could result in severe repercussions, including the end of their political career (Sutter, 2019, Mullen, 2024).

The United States had to accept that Mao Zedong's armies could eventually take over Taiwan. Leader Truman intimated in January 1950 that the United States would not hinder to prevent this from occurring. After North Korea assaulted South Korea in June 1950, the situation in the United States shifted, affecting Taiwan's destiny. When Communist troops, led by Mao Zedong and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, attacked South Korea, President Truman warned that if they attempted to take over Taiwan, the Pacific regions and American soldiers' safety would be jeopardized. As a result, he dispatched the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait to avert Mao and Chiang from resuming hostilities. Looking back on how significant these events were, US National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger famously told Premier Zhou Enlai of the People's Republic of China (PRC), "If the Korean War hadn't happened, Taiwan would likely be part of China today"(Mullen, 2024, Hickey, 2021).

Shortly after the start of the Korean War in June 1950, the Truman administration shifted the official US policy on Taiwan. They stated that deciding what would happen to Taiwan in the future

would have to wait until the Pacific region was safe again, Japan reached peace, or the United Nations debated it. The United States said unequivocally that Taiwan's lawful status had yet to be determined, and this is the case today. This concept was demonstrated in the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco, when Japan stated that it would no longer claim Taiwan, although it was unclear who would hold the claim instead (Chang, 2021).

As the Cold War broke out, Chiang Kai-shek was known as a staunch opponent of Communism. The US dispatched troops to Taiwan and gave the island a large sum of money to boost its economy. After China shelled five tiny islands near Taiwan in 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower negotiated a deal with Taiwan guaranteeing mutual assistance if attacked. Chiang was regarded as a vital ally against Communism, although he was not a democratic leader. Instead, he enforced severe rules, claiming that they were necessary because they were still fighting the Communists. During what became known as the White Terror, the KMT government imprisoned and executed anybody who disagreed with them. People in Taiwan had little voice in how they were ruled since Chiang Kai-shek claimed to represent all of China, which Taiwan was only a small portion of. He cited this as a reason to limit their political power. Despite the fact that many Americans disliked Chiang's leadership style; the United States continued to back him because they considered him as a crucial Cold War ally. Later, the United States pressed Chiang's government to grant more freedom and implement political reform. The strong connection between the United States and the Republic of China (ROC) began to deteriorate as it became more difficult to pretend that Chiang Kai-shek represented all of China or that Mao Zedong's Communist government would soon fall down (Shambaugh, 2022).

However, a significant shift in how the United States handled with Taiwan, as well as the relationship between Taiwan and China, occurred when both countries decided they needed to work together to combat the Soviet Union. When the division between China and the Soviet Union became

apparent, President Richard Nixon saw an chance to develop relations with China because they both disliked the Soviet Union. The United States considered Taiwan as one of several issues to discuss while attempting to recover relations with China, but it was the most critical issue for China to address. The People's Republic of China (PRC) made it clear that they would either maintain relations with the United States or collaborate strategically unless the US terminated diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The US sought to preserve some type of official relationship with Taiwan, such as an office or embassy in Taipei, and they also wanted China to agree to resolve disputes between Taiwan and China peacefully. But China rejected the notion. Instead, they demanded that the United States stop recognizing the Republic of China (ROC), terminate their defense treaty, and withdraw all US military personnel from Taiwan. They claimed that resolving this issue was entirely China's responsibility (Lee, 2018, Gordon, 2023).

2.1. Taiwan: A Top Concern in US-PRC Normalization Dialogue

Despite their failure to overcome key differences, the United States and China met in 1972 and signed the Shanghai Communiqué. They discovered a way to discuss things on which they both agreed. The United States acknowledged in this deal that it is aware that Chinese people on equally sides of the Taiwan Strait believe there is only one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States stated that it did not disagree with this. It also declared that it would like China to address the Taiwan problem peacefully on its own. The United States acknowledged China's assertion that Taiwan was a part of China, but did not support it. The United States did not dispute China's stance on Taiwan, avoiding a "One China, One Taiwan" policy. The United States reaffirmed its commitment to a peaceful resolution of cross-strait disputes, expressing no inclination to employ force or mediate the conflict. In 1978, the United States recognized diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, thereby ending diplomatic relations with the ROC. The United States recognized the People's Republic

of China as China's sole legitimate government, recognizing Taiwan's role in the single China. The US ended its defense treaty with Taiwan but continued to sell weaponry (Lawrence, 2024).

The United States Congress, feeling excluded from the normalization process and dissatisfied with the Carter administration's decision to cancel a treaty without their participation, decided to influence Taiwan's unofficial relationship. They significantly amended the Carter administration's draft legislation, thereby making it a security guarantee. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 established the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) as a nonprofit organization to handle cultural, commercial, and other informal exchanges with Taiwanese. Furthermore, the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) states so. The United stipulates' goal is to proclaim that regional peace and stability are crucial to its political, security, and economic interests, as well as concerns of international concern.

- According to the TRA, the US's decision to establish diplomatic relations with China is based on the belief that Taiwan's future will be peacefully determined.
- The TRA views any attempt to determine Taiwan's fate through non-peaceful measures, like as boycotts or sanctions, as a danger to the Western Pacific region's peace and security. The United States is deeply concerned about such acts.
- This means that the US has agreed to assist Taiwan with weapons for defense. It also means that the US will make certain that no one uses force or threats to jeopardize Taiwan's security, society, or economy. Simply put, while the US was in talks with China, they couldn't persuade China to agree not to exercise power against Taiwan. As a result, the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) links the decision to establish diplomatic relations with China to China's interactions with Taiwan. Although the TRA does not oblige the US to protect Taiwan, it does specify that it must be ready to do so. It also indicates the United States' concern for sustaining peace and stability in the Taiwan-China region. If China utilized force or did anything detrimental to Taiwan, the United States would be extremely

concerned and may act to assist (Mullen, 2024).

During Reagan's administration, the United States agreed with China in 1982 to decrease its arms supplies to Taiwan, indicating that the amount and quality would not surpass what had been sold in the previous years. The United States also stated that it does not approve the idea of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan." In an internal memo, President Reagan explained how he interpreted the agreement. He added that the US agreed to sell less weapons to Taiwan only if China promised to address the issues with Taiwan peacefully. He emphasized that the link between limiting weapons sales and China's commitment to peace remained a continuous part of US foreign policy. Reagan also stated that the quantity and quality of weapons delivered to Taiwan would be based on China's threat level. The goal was to ensure that Taiwan had a stronger defense than China. So, if China increased its military strength against Taiwan, the United States would not stop its arms sales to the island. Reagan also sent a classified letter to Deng Xiaoping, China's top leader at the time, expressing the United States' wish for a peaceful resolution to the Taiwan issue. Reagan effectively told China that if China employed force, the United States may intervene to aid Taiwan. However, it is vital to emphasize that Reagan's memo and letter were his own opinions and were never agreed upon by China (Gordon, 2023).

In August 1982, the Reagan administration quietly assured Taiwan of what the US had not agreed to during discussions with China, recognized as the Six Promises. Specifically, the United States,

- The deadline for ending arms sales to Taiwan has not been set.
- Did not guarantee to discuss with the PRC on military shipments to Taiwan.
- Will not serve as a mediator amid Taipei and Beijing.
- Did not agree to modify the Taiwan affairs Act;

- Did not commit to a position on Taiwan's control.
- Will not pressure Taiwan to discuss with the People's Republic.

The Six guarantees and Reagan's internal memo, which had been classified for nearly four decades, were declassified, revealing that the majority of the guarantees covered what the US had not agreed to in talks with China, with the third and sixth assurances outlining long-standing US policies. The One China policy refers to three joint statements between the United States and China, which include the TRA and the Six Assurances. Regarding the US's One China policy,

- There are no formal diplomatic ties between the PRC and Taiwan; it is acknowledged as the only legitimate government in China.
- The People's Republic of China (PRC) recognizes Taiwan's role in one China, but it promises not to contest or implement laws that go against this framework, eschewing the idea of "two Chinas."
- Does not obtain a position on sovereignty over Taiwan and believes its status is uncertain;
- Does not get a position on what any resolution of cross-strait disagreements should look like, instead prioritizing procedure, particularly the need for any outcome to be reached peacefully;
- It expresses an importance in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, leaving open the option of military intervention on Taiwan's behalf.
- Pledges to providing Taiwan with weaponry that will allow it to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability;
- It establishes a relationship between its One China policy, diplomatic relations with the PRC, and Beijing's sustained non-use of force against Taiwan (Sacks, 2024).

The U.S. has shifted its China policy over time, stating that cross-strait problem have to be set on quietly and with Taiwan's consent. President Bill Clinton became the first president to openly state that the U.S. does not sustain Taiwan's autonomy or membership in international organizations requiring statehood, signaling that U.S. support is conditional on Taiwan's non- aggravating behavior. Washington's One China policy defines U.S.-Taiwan relations, but policymakers can adjust actions. Following the 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, AIT attended government meetings; U.S. officials traveled to Taiwan, and supported Taiwan's participation in international organizations. Opening in 2003, U.S. Foreign Service officers were no longer required to leave from the State Department before unification AIT, and a few years later, active-duty military officers (rather than retired military personnel) began serving at AIT (Gordon, 2023).

The Donald Trump and Joe Biden administrations changed the limits governing executive branch engagement with Taiwanese diplomats in Washington in 2020-21; making them the least preventive they had been since 1979. These initiatives reflect a bipartisan consensus that Taiwan should be recognized as a significant partner in its own right, rather than as a mere point of contention in US-China relations. The US One China policy is anticipated to evolve in response to shifting dynamics in the Taiwan Strait. Historically, the United States has endeavored to moderate or balance the extreme tendencies of both parties. This stance has conveyed to Beijing that resolving cross-strait issues through coercion, including potential military action, would incur substantial costs, while simultaneously reminding Taiwan that it cannot act without repercussions. What strategies will ensure cross-strait stability amidst a stronger and more assertive China? (Gordon, 2023).

Significant Events in Cross-Strait and Contemporary US-Taiwan Relations

Years	Time Line	
1950	1949	Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China (PRC), while Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang party (KMT) fled to Taiwan and declared martial law.
	1950	Following the Korean War, President Harry S. Truman sent the Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait to avert a PRC attack. The US then changed its attitude on Taiwan's status.
	1954	After the PRC shelled Taiwan's offshore island of Kinmen, causing the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, the US and Republic of China (ROC) negotiated a bilateral defense agreement.
	1958	The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis began after China shelled Taiwan's offshore islands and attempted an amphibious landing to capture a small island. U.S. Navy warships guided Taiwanese ships to restock the offshore islands.
1960	1960s	Taiwan's economy experienced unprecedented growth of 360% between 1965 and 1986, known as the Taiwan Economic Miracle.
1970	1971	National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger visits Beijing to discuss relations with the PRC.
	1972	During President Richard M. Nixon's visit to China, the US and
		PRC issued a communique in Shanghai.

1980	1979	During President Jimmy Carter's tenure, the US established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, severed official connections with the Republic of China, and terminated the mutual defense treaty.
	1979	Congress passes the Taiwan Relations Act, which President Carter signs into law.
1990	1987	President Chiang Ching-kuo removes martial law and initiates democracy in Taiwan.
	1995	Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's address at Cornell University sparked the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.
	1996	Taiwan has the first direct presidential election.
2000	2000	Taiwan's biggest opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), takes power for the first time.
2010	2008	Despite complaints from the US and China, Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian of the DPP is pursuing a referendum to seek UN membership.
	2008	Ma Ying-jeou, the KMT president, seeks reconciliation with the PRC based on the 1992 Consensus.
	2014	The Sunflower Movement, which opposes deeper ties with the PRC, erupts in Taiwan.
	2014	Chinese leader Xi Jinping aims to accomplish "rejuvenation" of the Chinese country by 2049, including union with Taiwan.
	2016	Tsai Ing-wen, president of the DPP, rejects the 1992 Consensus
		and cuts off communication with the PRC.

2020	2022	China responds to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan by conducting significant military drills.
	2023	The US believes that Xi has ordered the People's Liberation Army to prepare for an assault of Taiwan by 2027.

CHAPTER THREE

MAGNITUDE OF MILITARY AND STRATEGIC COOPERATION BETWEEN US AND TAIWAN

3.1. US-Taiwan ties: Strategic Cooperation versus Diplomatic Relations

US-Taiwan ties focus on strategic cooperation rather than formal diplomatic relations. This allows the US to support Taiwan and collaborate on various issues without officially recognizing Taiwan, thus maintaining the potential for relations with China. This flexible, organized partnership involves regular exchanges and cooperation across sectors, enabling both nations to pursue their interests while balancing regional stability and strategic priorities. Taiwan's international status is unique—it's recognized by only a few small countries and isn't a member of the United Nations (UN), which sets it apart. When direct diplomatic relations with the United States aren't possible, Taiwan looks at other options. Strategic collaboration is one such option, distinct from formal diplomatic relations. This means US-Taiwan relations can't involve official diplomatic ties to maintain relations with China (Parameswaran 2014).

Strategic partnerships as loosely organized frameworks for parties to work together on common challenges and opportunities across various sectors. These partnerships involve regular exchanges between countries through different government agencies, setting them apart from diplomatic relations. The pattern of constant and normal exchanges between two countries distinguishes strategic partnership from diplomatic relations, as evidenced by the different intergovernmental agencies involved (Czechowsk 2013). The structure of these organizations may differ from one another; nonetheless, the form is typically rooted in areas of cooperation with major agencies, providing a vehicle for partnership. Third, rather than opposing a specific country or organization, the primary goal of the strategic partnership are to confront similar difficulties and capitalize on shared opportunities (Parameswaran, 2014).

It is mainly a tool for countries to follow chances for discerning engagement and dedication with as

various partners as feasible while without alienating others. It is a system based on goals rather than threats. Fourth, strategic alliances are multidimensional, requiring collaboration across multiple domains. It is not limited to military or security cooperation, as an alliance is. It defined diplomatic ties as the scenario in which two states can communicate without formal barriers. Without diplomatic connections, communication is unlikely to be straight forwarded and may even be impossible. As a result, diplomatic ties are the most common way for two countries to maintain continuous communication. The distinction between strategic partnership and diplomatic relations highlights the type of relationship amid Taiwan and the United States. Their relationship is based on strategic collaboration, with indirect communication as needed by diplomatic rules. It's important to understand how the US keeps its relationship with Taiwan. The US maintains strategic cooperation with Taiwan through the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 while also having diplomatic relations with China under the One China Policy, based on the Three Joint Communiqués. The US opposes any unilateral changes to the current situation in the Taiwan Straits by either side and does not support Taiwanese independence. The US also supports a peaceful resolution of China-Taiwan disputes in a way that is acceptable to both parties (Berridge and James 2003).

According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report (2017), a strategic partnership starts with a loose form of alignment. This limited alignment allows a tiny state like Taiwan to benefit from US economic and security assistance without provoking aggressive action from mainland China. The formal framework for this collaboration between Taiwan and the United States is structured through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT). It is an entity with responsibilities such as coordinating with Taiwanese representatives to enhance commerce, defense relations, and public diplomacy efforts. The next component is strategic partnership, which involves sharing difficulties and capitalizing on mutual opportunities. The next component is strategic partnership, which involves sharing difficulties and

capitalizing on mutual opportunities. In the instance of Taiwan, the United States can form a strategic alliance with Taiwan while also maintaining diplomatic connections with China in opposition to any diplomatic relations established by other countries with Taiwan. Finally, in terms of multidimensionality, the United States' cooperation with Taiwan extends beyond defense and security support to include economic and commercial partners (Ikhrum, 2021).

3.2. Development of US-Taiwan ties toward Strategic Cooperation

Taiwan's strong economic growth, along with its long-standing competition with Communist China, necessitated the strengthening of its defense and security forces to ensure its sovereignty and survival. Thus, Taiwan may join forces with the United States, a superpower nation in terms of military and economic power. As an island republic with no land borders, Taiwan's economy must rely on sea lanes to conduct trade with the rest of the globe. During Taiwan's early years, the United States gave important military and security support. When communist China threatened to invade the Taiwan Straits in the early 1950s, the US Navy launched its 7th Fleet to protect the island. With the US assurance of the island's security, the separatist KMT Party led by Chiang Kai-shek took lead by implementing several reforms to strengthen Taiwan (Copper, 1996).

Some of the attempts included organizing elections and developing a plan to compose Taiwan's political structure more democratic. Since 1949, the United States has played an important role in safeguarding Taiwan's security, even after diplomatic connections were severed in 1979. This security assurance was enabled by the TRA and bolstered by three joint US-China communiqués, which have served as a symbol of regional stability and peace due to the US's commitment. In near the beginning 1950, the US resolved that, regardless of communist triumph in mainland China, they had no purpose of preventing Communist forces from finishing out the KMT in Taiwan (Bergsten, Freeman, & Lardy, 2008).

Once the Korean War began in June 1950, the United States made a strategic decision to strongly commit to protecting against communist threats in the region. This also helped reassure and strengthen US allies during the early Cold War. The US commitment to Taiwan's security and peaceful development is crucial for maintaining credibility with its allies in East Asia. When the US established diplomatic relations with communist China in 1979, it ended formal ties with Taiwan and withdrew its military presence from the island. However, this did not end US military support for Taiwan, including arms sales and regional military deployment. The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979 serves as an informal US defense commitment to Taiwan, ensuring it has the means to maintain its self-defense capabilities. After the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) regained power in 2016, Taiwan started developing a defense strategy to complement US and Japanese policies. The US has helped Taiwan grow its local defense industries and increase defense spending. Additionally, during the Vietnam War, Taiwan provided economic and technical support to US operations (Bergsten et al. 2008).

Taiwan's economy extended swiftly in the early 1960s due to an export- driven growth strategy that changed the island from rural to industrial. Taiwan's economic achievements will be significant for the United States as a strategic alliance member. In terms of economic support, the United States has historically offered economic support to Taiwan. Following the outbreak of the Korean War. The US initially provided assistance to Taiwan in securing its future, but eventually shifted its focus to economic development. The US aid agenda to Taiwan has stimulated and encouraged deregulation, as well as promoted an enhanced understanding of the market component, in addition to subsidizing framework expansion and infrastructure construction (Jacoby, 1966).

On the other hand, in 1964, the United States temporarily ceased its economic support for Taiwan, forcing Taiwan to stand on its own (Copper, 1996). Despite the loss of US aid, Taiwan's economy has recovered and grown swiftly, affecting people's social lives. It was also the time when the

politics were more towards democracy and the authoritarian was getting less. (Rosier et al 2016).

Internal and external elements contribute to the strategic cooperation between the United States and Taiwan

3.3. Internal Factors

The United States views Taiwan's democracy as a model for Asia and the world. The defeat of the long-standing KMT Party by the DPP in 2000 marked a significant moment, showcasing a peaceful transfer of power in Taiwan. The DPP's victory, with Chen Shui-bian becoming president, ended 55 years of KMT rule and initiated Taiwan's first democratic power shift between parties. The DPP, known for its pro-independence stance, has significantly influenced both local politics and Taiwan's global relations, especially with the US, Taiwan's main supporter. However, US support for Taiwan's independence is a sensitive issue in US-China relations. Any attempt by Taiwan to declare independence crosses a red line for the US. The DPP's push in 2003 for a referendum on a new constitution and UN membership under the name "Taiwan" angered China and concerned the US. The Bush administration viewed this move as a provocative step toward independence, raising questions about US support for Taiwan, particularly in economic and military matters (Zulkifli, 2021).

In 2000, President Clinton stated that any declaration regarding Taiwan ought to be peaceful and have the approval of the Taiwanese people. In 2003, President Bush opposed any unilateral changes to the status quo in Taiwan. Despite contrasting Taiwan's referendum proposal, the US sent aircraft carriers near Taiwan as a symbolic gesture against China's aggression. The DPP's actions and the US response have been influential, reflecting the US's strong interest in Taiwan. Taiwan can pursue self-determination without seeking full sovereignty, maintaining political ambiguity for better security. In March 2008, the KMT Party regained power, with Ma Ying-jeou's victory marking Taiwan's second democratic transfer of authority. President Bush praised this peaceful transition, calling Taiwan a model

democracy in a Chinese cultural context. Ma Ying-jeou's presidency raised hopes for stability and reduced tensions with mainland China (Vorndick 2018).

Since its defeat to the Communist Party in 1949, the KMT Party's One China Policy has remained a cornerstone of the party's ideals toward China. The KMT Party's presidential election victory in March 2008 set the path for the Legislative Yuan (LY) elections on January 12, 2008, which defeated the DPP. After winning the president in March, the KMT Party took firm control of the government in May 2008, and the legislative elections were the first fought under new electoral laws approved in 2005 as part of an amendment to Taiwan's constitution. The regulations reduced the size of the LY from 225 to 113 members and extended the period of service from three to four years. The regulations also established a new single-member district system that required voters to cast two ballots, similar to those used in Germany and Japan, one for a candidate and one for a political party (Sutter 2008).

In 2016, the DPP won both the presidential and legislative elections, with President Tsai Ing-wen taking office. President Tsai and the DPP consider Taiwan a sovereign and independent state, and they believe that any changes to this status should be decided by Taiwan's 23 million people through self-determination. As an island nation, Taiwan heavily relies on global trade for goods and services. However, Taiwan has not made significant progress in economic liberalization or securing new bilateral trade agreements with key partners like the United States. Since the US cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan in 1978, China has actively promoted economic integration with Taiwan. By 2001, China had become Taiwan's largest export partner, accounting for 25% of its total exports. By 2003, Taiwan's foreign direct investment in China exceeded USD 21.43 billion, and Taiwan's IT industry grew increasingly dependent on China. China has used economic pressure to threaten Taiwan, aiming to deter any moves toward independence, believing that economic coercion could help resolve military tensions. Before the DPP took power in 2000, China expanded trade with Taiwan to suppress separatist movements and

support future peaceful unification. However, this strategy did not succeed during the DPP administration from 2000 to 2008 (Lawrence, 2024).

The lack of internal economic integration in Taiwan created divisions, as President Chen and his pro-independence supporters had strong backing from companies not tied to the business community closer to China. As economic integration with China increased, President Chen faced growing pressure to strengthen military ties with the United States and build a unique Taiwanese national identity. Taiwan's economic dependence on China worried opposition political parties, especially the DPP led by President Chen. After winning the elections, Chen's administration took steps to limit Taiwanese investment in China, proposed a national technology protection law to regulate the flow of high-tech products, and encouraged Taiwanese firms to return to Taiwan. This reflects the DPP's pro-independence stance towards mainland China. After being elected in March 2008, President Ma Ying-jeou worked to strengthen economic and social ties between Taiwan and China. However, there are increasing concerns in Taiwan about the potential negative effects of strong economic relations, which could make the island more reliant on mainland China (Zulkifli, 2021).

3.4. External Factors

External factors significantly shape the strategic partnership between the United States and Taiwan. This study focuses on Taiwan's relations with China, the impact on US-China diplomatic relations, and Taiwan's interactions with international organizations. China is a major factor for Taiwan, with its long-term goal being reunification and its short-term goal to stabilize relations to make progress toward that goal. Taiwan's relationship with China has been a source of instability in Northeast Asia since the KMT's fall to communists in 1949. China's policy toward Taiwan includes three key elements: offering positive incentives through increased economic exchanges, building up military presence on the island, and continuously working to isolate Taiwan internationally (Vorndick 2018).

Taiwan's separatist efforts have fluctuated, although the country has remained committed to greater independence from China, particularly since 2000. China has always been concerned about the movement, which, since 1949, has sought to safeguard Chinese sovereignty and nationalistic goals. The unpredictable nature of the Taiwan issue and its ramifications for Chinese foreign policy are exacerbated by China's inability to control Taiwanese leaders, who must constantly seek independence from China (Sutter 2008). The 2000 Taiwan election, in which the DPP defeated the long-standing ruling KMT party, represents a significant setback for China. The DPP, a well-known pro-independence movement, poses severe challenges to China and may intensify relations between the two nations. Despite the fact that the United States does not have an official diplomatic relationship with Taiwan, it has long been a reliable source of stress relief. In his inauguration speech after entering power, President Chen attempted to shift attention away from Taiwan's desire for independence while also refusing China's demand to adhere to a One China Policy. To reduce China's pressure on Taiwan, President Chen has announced that Taiwan will not declare independence, will not change its national title, will not include the two-state theory in its constitution, will not hold a referendum on reunification or independence, and will not abolish the National Unification Council. However, China did not embrace this approach, putting additional pressure on Taiwan and intensifying efforts to isolate it internationally (Zulkifli, 2021).

During this time, China applied diplomatic pressure on the US, viewing the US as the principal blame for Taiwan's continued separation. China's efforts to put pressure on the US, however, backfire as President Bush reacts with more weaponry shipments to Taiwan. The US opposes Taiwan's independence movement and adheres to the One China Policy. President Chen and the DPP advocate for reforms regarding Taiwan's status, which China perceives as a possible trigger for conflict. The US provides military support to deter China from using force against Taiwan and has intervened in

Taiwan's legislative elections to counter rhetoric promoting independence. The US also encourages dialogue between Taiwan and China to mitigate misunderstandings and reduce tensions in the region (Mustakim et al, 2021).

The third chapter of the document delves into the intricate dynamics of US-Taiwan security cooperation, highlighting the significant modernization of Taiwan's military forces, which is bolstered by US support through advanced weaponry and defense systems. This modernization effort aims to enhance Taiwan's self-defense capabilities and maintain a strategic balance in the region, acting as a substantial deterrent to potential Chinese aggression. The chapter also discusses the US policy of strategic ambiguity towards Taiwan, which serves to manage China's rise and maintain regional stability by deterring both Taiwan from declaring independence and China from using military force for reunification. Additionally, high-profile visits by US officials to Taiwan are highlighted as significant diplomatic interactions that signal strong US support for Taiwan, often perceived by China as provocations and direct challenges to its sovereignty claims, leading to heightened tensions and potential military standoffs in the Asia-Pacific region.

3.5. View of realism and neo-realism in relation to this chapter

When discussing the magnitude of military and strategic cooperation between the U.S. and Taiwan, Realism suggests that both nations are motivated by the need to balance against perceived threats. For the U.S., this cooperation is a way to counter China's growing influence in the Asia-Pacific region, while for Taiwan; it is about securing support from a powerful ally to deter Chinese aggression. On the other hand neo-Realism, or structural realism, focuses on the distribution of power in the international system as the primary factor driving state behavior. In this framework, U.S.-Taiwan cooperation can be seen as a response to the shifting balance of power in East Asia. As China rises, the U.S. strengthens its ties with Taiwan to maintain a favorable balance of power in the region.

Taiwan, in turn, aligns with the U.S. as a means of external balancing against China's superior power.

CHAPTER FOUR

US-TAIWAN COOPERATION IS A THREAT TO CHINA'S REGIONAL SECURITY

China sees the connection between Taiwan and the United States as a direct danger to its national sovereignty, regional security, and geopolitical objectives. Historically, the Chinese government has argued that Taiwan is an integral part of China, and the "One China" policy supports this position. Any US support for Taiwan, whether political, military, or economic, is viewed by Beijing as an infringement on its sovereignty and a challenge to its authority (Farooq, 2023). This view is heightened by the fact that Taiwan acts as a de facto independent state, complete with its government, military, and constitution, but not being commonly recognized as a sovereign entity on a global scale. The military side of US-Taiwan relations is particularly concerning for China. The United States has routinely provided Taiwan with advanced weapons and defense systems, including fighter jets, missile defense systems, and naval assets. These arms shipments, together with joint military training and intelligence cooperation, help Taiwan strengthen its defensive capabilities and ability to prevent or respond to future Chinese attack. This military support not only strengthens Taiwan's security, but it also acts as a strategic deterrent to China, complicating Beijing's planning for any military action against the island (DuBard, Peng, 2024).

Taiwan is a prominent player in the global semiconductor sector, and its cooperation with the United States poses a competitive challenge to China. The semiconductor business is critical to modern technology, including military applications, and retaining a technological advantage is a top priority for both the United States and China. By assisting Taiwan's semiconductor industry, the United States not only strengthens Taiwan's economy but also assures that crucial technology remains outside of Chinese control, limiting China's technological and economic ambitions (Xinbo, 2000).

Diplomatically, the United States' backing for Taiwan undercuts China's efforts to isolate Taiwan globally. High-profile visits and discussions between Taiwanese and US officials demonstrate international support and recognition for Taiwan, contradicting Beijing's narrative and diplomatic efforts to marginalize the island. Such connections boost Taiwan's international reputation while challenging China's efforts to project a united front in its territorial claims. Furthermore, the ideological divide between Taiwan and China heightens Beijing's anxieties. Taiwan's blooming democracy is in sharp contrast to China's authoritarian dictatorship. The United States' support for Taiwan is frequently presented as a defense of democratic values against authoritarianism, promoting an unflattering worldwide narrative about China. This intellectual backing strengthens pro-democracy movements in Taiwan and other regions of Asia, undermining the Chinese Communist Party's narrative and credibility (Farooq, 2023, Xinbo, 2000).

The confluence of these military, geopolitical, economic, diplomatic, and ideological reasons renders the US-Taiwan relationship a huge and multifaceted threat to China. It hampers Beijing's efforts to achieve reunification with Taiwan, threatens its regional dominance, and calls into question its broader global goals. As a result, China is deeply concerned about the increasing connections between Taiwan and the United States, which it sees as a significant impediment to its strategic goals (Farooq, 2023, Chase 2005).

4.1. Reasons Why China Opposes American Intervention in the East China Sea

China vehemently opposes American interference in East China for a variety of strategic, economic, and political reasons. To begin, China seeks to demonstrate its strategic supremacy and control over the East China Sea, an area critical to its national security and military strategies. The East China Sea is home to major maritime routes and has prospective oil and gas reserves, making it an important region for China's economic and energy security (Kashyap, 2023). China views the United

States' military presence and activities in the region, particularly naval patrols and reconnaissance missions, as direct threats to its sovereignty and strategic interests. The United States' partnerships with Japan and South Korea, both of which have strong military capabilities and host American military bases, complicate China's security calculations. Economically, the East China Sea is critical for China's trade and fisheries. Control over this region gives unhindered access to critical sea routes that support the flow of products and resources required by China's economy. American action is viewed as a threat to China's economic interests and its control over these critical maritime lanes (Hass, 2017).

Furthermore, the East China Sea contains substantial natural resources, such as fish populations and possible underwater oil and gas deposits, which are critical to China's economic growth. The United States' support for competing territorial claims by Japan and other countries undercuts China's efforts to exploit these resources. Politically, American action in the East China Sea region raises broader concerns about China's regional dominance and its goal of a hierarchical regional order centered on Beijing. The United States' advocacy for a rules-based international order, which includes protecting freedom of navigation and rejecting unilateral territorial claims, directly contradicts China's efforts to exert sovereignty over disputed territories such as the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands (kim, 2016).

These disputes are about more than just territorial control; they are also about national pride and legitimacy, making them extremely sensitive for the Chinese government. American involvement in these disputes is perceived as foreign intervention, encouraging other regional actors to oppose Chinese claims and challenging Beijing's diplomatic and strategic goals. Furthermore, US action boosts the resolve and solidarity of regional friends and partners who are concerned about China's growing aggression. This leads to a more coordinated and collective regional response to China's initiatives, limiting Beijing's ability to exercise unilateral influence in the East China Sea. For example,

US military cooperation with Japan, which includes joint exercises and defense obligations, deters Chinese attempts to change the status quo through force. This regional security architecture, which is supported by American presence, limits China's strategic options and its capacity to project force unchallenged (Kashyap, 2023).

Furthermore, American participation in the East China Sea region represents a larger geopolitical battle between China and the United States for influence in Asia-Pacific. The United States aspires to continue its leadership while keeping the region open, stable, and controlled by international laws and norms. China, on the other hand, seeks to change the regional order to fit its own interests and vision of a multi-polar world in which its influence is dominant. This basic contrast in strategic interests creates inherent conflict, with the East China Sea serving as a primary arena for this struggle. To summarize, China opposes US participation in the East China Sea because it undermines Beijing's strategic objectives, upsets its economic interests, challenges its territorial claims, and strengthens regional opposition to its power. The United States' presence and activities in the region are considered as major hurdles to China's goals to position itself as the dominant force in the East China Sea, prompting Beijing to persistently oppose American involvement (Kim, 2016, Hass, 2017).

4.2. China opposes US intervention in the East Asian region

China opposes American intervention in East Asia for a variety of reasons, including strategic, economic, and political concerns. First, from a geopolitical standpoint, China aims to position itself as the dominant force in East Asia, a goal that is directly challenged by the existence and influence of the United States. The United States maintains strong military relationships with Japan, South Korea, and Australia, and has a major military presence in the region, including naval bases and personnel. China sees these agreements and deployments as attempts to constrain its ascent and limit its strategic

flexibility. The US military presence near China's borders, particularly frequent freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea, is viewed as a direct threat to Chinese national security and sovereignty. Economically, East Asia is an important location for global trade and investment, and China intends to serve as the economic network's major center (Asia, 2000).

The United States' engagement challenges China's economic goals by encouraging alternative trade deals and partnerships that exclude or limit China's influence. For example, the United States supports projects like as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and its successor, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which seek to establish high standards for trade and investment, possibly disadvantageous to Chinese enterprises. Furthermore, the United States has been loud in opposing China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aims to enhance China's economic dominance through infrastructure projects in Asia and elsewhere. American opposition to the BRI, combined with efforts to provide other sources of financing and development support, undercuts China's economic strategy in the region. Politically, the United States promotes democratic values and human rights, which contrast sharply with China's authoritarian governing approach. American participation frequently combines backing for democratic movements with criticism of China's human rights record, particularly in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet (Hass, 2017).

This ideological dispute jeopardizes the Chinese Communist Party's narrative and credibility, both domestically and globally. The United States also advocates for a rules-based international order that emphasizes state sovereignty and territorial integrity, which contrasts with China's territorial claims, particularly in the South China Sea and Taiwan. The United States' opposition to China's maritime claims, as well as its support for regional governments opposing those claims, hamper China's efforts to exert authority over these strategically crucial areas. Furthermore, the US intervention strengthens relations between regional countries that are concerned about China's growing influence and

assertiveness (kim, 2016).

This leads to the establishment of multilateral security frameworks such as the Quad, which includes the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, and aims to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. Such alliances reduce China's influence and provide a counterbalance to its dominance in the area. The presence of the United States also provides a security umbrella, encouraging neighboring nations to oppose Chinese pressure and declare their own interests, further complicating Beijing's strategic goals. In conclusion, China opposes American participation in East Asia because it undercuts Beijing's strategic aspirations, complicates its economic plans, tests its political system, and supports regional coalitions that counterweight Chinese dominance. The United States' presence and policies in the region are viewed as major impediments to China's ambition of becoming the dominant force in East Asia, prompting Beijing to continually oppose American involvement (Farooq, 2023, Boer, 2020).

4.3. China's reaction to recent US weapons sales

- A significant increase of arms sales notifications to Taiwan in 2020 has resulted in sharp warnings and criticism from China, heightening tensions across the Taiwan Strait and between Washington and Beijing. Beijing was particularly outraged by the inclusion of attack missiles for the first time, as well as the disclosure to Congress of a \$600 million proposed sale of advanced drones to Taiwan, which was one of the first proposed technological exports (Xinhua, 2024)
- In reaction, China has increased its saber-rattling, boosting military drills across the Taiwan Strait and routine patrols in the area. In response to \$4.18 billion in US arms sales in October 2020, China sanctioned seven key US defense businesses engaged in the transaction. Some observers have questioned the effectiveness of US weaponry supplies in enhancing Taiwan's ability to withstand a

hypothetical conflict with China, noting that the shipments increase the risk of conflict while making no significant qualitative difference in Taipei's defensive outlook ((McCartney, 2024, Jazeera, 2024).

4.4. US Taiwan security cooperation: Implications for China: An analysis from a realism and neo-realist perspective

4.4.1 Realism perspective

In international relations, countries interact with each other and form relationships, driven by their interests in maintaining their sovereignty. These interactions can lead to cooperation or conflict, which can draw global attention and sometimes escalate into war. The conflict between China and Taiwan is one such complex international conflict, involving disputes over each side's sovereignty and recognition in the international community. China and Taiwan have different political ideologies—China is communist, while Taiwan is democratic. The history leading to their current separate identities has been long and intricate (Azzara & Sholeh, 2022).

From a realist perspective, the strengthening of US-Taiwan security cooperation is a rational and strategic response to the changing balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region. Realists argue that the international system is inherently anarchic, with no overarching authority to enforce agreements or protect the interests of individual states. In this context, states are compelled to pursue policies that maximize their security and power, often at the expense of other states (Mearsheimer, 2001).

The United States, as the dominant power in the region, has a vested interest in maintaining its influence and preventing the rise of a potential peer competitor, such as China. By deepening its security ties with Taiwan, the US is effectively creating a buffer against China's growing assertiveness and expanding regional influence. This strategy is consistent with the realist principle of balancing, where states seek to counterbalance the power of a rising or dominant state to preserve their own security and autonomy (Waltz, 1979).

Realists would argue that the US-Taiwan security cooperation is not driven by ideological or moral considerations, but rather by the pragmatic need to safeguard American interests in the region. From this perspective, the US is not acting out of a sense of altruism or a desire to promote democratic values, but rather out of a calculated effort to maintain its geopolitical dominance and prevent the emergence of a potential hegemon in the Asia-Pacific. This approach is rooted in the belief that states are inherently self-interested and that the international system is a zero-sum game, where one state's gain is another's loss (The 'Realist' Call for Strengthening U.S.-Taiwan Relations, 2020, Mearsheimer, 2014).

4.4.2. Neo-realist perspective

From a neorealist perspective, the strengthening of US-Taiwan security cooperation is a strategic response to the changing balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region. Neo-realists argue that the international system influences state behavior primarily based on the distribution of power. In this context, states are compelled to engage in a self-help balance of power to maximize their security in an anarchic system (Waltz, 1979). The United States, as the dominant power in the region, has a vested interest in maintaining its influence and preventing the rise of a potential peer competitor, such as China. By deepening its security ties with Taiwan, the US is effectively creating a buffer against China's growing assertiveness and expanding regional influence (Mearsheimer, 2014).

Neo-realists contend that there are essentially three possible systems according to changes in the distribution of capabilities, defined by the number of great powers and their relative power (Waltz, 1979). The most stable arrangement is bipolarity, where two great powers balance each other, ensuring stability and preventing the emergence of a dominant power (Waltz, 1979). In the context of US-Taiwan security cooperation, neo-realists would argue that the US is seeking to maintain its influence and prevent China from becoming a dominant power in the region (Bell, 2017).

4.5. Alternative Viewpoints and Criticisms of the Realist Framework

To provide a more balanced perspective, the thesis would benefit from discussing potential counterarguments and alternative viewpoints that challenge the Realist framework. By addressing criticisms and offering different theoretical perspectives, the analysis can be deepened, showing a broader understanding of the complexity surrounding U.S.-Taiwan cooperation and its implications for China. Critics of Realism often argue that its focus on state-centric, power-based interactions neglects important non-state actors, economic interdependence, and the role of international institutions (Keohane & Nye, 2011). For instance, Liberalism emphasizes the potential for cooperation through international organizations and economic interdependence, which may downplay the likelihood of conflict in the Taiwan Strait (Ikenberry, 2018). Additionally, Constructivist viewpoints argue that identities, norms, and perceptions of sovereignty can shape state behavior in ways that Realism does not fully capture. A thorough discussion of these perspectives would not only acknowledge the limitations of the Realist framework but also demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the broader theoretical debate (Finnemore & Sikkink, 2001).

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

5.1. Analysis on US-Taiwan relations and its implications on China

The US-Taiwan security partnership has a major impact on China and affects all aspects of its strategic, political, economic, and military activities (Lawrence, 2024). As a matter of fact, from China's perspective, the stability of the relationship between the USA and Taiwan is seen as a threat to the stability of the region. This cooperation improves Taiwan's ability to defend and prevent China's military action against Taiwan, but it also increases military tensions in the region and leads to the risk of miscalculation and attack (Javed, 2022). Promoting Taiwan's security strengthens Taiwan's status as an independent entity and challenges China's long-standing claims to the island. This support is a major cause of tension in US and China relations, leading to more conflict and reducing opportunities for cooperation on other international issues. Sanctions on US companies involved in arms sales. These actions could disrupt trade and investment and affect the economic security of the region (Chen, Sun, & Wen, 2018). China sees this as a direct challenge to its military and strategic objectives. This interaction is part of a broader US strategy to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region. China accepts that US military aid to Taiwan gives it a false sense of security, fuels separatism and weakens its chances of resolving the conflict (Maizland, 2023).

This is understood as a nation-building issue in China rather than a geopolitical or ideological issue in the United States. China should support construction of the Asia-Pacific security community and encourage the United States to lead this effort. The combination of public confidence in the military and the desire to defend Taiwan demonstrates the importance of this strategy. Taiwan's independence journey has been one of solidarity with the United States since the Cold War, and this commitment to leadership is vital to Taiwan's confidence in this geographic region (Malinconci, 2023).

China has many obstacles that affect its strategic, political, economic and military activities. China sees such cooperation as a serious threat to its regional goals and national sovereignty. Taiwan's growing defense capabilities, combined with the strengthening of U.S. regional institutions, challenge China's influence and make it harder for it to achieve its goals in East Asia. The ongoing conflict reflects security, negotiation and power interaction in the Indo-Pacific region and reflects the broader regional rivalry between China and the United States (Maizland, 2023).

5.1.1 Taiwan's tripartite, pro-US and distant-China model in dynamic equilibrium

The Taiwanese government, which seeks autonomy and independence, is unhappy with maintaining the current situation. Taiwan lacks international recognition as a sovereign state, which limits its ability to protect its interests in the global system that grants rights and protections only to recognized states. This makes Taiwan vulnerable to exclusion in the era of globalization. In November 2021, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese stated that Australia is unlikely to support Taiwan's entry into the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership because Taiwan lacks sovereignty (Lawrence, 2024). Taiwan, as a relatively weaker player in the Taiwan Strait conflict, relies on support from the US to resist pressure from mainland China. It strengthens its relationship with the US through promises of arms sales and security assurances (Chen, Sun & Wen, 2018).

In the realm of diplomacy, Taiwanese authorities aim to minimize involvement in sovereignty disputes with the help of the US, enhancing their international standing through initiatives like "vacation diplomacy" in the 1990s and "check diplomacy" before 2008. Recently, Taiwan has adjusted its diplomatic strategy, participating as an observer in UN-related bodies such as the Global Cooperation and Training Framework to bolster its global influence, supported by the

US (Maizland, 2023). However, Taiwan's heavy economic reliance on China remains challenging to reduce, despite efforts to strengthen economic ties with the US and allies through initiatives like the "New Southbound Policy" and TIFA trade agreements under President Tsai's administration. In 2021, Taiwan's exports to China and Hong Kong reached 42% of total exports, while imports primarily came from Mainland China and Hong Kong (each 22%), with the US contributing 10% (Lawrence, 2024).

5.1.2 A brief review of Taiwan's public opinion poll

According to a 2022 public opinion poll conducted by National Chengchi University in Taiwan, a significant majority, around 90% of respondents, support maintaining the current status quo between Taiwan and mainland China. Among them, about 12.4% prefer the status quo to continue indefinitely, while approximately 30% believe Taiwan should maintain the status quo for now and decide on reunification or independence later, depending on circumstances. In contrast, 37.7% of respondents favor maintaining the status quo and moving towards greater autonomy in the future, with only 10.4% opting to maintain the status quo and eventually move towards reunification. Interestingly, none of the respondents considered Taiwan to be currently an independent nation, though more people expressed hopes for eventual "independence" compared to the previous year. Opposition to reunification with mainland China largely stems from concerns over one-party rule and undemocratic governance in Beijing, while most Taiwanese residents prioritize preserving and strengthening Taiwan's autonomy and international recognition. Although some individuals in Taiwan have reservations about adopting a Hong Kong-style autonomous arrangement, the potential impact of public sentiment on Taiwan's independence remains uncertain as long as de facto autonomy is maintained (Chen, Sun, & Wen, 2018).

5.1.3 Analysis of China's Possibilities for Re-stabilizing the Situation in Taiwan and Its Issues

Besides the key players mentioned earlier, the Taiwan Strait issue involves Japan, South Korea, ASEAN, Australia, and the EU as significant stakeholders. These countries and regions are involved in the Taiwan Strait situation for several reasons: maintaining limited economic ties, managing supply chains, strategic military relations with Taiwan, aligning closely with the US, and balancing political and economic relations with China. While these stakeholders prioritize stability in the Taiwan Strait, their focus and emphasis may vary. For instance, in 2023, the EU decided not to pursue a long-awaited bilateral investment agreement with Taiwan. According to Malinconi (2023), the EU aims to manage its economic connections with Taiwan carefully and avoid actions that could provoke tensions with China. Any unilateral actions that could lead to significant geopolitical shifts may pose risks to the national security interests of Asia-Pacific countries. Changes in the Taiwan Strait have indirect yet notable impacts on regional players like the EU, despite its geographical distance from the Pacific Ocean, especially concerning economic pressures arising from the rivalry between China and the US. The Asia-Pacific countries wield greater influence over Taiwan Strait dynamics compared to the EU, which plays a minimal direct role.

5.1.4. Costs and benefits of China using force to settle the situation

China is currently in a passive stance regarding the Taiwan Strait issue, with limited options for peaceful negotiations or forcible reunification. China insists that recognizing it as a precondition hampers Taiwan's participation in peace talks, while the US's supportive stance towards Taiwan heightens China's concerns about the world's dominant power. Consequently, the possibility of resolving Taiwan Strait tensions through three-way discussions has diminished. The Taiwan issue has significantly accelerated China's military expansion (Maizland, 2023). During the 20th Communist Party Congress, China incorporated "anti-Taiwan independence" into the party

constitution, and President Xi Jinping reiterated China's commitment to reunifying Taiwan by force if necessary. Meanwhile, there's a stark disparity in military capabilities between China and Taiwan, with Taiwan's DPP increasing defense spending to over USD 19 billion in 2023, while China's defense budget is about 12 times larger than Taiwan's. China's growing military strength and confidence, coupled with worsening cross-strait relations, greatly heighten the risk of armed conflict (Maizland, 2023).

However, there are differing assessments regarding the potential timing of a conflict in China's Taiwan Strait. The consequences of such a conflict for China's economy, diplomacy, and international standing would be immense and difficult to predict. To mitigate risks before any potential conflict, the Chinese government has enacted stringent capital controls. These measures include liquidating Chinese assets and treasury bonds held by countries possibly involved in the conflict, halting critical exports, and imposing restrictions on foreign travel. In the event of a conflict, the southeastern coast of mainland China, near the Taiwan Strait and crucial for trade, would likely face significant disruption, severely impacting global supply chains (Maizland, 2023).

Furthermore, the US and its allies will surely impose economic penalties on China; yet, given the increased interdependence of the Chinese and global economies, the war in Ukraine will have a far greater impact on the world economy and financial markets. At the same time, considering Taiwan's significant position in the semiconductor chip industry, the worldwide supply chain for electronics will be badly damaged. Whether or whether China uses force to reclaim Taiwan, its economic and diplomatic position will suffer substantially. China's move to wage war might disrupt the risk mitigation plans of Southeast Asian countries, Japan, and South Korea, who have deep economic links and boundary issues with China. These countries may turn against China.

US influence in Pacific affairs would be passively and significantly increased. Moreover, Taiwan perceives a war of foreign invasion as likely to encourage regional nationalism and complicate Beijing's postwar rule in Taiwan. Unlike the complex costs of war, China can clearly see the benefits of reunifying Taiwan by force in terms of sustaining homeland security and achieving military deterrence. It's important to consider whether post-war Taiwan aligns with Beijing's goals. Although all sides agree that China's goal is territorial sovereignty and homeland security, Taiwan's significance in the global semiconductor business makes it crucial for more than just geopolitics. The reunification of mainland Taiwan may result in increased expenditures for resolving border disputes with Southeast Asian countries, as buffer zones will no longer exist (Zhou, 2023).

5.1.5. Integrating Empirical Data: Military Expenditures, Arms Sales, and Public Opinion in U.S.-

Taiwan Security Cooperation

To strengthen the analysis of U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation and its implications for China, integrating empirical data can provide a more robust foundation for the theoretical claims made in the thesis. By incorporating statistical data on military expenditures, arms sales, and public opinion polls, the arguments would gain depth and credibility, enhancing the overall clarity and persuasiveness of the study.

1. Military Expenditures

Including data on military expenditures can help illustrate the growing defense capabilities of both the U.S. and Taiwan in response to perceived threats from China. For instance, showing the rise in Taiwan's defense budget over the past decade could underscore its efforts to strengthen deterrence, while comparing these figures with China's rapidly increasing defense spending would highlight the power asymmetry in the region. This data would provide empirical backing to the Realist and

Neo-Realist argument that states, including Taiwan and the U.S., seek to maintain security by increasing military capacity in an environment of uncertainty and competition.

2. Arms Sales

Statistical data on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, including the volume, types of weapon systems sold, and trends over time, would offer concrete examples of how the U.S. supports Taiwan's defense strategies. These figures could be linked to specific theories of Realism, such as external balancing, where Taiwan relies on the U.S. to counterbalance China's superior military power. By providing detailed empirical evidence of arms transfers, the thesis can better explain the magnitude of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation and its strategic implications for the regional balance of power.

3. Public Opinion Polls

Public opinion polls in Taiwan and China regarding U.S.-Taiwan cooperation can shed light on how this security partnership is perceived by the general population and how it influences national policies. For instance, polling data from Taiwan showing strong support for closer U.S. ties could be used to demonstrate the domestic backing for Taiwan's alignment with the U.S., while Chinese public opinion may reflect nationalistic views on Taiwan as a core security issue for Beijing. These insights would provide a more nuanced understanding of the political dimensions of security cooperation, offering empirical data to support the theoretical claims about the role of domestic factors in shaping state behavior.

5.1.6 Global Implications of U.S.-Taiwan Cooperation

- 1. Escalation of the U.S.-China Rivalry:** The findings reinforce the notion that Taiwan plays a pivotal role in the broader U.S.-China geopolitical rivalry. As the U.S. deepens its security

ties with Taiwan, it signals a firm stance against China's ambitions to assert regional control, especially over Taiwan. This dynamic has global ramifications, as it may intensify the ongoing competition between the U.S. and China across multiple fronts, including trade, technology, and influence in international institutions. The Taiwan issue could become a flashpoint, with the potential to draw in other global actors like the European Union and Russia, further complicating global security.

- 2. Impact on International Norms:** The U.S.-Taiwan relationship, and China's opposition to it, challenges established international norms surrounding sovereignty, non-interference, and territorial integrity. The findings suggest that continued U.S. support for Taiwan could prompt China to take more aggressive actions, both diplomatically and militarily, undermining the stability of international institutions. This could set a precedent for other global actors to challenge international norms in contested regions, leading to a more fragmented global order.
- 3. Global Security Architecture:** The intensifying U.S.-China rivalry, with Taiwan as a central issue, may prompt changes in the global security architecture. As alliances shift and regional security arrangements evolve, other nations and international organizations may be forced to reassess their roles and strategies. NATO, for example, may need to consider a broader focus that includes potential conflicts in the Asia-Pacific, while ASEAN might face internal divisions over how to respond to the U.S.-China rivalry.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation has intensified, particularly under recent U.S. administrations. Since Taiwan's separation from mainland China in 1949, the U.S. has progressively bolstered Taiwan's defense capabilities, with a strategic focus on countering China's growing influence in East Asia and ensuring regional stability. East Asia, especially the Taiwan Strait, remains one of the most security-sensitive areas, with increasing tensions between the U.S., Taiwan, and China. The U.S. has adapted its defense and foreign policy posture toward strategic modernization and infrastructure development to counter China's regional ambitions.

U.S. military cooperation with Taiwan has resulted in the provision of advanced weaponry and the modernization of Taiwan's strategic forces, significantly enhancing its defensive and offensive capabilities. The rapid enhancement of Taiwan's military reflects the U.S.'s broader strategic objectives: to maintain its hegemonic status, counter China's rise, and secure Taiwan's economic and military interests. Offensive realism provides the theoretical underpinning for these actions, explaining how the U.S. seeks to maximize its power in the international system beyond immediate security needs.

China, in response, views U.S.-Taiwan cooperation as a direct threat to its regional security and deterrence stability. The longstanding territorial and sovereignty disputes between China and Taiwan are compounded by U.S. military support, escalating military rivalries and mistrust. China's strategies have increasingly focused on countering U.S.-Taiwan cooperation, particularly in the East China Sea and around its borders. The U.S. is supporting Taiwan in modernizing its armed forces across several key areas, including the army, navy, air force, cyberspace, outer space, and nuclear capabilities. This modernization not only enhances Taiwan's military posture but also serves as a

deterrent against potential Chinese aggression. However, it also creates significant security risks, as the balance of power in the region shifts toward instability. The introduction of the U.S.-Taiwan Joint Military Doctrine, with provisions for offensive operations, further complicates relations, especially given the strategic focus on surgical strikes and advanced military technologies.

For China, U.S. support for Taiwan's military modernization, coupled with the evolving military doctrines and alliances with regional powers like Japan and South Korea, represents a profound security challenge. China perceives these developments as efforts to undermine regional deterrence and threaten its security, forcing it to enhance its own military capabilities. The growing military asymmetry and the risk of limited conflict in the Taiwan Strait increase tensions, although the possibility of a total war or nuclear engagement remains low. U.S.-Taiwan security cooperation, marked by a shift from defensive to offensive postures, has created a security dilemma for China. The modernization of Taiwan's military, supported by the U.S. and its allies, poses serious threats to China's regional dominance and compels China to recalibrate its security strategies. The complex interplay of power, security, and stability in the region underscores the broader implications for East Asia's geopolitical environment.

In response, China must develop advanced military capabilities, including enhanced reconnaissance and surveillance, to maintain a balance of power in the region. While the increase in U.S. military support for Taiwan presents significant challenges, long-term peace and stability in East Asia will ultimately depend on resolving outstanding conflicts through meaningful dialogue and diplomatic engagement.

DISCUSSION

- Evolving nature of US-Taiwan relations: Despite the lack of formal diplomatic ties, US-Taiwan strategic cooperation has deepened significantly in recent years, moving beyond just arms sales to include military training, intelligence sharing, and cyber security collaboration.
- China's multifaceted response: China's reaction to US-Taiwan cooperation goes beyond diplomatic protests. It includes economic sanctions on US arms manufacturers, increased military activities near Taiwan, and efforts to diplomatically isolate Taiwan internationally.
- Implications for regional security: The strengthening US-Taiwan relationship is reshaping the security dynamics in East Asia, potentially increasing the risk of conflict but also serving as a deterrent against Chinese aggression.
- Historical context shaping current tensions: The complex historical background of Taiwan, including its colonial past and the unresolved Chinese Civil War, continues to influence contemporary cross-strait relations and US policy in the region.
- Balancing act for the US: The research highlights the delicate balance the US must maintain between supporting Taiwan's security and adhering to its "One China" policy, which acknowledges but does not endorse China's position on Taiwan.
- Taiwan's strategic importance: The study emphasizes Taiwan's crucial geographic position within the "first island chain," underscoring its strategic value in the broader context of US-China competition in the Indo-Pacific region.
- That discussion provide a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between US-Taiwan security cooperation and its implications for China, highlighting the historical, strategic, and theoretical dimensions of this critical geopolitical issue.

FINDINGS

Destabilization of the Asia-Pacific: The findings suggest that increased U.S.-Taiwan military cooperation exacerbates security tensions in the Asia-Pacific, as China perceives these actions as part of a broader containment strategy (Mearsheimer, 2014). This has led to a regional arms race, with China increasing its military capabilities to counterbalance U.S. influence. If unchecked, this could destabilize the region, increasing the likelihood of conflict in the Taiwan Strait and beyond (Roy, 2021). The expansion of military alliances, such as the Quad (involving the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia), adds another layer of complexity, potentially triggering further responses from China (Glaser, 2015).

Shifting Balance of Power: U.S.-Taiwan cooperation, viewed through the lens of Realism and Neo-Realism, represents a key aspect of the broader power balancing dynamic in East Asia. The U.S. seeks to maintain its hegemonic influence in the region by supporting Taiwan, while China's efforts to assert dominance challenge this equilibrium (Bush, 2017). This power struggle not only impacts the security of Taiwan and neighboring countries like Japan and South Korea but also contributes to the reshaping of regional alliances and the recalibration of security strategies by other Asia-Pacific nations (Swaine, 2020).

- One unique aspect of this conflict is the “One Country, Two Systems” principle proposed by China, used to govern Hong Kong and Macau after their handover from British and Portuguese rule. However, Taiwan rejects this model, citing concerns about Hong Kong's diminishing autonomy and political freedoms under Chinese rule.
- A conflict in the Taiwan Strait could disrupt major shipping routes and impact global trade, as the strait is one of the busiest maritime passages in the world. This would have significant

economic repercussions for regional economies heavily reliant on trade. Taiwan is a crucial player in the global semiconductor industry. Any conflict could disrupt the supply of semiconductors, affecting industries worldwide, particularly in tech-driven economies like South Korea and Japan.

- The U.S. policy of "strategic ambiguity" is meant to stop China from attacking Taiwan and to stop Taiwan from declaring independence. This policy aims to keep things as they are and encourage a peaceful solution to the conflict.
- The U.S. policy of “strategic ambiguity” aims to deter both China from attempting to forcibly unify Taiwan and Taiwan from declaring formal independence. This policy intends to maintain the status quo while promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict.
- The conflict has led to an arms race in the region. Countries like Japan and South Korea are increasing their defense spending and updating their military forces in response to China's growing military power and the potential conflict over Taiwan.
- Both China and Taiwan might continue their economic interdependence, which could serve as a stabilizing factor, discouraging both sides from taking drastic actions that could harm their economies.
- The Taiwan-China conflict could involve other countries and lead to a larger geopolitical crisis. The US commitment to defending Taiwan might worsen US-China relations and increase regional tensions. This situation could lead to more military build-up, arms races, and proxy conflicts, harming regional stability.
- The U.S. involvement in the Taiwan issue highlights debates on international law and norms, particularly regarding sovereignty, self-determination, and the use of force. This influences regional diplomatic strategies and positions on other territorial disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea.

- US continued military support to Taiwan could deter aggressive actions from China. Furthermore, the U.S. and its allies could also employ economic sanctions and other measures to deter Chinese aggression, which could impact global trade and economic stability.
- China's growing military strength raises concerns about its willingness to use force, altering regional dynamics and perceptions of security.
- The possibility of a military confrontation between Taiwan and China poses a direct threat to regional peace and stability, with the potential to disrupt global trade and economic relations.
- The U.S. involvement in the China-Taiwan conflict adds another layer of complexity to an already delicate situation in the region. As tensions between China and Taiwan continue to simmer, the role of the United States remains crucial in shaping the dynamics of this longstanding dispute.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Diplomatic Strategies

- 1. Multilateral Dialogue Framework:** Establishing a multilateral dialogue framework involving the U.S., China, Taiwan, and other key regional actors like Japan and ASEAN nations could help reduce miscommunication and manage rising tensions. Regular diplomatic exchanges focused on de-escalation, crisis management, and regional stability would foster greater transparency and trust among the stakeholders.
- 2. Track II Diplomacy:** Encouraging unofficial, informal dialogues between academics, former military officials, and diplomats from the U.S., Taiwan, and China could provide a backchannel for addressing contentious issues in a less confrontational manner. These unofficial exchanges could lay the groundwork for future formal negotiations and diplomatic initiatives.

Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)

- 1. Military Communication Channels:** Implementing reliable military-to-military communication channels between China, Taiwan, and the U.S. would help prevent unintended escalations during naval or air force encounters in the Taiwan Strait. Hotline agreements and clear rules of engagement during joint military exercises would reduce the risk of accidental conflict.
- 2. Transparency in Military Exercises:** Increasing transparency in military activities by notifying other regional actors in advance of large-scale military exercises would help build trust and reduce suspicion. Confidence-building measures like sharing information about the scope and purpose of exercises could alleviate concerns of aggressive intent.

- 3. Arms Control Agreements:** Exploring arms control measures, such as limiting the deployment of certain high-threat military technologies in the Taiwan Strait, could serve as a mechanism for reducing tensions. Both the U.S. and China could agree on limits to missile deployments or naval maneuvers to avoid provoking one another.

Economic and Humanitarian Cooperation

- 1. Taiwan-China Economic Cooperation:** Encouraging Taiwan and China to enhance economic ties through mutually beneficial trade agreements or joint infrastructure projects could help ease tensions by increasing interdependence. Strengthening economic cooperation may shift focus away from military confrontation and toward peaceful coexistence.
- 2. Humanitarian and Cultural Exchanges:** Promoting humanitarian efforts, educational exchanges, and cultural initiatives between Taiwan, China, and the U.S. could help normalize relations and humanize the opposing sides. Such initiatives build goodwill and create opportunities for cooperation in non-military areas, which can translate into diplomatic benefits.

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