



# CRISIS COUNCIL

## STUDY GUIDE

### TOPIC

**2025 TAIWANESE STRAIT  
CRISIS**



**GMUN 2023**  
GENIUS MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE



This is a work of creative nonfiction. Some parts have been fictionalised in varying degrees, for various purposes.

This document serves as a guide and should not be the sole basis of your research. The dais highly recommends that further research is done on the topics. The dais would not be responsible for your own research. If you have read this, email the copywriter a picture of an (intact) Titan submarine.



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## DAIS INTRODUCTION

### Lim Ke Wen

#### Chair

Greetings delegates, my name is Lim Ke Wen and I have been involved in MUN since 2016 and I have been a delegate, chair, secretariat and even observer in MUN conferences, mainly in Malaysia. It is my passion to teach MUN as a platform for youths to acquire political literacy and critical thinking in an ever-changing world. I will be serving you as the Head Chair for this crisis council.



I hope everyone can learn something from this council, albeit it can be fun (and stressful). Hope to see you during the conference!

Feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions at +6013-3502989 or email me at [limkw98@gmail.com](mailto:limkw98@gmail.com).

### Haresh Kumararajah

#### Co-Chair

Hello! My name is Haresh Kumararajah and I will be your Co-Chair for this council! I have been involved in MUN since 2017, though admittedly I'm coming back from a long break.



Currently I'm a first year at UKM studying Computer Science and I'm an alumni of Pusat GENIUS@Pintar, with a great dislike for the new name of the school. I like to study with Japanese Metal music in the background because the heavy drums are great for my focus but lyrics I can understand are distracting. Citizen Sleeper and Soma are the coolest games I have ever played and chess is a way of life I am surprisingly bad at after like 12 years of playing the game, albeit very, very inconsistent 12 years. My patron deity is Perun and his hour long slideshows.

Never expected to come back to MUN honestly, but here I am. Hope to see you guys soon at the conference and hope we have fun! Feel free to email me at [hareshk2314@gmail.com](mailto:hareshk2314@gmail.com).



## Ernest Wong

### Crisis Director

I have been directing (self) crisis for at least half of his MUN career while pretending to be a researcher in civil engineering projects. That's all you need to know.

Otherwise, I am someone who you will see in every MUN conference, at every train station, at every Subway sandwich store using a DBS live fresh platinum card ending in 1934, at every corner of Baker Street at NW1 5SX, inside every Stadler FLIRT passenger electric multiple unit train, at every LRT shuttle bus between Hang Tuah and Bandaraya LRT stations, and always omnipresent in the background of every scene in your dreams.

Crisis is fun as simply put in a quote:

“In a normal MUN council, you are playing a game;  
In a crisis MUN council, you are the game.”

**Email:** [sherlockgoestotheunitednations@proton.me](mailto:sherlockgoestotheunitednations@proton.me)

**Bundeswehr Intranet Service Account:** lol



## Kon Li Pei

### Co-Crisis Director

Hi, I'm Li Pei and I'll be one of your crisis directors for GMUN2023! Ever since attending my first crisis council in 2019, I have aspired to create an environment for delegates which blends the chaos of crisis and the engaging, educational nature of MUN conferences. Outside of MUN I enjoy stabbing string with a pointy metal stick (crochet), baking and various other activities generally enjoyed by your typical 70 year old.



Here's to all of your directives that I will be reading, and I hope you will enjoy this council!





## Jason Chow

### Co-Crisis Director

Good morning/afternoon/evening to any and all delegates reading this. My name is JJ or Jason Chow and I'm the Co-Crisis Director for GMUN 2023's Crisis Council.

I study at elc International School and am currently on track to finish my IGCSEs by June next year. I am also an avid John Wick analyser and enjoy listening to music at a volume that will no doubt make me deaf by age 30. In my free time, I like hoarding an endless amount of useless information about random historical figures as well as watching boxing matches with Michael Reeves in it.



Can't wait to see everyone argue about governments with each other!

Be seeing you.

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## UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

As this council will operate based on the United Nations Security Council, means that the powers that the Security Council apply here. Aside from the Security Council having the power to command other UN bodies such as the General Assembly. The Security Council also has the ability to take action under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter. Specifically, Article 41 and 42. Article 41 authorises the use of measures aside from armed forces, which are to be implemented by the members of the United Nations, such actions include sanctions. Article 42 authorises the use of armed force, of which the only example of Article 42 being enacted is the Korean War.

The Security Council is the only UN body with the power to impose binding resolutions on member nations. The council consists of 5 permanent members, The United States of America (USA), The French Republic, The Russian Federation, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) and The People's Republic of China.

### *The powers of the Security Council are as follows:*

1. To maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations;
2. To investigate any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction;
3. To recommend methods of adjusting such disputes or the terms of settlement;
4. To formulate plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
5. To determine the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression and to recommend what action should be taken;
6. To call on Members to apply economic sanctions and other measures not involving the use of force to prevent or stop aggression;
7. To take military action against an aggressor;
8. To recommend the admission of new Members;
9. To exercise the trusteeship functions of the United Nations in "strategic areas";
10. To recommend to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and, together with the Assembly, to elect the Judges of the International Court of Justice.

Countries will be expected to follow and stick to the sort of guidelines set as above, and not to overuse or underuse their powers. However, if countries abstain from voting, then the vote isn't counted toward "YES" or "NO". Negative votes by any of the 5 permanent members of the UNSC would veto any resolution that is being voted in question.



Pursuant to [General Assembly resolution 76/262](#), the Security Council shall prepare and present a report 72 hours prior to a commencement of a special General Assembly session should any permanent members of the Security Council exercises their right to veto on a Security Council resolution. However, as this council is operating only as the Security Council, the council shall, for the purposes of simulating the effects of resolution 76/262, temporarily convene as a General Assembly session for the purpose of discussing any veto made during the Security Council.

## **CRISIS COUNCILS IN MODEL UNITED NATIONS**

Crisis councils are where time moves linearly as compared to it being static in normal UN councils. In crisis, everything a delegate chooses to do, from their speeches, voting patterns to directives, can affect the dynamics and outcome of the council.

Procedurally, the Rules of Procedure of this council will follow standard Harvard MUN Rules of Procedure, of which the details will be further clarified if necessary during the first committee session. However, there may be some modifications to fit the council's needs as the chairs and crisis team see fit.

The second essential part to the workings of a crisis council are directives. Directives are instructions received from delegates as to what they wish to do, based on the powers of which their portfolio may provide. Here is an example:

An individual representing the United States of America in the United Nations Security Council, with the council discussing on the question of Afghanistan, may act by choosing to recommend their government to send its army to reinforce existing Afghan elements, engage in further attacks and/or drone strikes or any else that the individual wishes by writing such actions and then submitting it to the crisis team as a directive. Alternatively, the delegate may choose to do nothing.





It is good practice to make your directives as detailed and as realistic as possible, as it makes it less easier to find flaws to exploit. A good piece of advice would be to ask yourself some of the following questions:

- ★ What do I want to do?
- ★ When do I want to do it?
- ★ Who is carrying out the action? (Naming relevant government or international agencies, if they are involved, is recommended)
- ★ How exactly is the action being done?
- ★ If it is a directive to move troops or increase funding, have I included any figures? (Make sure they are realistic to what your country had at that time)
- ★ Do I have the legal capacity to do it?

In summary, a well-written directive would have fulfilled the criteria of 5W1H -

1. **What** - the description of the plan, project or action;
2. **Who** - who are involved in the said plan, project or action;
3. **Where** - where would the said event take place;
4. **Why** - why is there a need for the said event to occur;
5. **When** - if the event is time sensitive, description of as to when the event will take place, and if it occurs in stages, to be described in detail;
6. **How** - the description of the plan, project or action. This should also encompass the previous questions above.

In this crisis, directives will be vetted by the crisis team who will read it and determine how it would play out in relation to the current scenario and with the directives of your fellow delegates. A good tip would be to ensure the directive is as detailed as possible to ensure the crisis team aren't able to find loopholes in them that they can exploit.

If the delegate chooses to not send any directives, such delegates will not be free from consequences faced from both the crisis timeline and grading performance throughout the council.

Feedback on how each delegate's directives has played out will either be messaged personally or via news updates that will be broadcasted to the entire council, in the event where the directive affects the crisis timeline significantly. However, commentary on the delegate's performance shall be conducted at the conclusion of the conference.

More information on how directives and the crisis works will shall be conveyed to delegates closer to the date of the conference.



### *Disclaimer*

This document is not to be your only form of research; this council, in particular, requires good knowledge on the historical background of the topic. Although a timeline is given below with some brief descriptions of the events and their significance, we will purposefully leave out certain details to encourage individual research. Furthermore, the dais recommends doing research on the state of your own allocated nations and their historical significance and participation towards the issue.

## **PREMISE OF THE COUNCIL**

Tense political relationships between the People's Republic of China, Taiwan or officially the Republic of China, and the United States of America since the Cold War era have been a ticking time bomb, and its detonation has been delayed time and time again under the false idea of diffusing it.

The United States has “acknowledged” the ‘One China Policy’ stating that Taiwan is a part of China but continues to sell and supply Taiwan with military equipment, giving them the ability to defend themselves. The USA is sitting in a dangerous middle ground by not recognizing the PRC’s sovereignty over Taiwan but at the same time not recognizing Taiwan’s sovereignty while asking both parties to settle it out peacefully.

Taiwan is happy with delaying the detonation of the time bomb and maintaining the status quo. They can just refuse any peaceful attempts at reunification made by the PRC knowing that they won’t use force, as the president of USA, Joe Biden, has stated that it would support Taiwan militarily if China attempts to take Taiwan by force. China is, however, unsatisfied with the status quo. Ever since the Cold War, China has been forced to accept this status quo as they understand they lack the military, economic, diplomatic, political, and technological power to take Taiwan by force. However in recent years, China’s confidence in its capability to launch this operation has been increasing, as China is now considered one of the world’s superpowers.

The year is 2025, and China’s military has undergone drastic improvements, turning it from a weak 1990s Soviet force to one of the most powerful militaries in the world. They are more confident than ever in their ability to take over Taiwan by force, even with intervention from the USA and its allies. With the recent election held by Taiwan in January 2024, the Democratic Progressive Party or DPP won by a landslide, a party known for its nationalistic views, shows the ever growing sense of nationalism in the people of Taiwan.

The election of this new party makes peaceful unification seem like an increasingly unattainable goal. In light of the developments in Taiwan, the annual sitting of the National People’s Congress of China in 2024 passed a resolution, empowering the state to perform “all means necessary” to perform the complete unification of the Taiwanese province, on the condition that “no drop of blood is shed upon the sons and daughters of the motherland”, effectively triggering Article 8 of the Anti-Secession Law and providing further clarity on the legislative direction that China is willing to take on against Taiwan since the passing of the law in 2005.



With a steady increase in Chinese military presence in the Taiwan Strait, a recent skirmish between the PLA East Sea Naval fleet and the US' Seventh Fleet has prompted the United States to raise an emergency UN Security Council session pertaining to the rising hostilities at the request of non-council member states within the region.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE CHINA - TAIWAN CONFLICT**

### *Beginning*

The conflict between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China began after the end of the Chinese Civil War in October 1949, with a near complete victory for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in taking over mainland China from the Kuomintang (KMT) and the proclamation of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Beijing. Taking advantage of the turmoil caused by the defeat of the Japanese, the aid provided by the Soviet Union, and the general incompetence and corruption of the KMT-led Republic of China government, the CCP were able to gather widespread support from the masses, allowing them to seize city after city, eventually being able to push the KMT forces out of mainland China entirely and into the island of Formosa, now known as Taiwan. And thus, two competing Chinese governments emerged: the People's Republic of China (PRC) based in Beijing and the remnants of the Republic of China (ROC) based in Taipei. ("Chinese Civil War - Nationalist collapse and the establishment of the People's Republic of China (1949)", n.d.)

### *Post-retreat to Taiwan*

The retreat of the KMT to Taiwan however, did not mark the end of hostilities, both sides claiming themselves as the one true Chinese government. The KMT viewed the retreat as a temporary measure and continued to make plans to go on the counteroffensive. Many ROC troop pockets were left on mainland China, with a significant number of them retreating to Burma, where they staged guerilla actions until their eventual retreat. The KMT still controlled islands near mainland China such as Kinmen and the Matsu islands and refused to retreat from those positions, viewing them as essential for any potential counterattack. The ROC government at the time also did not recognize their retreat as a permanent one, having ambitions for one day mounting a counter attack and retaking the mainland. However, as the years passed the ROC government realised that retaking the mainland force was not an achievable goal and the Republic of China Armed Forces (ROCAF) pivoted to a completely defensive posture. (Wang 2019)

The ROC government in Taiwan after the retreat in 1949, was not a kind one. Under the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, martial law was declared in Taiwan in May 1949. Lasting until 1987, the period was known as the White Terror, with many of the citizens of the island being arrested, tortured and executed for being perceived as anti-KMT or pro-PRC. However, the government also pursued a policy of relentless industrialization and economic development. With the help of economic aid from the US, the ROC pursued policies such as import substitution and export-oriented industrialization to grow the economy. During the 60s and 70s, the Taiwanese economy experienced a period of rapid growth and, along with Hong Kong, Singapore and South Korea, was known as one of Four Asian Tigers.

### *American Support for Taiwan*

American support for the ROC government started ever since World War 2, through various means. After the defeat of the KMT in Mainland China, the US continued its support of the ROC. During the Korean War, American troops were stationed on the island and provided military assistance, training and financial aid to the Taiwanese to deter a potential invasion from the PRC. In 1954, the US signed the Sino-American Mutual Defense treaty with the ROC government, a defence pact that made clear American intentions to defend the island in the event of a PRC invasion.

### *International Recognition of the PRC as China and the Taiwan Relations Act*

The PRC continued to gain military, economic and diplomatic power during the period. In 1971, Resolution 2758 was passed with two-thirds majority in the United Nations General Assembly, recognizing the PRC as "the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations". The ROC was left with no formal recognition in the UN and lost not only the veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), but voting power in general in all the councils of the UN. As a result of the vote, the PRC gained permanent member status and the veto power in the UNSC. (UN Judicial Yearbook 1971)

In 1979, another blow was dealt to the ROC when the US recognized the PRC as 'China' and withdrew its official recognition of the ROC. This was due to a number of reasons such as the falling out between the Soviet Union and the PRC as a result of the Sino-Soviet split, and Washington seeing this as an opportunity to build closer ties. It was not an unexpected move, relations between the two countries had been warming for a decade at that point, with American President Nixon travelling to Beijing in 1972. Nevertheless, it was a significant blow to the ROC. The US embassy in Taipei was moved to Beijing and the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty was terminated, replaced with the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979, which established the legal framework for US cooperation with the "governing authorities of Taiwan", not recognising Taiwan as an independent country in the act. While the defence pact had been terminated and the TRA did not include a military guarantee for



the sovereignty of Taiwan, the act had clauses that allowed the US to provide military aid to Taiwan in the event of a PRC invasion. This was the birth of Washington's policy of strategic ambiguity, a policy that furthered the goal of dissuading the Taiwanese from unilaterally declaring independence as well as dissuading the PRC from seizing the island through force. (Mann, 2000)

### *China-Taiwan Cross-Strait Relations*

In 1987, a string of reforms were implemented in Taiwan under the government of Chiang Ching-kuo, the son of Chiang Kai-shek. Relations between the ROC and the PRC began warming during this period of time. The PRC established guidelines to allow ROC investments in the Mainland and subsequent ROC governments created avenues of trade and commerce with the PRC that deliberately sidestepped the question of sovereignty so that two countries could still cooperate economically. While Taiwan at this point was still far from being a democracy, greater leniency had been given to opposition political movements. Martial Law was lifted for the first time in decades, and the ROC allowed its citizens to visit the mainland.

The political climate in Taiwan began to change after the lifting of martial law. Opposition parties such as the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) that advocated for Taiwanese Nationalism were created. In the runup to the 1996 Taiwanese Presidential Elections, the then ROC President Lee Teng-Hui shifted his rhetoric towards the idea of a separate and independent Taiwanese political identity. This shift in rhetoric combined with President Lee's visit to the US led to relations between the ROC and PRC to deteriorate, eventually leading to the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.

The presidency of Chen Shui-bian saw a period of lukewarm relations between the two countries. During his inauguration speech, he pledged to not declare independence, to not declare a Republic of Taiwan and to not promote a referendum on unification or independence so long as the PRC has no intention of using military force against the island. However, relations soured in 2005 with the passing of the Anti-Secession Law in Beijing. The law allowed for the use of "non-peaceful means" of response in the event of a Taiwanese declaration of independence. (Jacobs, 2012)

The election of Ma Ying-jeou of the KMT in 2008, however, marked a period of closer ties between the PRC and the ROC. Greater economic ties were forged as the ROC allowed the investment of Chinese investors in Taiwanese companies in limited amounts. In 2014, the ROC Minister of the Mainland Affairs Council and the PRC Minister of the Taiwan Affairs Office held diplomatic meetings. The following year President Ma and President Xi Jinping met and shook hands in Singapore, marking the first time the two leaders of the ROC and PRC had met since the outbreak of the civil war. (Beckershoff and Shubert, 2020)

This period of warm relations ended in 2016 with the election of Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP. Being a proponent of Taiwanese nationalism, President Tsai acted to reduce Taiwanese dependence on the PRC. Under the New Southbound Policy, Taipei acted to increase cooperation with 18 countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia and Australasia, with a focus on 6 sectors: Trade, Technology, Agriculture, Medicine and Tourism (Focus Taiwan, 2016). Military expenditure has increased dramatically under President Tsai, with a \$19 USD budget for 2023, with a focus on defensive self-sufficiency. President Tsai has explicitly rejected President Xi Jinping's calls for peaceful unification under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

In 2022, Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the US House of Representatives at the time, visited Taiwan. Despite pushback from President Joe Biden and the US military, she proceeded with the visit. Pelosi declared that her visit was a sign of the United States' "unwavering commitment to supporting Taiwan's vibrant democracy", even visiting Tsai Ing Wen, the President of Taiwan at the time and a member of the DPP. The visit was strongly condemned by the PRC. Viewing Pelosi's visit as a direct provocation towards the PRC, shortly after the visit the PRC sent warships, including an aircraft carrier, into the seas around Taiwan. Beijing was criticised for its attempts to wipe away the Taiwan Strait median line by flying military aircrafts and sailing warships into Taiwan's contiguous maritime areas. The PRC also suspended eight official military dialogues and cooperation channels with the United States following Pelosi's visit.

## **EVENTS BETWEEN 2024 - 2025**

During the 2024 Taiwanese Presidential election, the DPP once again won the election, with their candidate Lai Ching Te becoming the new President of Taiwan. Under the manifesto of uniting citizens in order to strengthen Taiwan, maintain democracy and security in the face of Chinese intimidation and "unscrupulous diplomatic bullying".

With increased rhetoric of Taiwanese sovereignty, the agenda of the 2024 National People Congress was naturally tuned towards the increasingly irredentist narratives towards the Taiwanese formosa, which resulted in the passing of a resolution that seeks to reunify the breakaway province "by all means necessary", which was seen as the legislative invocation of Article 8 of the Anti-Secession Law of 2005.

Following the passing of the resolution, the People's Liberation Army's Navy has conducted more naval exercises in greater intensity around the Taiwanese Strait and various channels around the Formosa. PLA air squadrons harassing Taiwanese fighter jets in the Taiwanese Air Defence Identification Zone became commonplace. Joint naval and air exercises with live fire on the Taiwan Strait is seen as normal happenings in any given month of the period.

With China having only increased their military might in preparation for the 2027 takeover of Taiwan, the United States has once again reiterated their support for Taiwan as Joe Biden once again wins the 60th US Presidential election.

As part of the support, the Seventh Fleet conducts regular 'Freedom of Navigation' exercises around the South China Sea and more frequently, the Taiwan Strait. However, in mid-December, a Chinese Luyang III-class Type 052D *Nanjing* destroyer attached to the Chinese East Sea Fleet had launched several volleys of cruise missiles towards a sailing American Carrier Strike Group Five, which damaged several ships, including the flagship, the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan. While the military doctrine of the United States dictates that it only attacks if it is fired upon, the Pentagon revealed that the Carrier Strike Group did not launch a counterattack, with the reasoning being that the attack had only come from a lone ship during a live fire exercise, which to cool heads would turn to learn from the wisdom of the Soviet nuclear false alarm incident in 1983, which initiating an escalation into a full-scale war would've necessitated decisive action by all forces rather than a lone destroyer striking an American naval fleet. However, questions are raised by nationalists on both sides as to whether both sides did the right thing.

Nevertheless, the United States has called for an emergency session to be convened at the UN Headquarters in New York on December 17, 2024, Monday, on the topic of the growing military escalations by China, with invitations to non-member states of the Security Council to participate in the session. For the first time since 1971, a representation from Taiwan, accredited as Chinese Taipei, was allowed to take part as an observer organisation in the proceedings at the request of the United States with the approval of the Presidency of the Security Council.

## KEY ISSUES AND IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

### *American Policy of Strategic Ambiguity on Taiwan*

The strategic ambiguity on Taiwan by the United States is typically understood as deliberately creating uncertainty in Beijing and Taipei about whether the United States would intervene in a war between Taiwan and China. This supposedly creates dual deterrence: The threat of U.S. intervention prevents China from invading, and the fear of U.S. abandonment prevents Taiwan from sparking a war by declaring independence, which China considers a *caesus belli*. However, it is never officially articulated nor considered as an actual policy by the United States. (Kuo, 2023) Despite support for Taiwan being mentioned by President Joe Biden, it is still seen that the United States government as whole continues to uphold that strategic ambiguity.

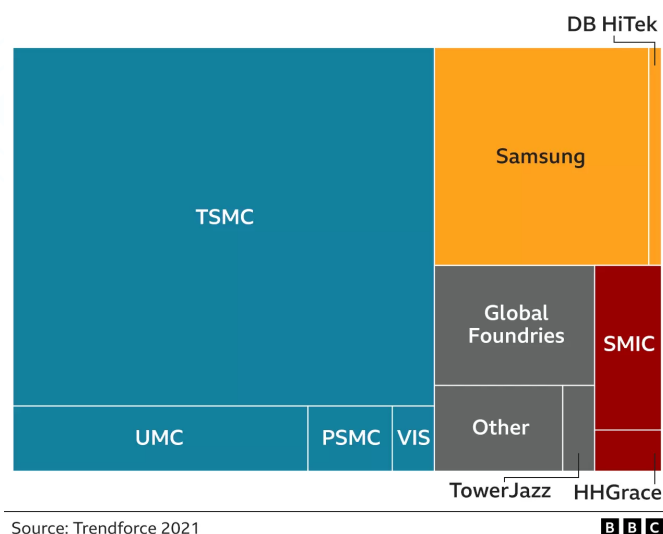
### *TSMC and Taiwan's Semiconductor Industry*

Taiwan's economy is essential to the global economy, mainly due to much of the world's everyday electronic equipment, such as phones, laptops, being powered by semiconductor chips made in Taiwan. This dominance in the semiconductor market is due to the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), where a single semiconductor manufacturing company holds more than half of the world's semiconductor market. (Brown, 2022)

#### Taiwan dominates the global production of computer chips

Global foundry market share, by country and company 2021

■ Taiwan 65% ■ South Korea 18% ■ China 5% ■ Other 12%



Source: Trendforce 2021

BBC



The possible invasion of Taiwan by the People's Republic of China is expected to cause disruption in global supply of semiconductor chips, while at the same time, complete takeover of TSMC infrastructure by China will allow the PRC to take control over one of the world's most important industries.

### *South China Sea Disputes And Artificial Islands*

The South China Sea dispute involves territorial and maritime rights primarily held by nations like China, Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines. China has constructed various artificial islands in the region to enhance the legitimacy of their claim in line with the Nine-Dash Line.

The United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) is invoked to determine the EEZs (Exclusive Economic Zones) of countries and their maritime boundaries. The Philippines and Vietnam, among others, are countries that are attempting to assert their rights according to UNCLOS, while China claims historical sovereignty.

This dispute intensifies tension between China and Taiwan as they both claim sovereignty over the same region. It adds complexity to their already strained relationship, as well as the implications of military involvement and diplomatic relations with other countries.

### *Kinmen, Matsu and Wuqiu Islands of Taiwan*

The Kinmen, Matsu and Wuqiu Islands of Taiwan are strategically important as they are governed by Taiwan and located near China. They also have historical significance as they were used as battlegrounds in the Chinese Civil War.

Both nations claim sovereignty over the heavy militarised islands which adds tension due to their proximity.

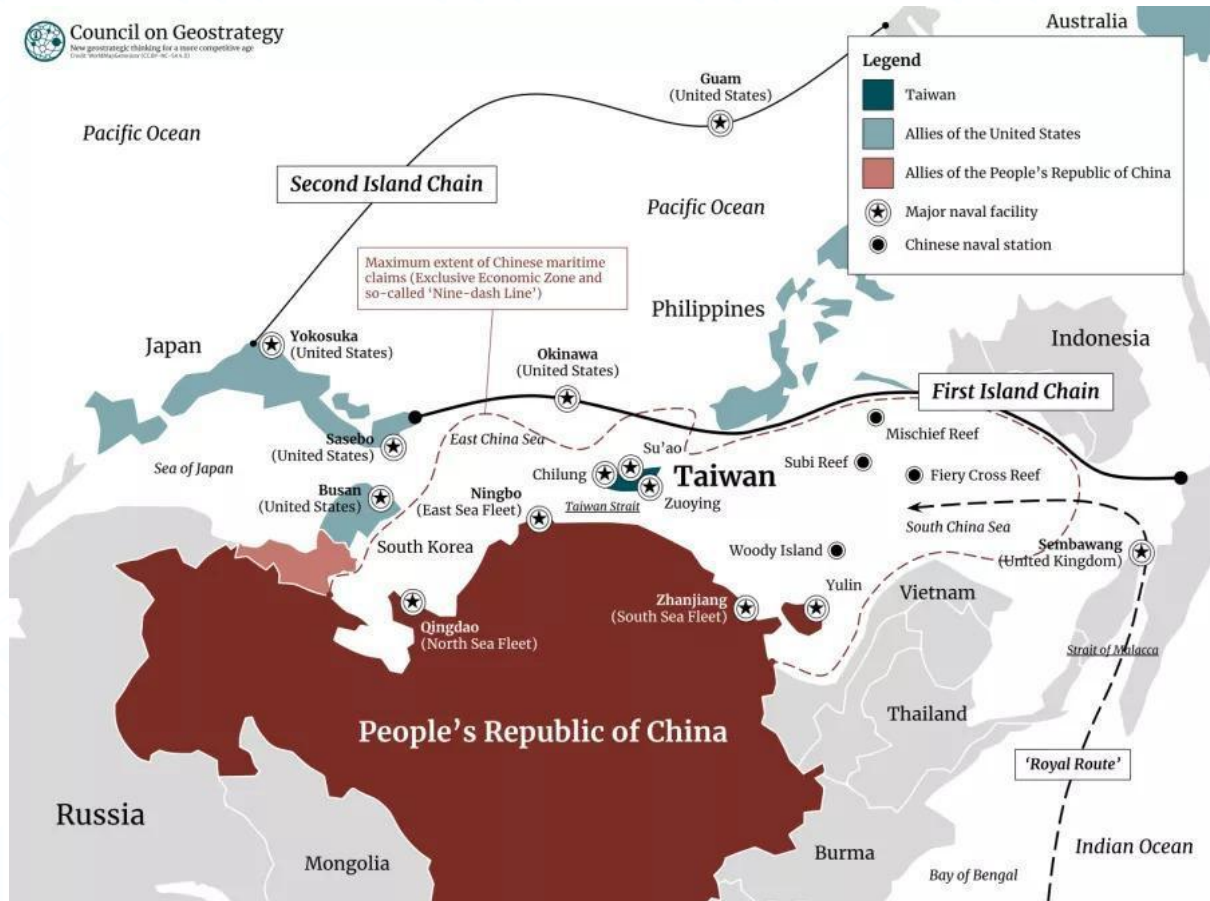
### *The Island Chains*

The Island Chain strategy was first conceived by John Foster Dulles in 1951 as a plan to contain Soviet naval influence in the Pacific. Today, the island chains are part of the core reason why the PRC considers Taiwan absolutely essential in defending its national security.

There are three main island chains, the first being the most important. It stretches from the Kuril Islands north of Japan, through the Japanese home islands, the Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, the Philippines and ends at Borneo. The second island chain is most commonly defined as stretching from the Japanese Bonin and Volcano Islands, through the many Mariana Islands (with the most important being Guam), and ends at Western New Guinea. The third island chain begins at the Aleutian Islands through the Hawaiian Islands, American



Samoa and Fiji, and finally ends at New Zealand. Fourth and fifth island chains have been proposed in the Indian ocean but are less relevant currently.



The islands of the First Island Chain act as strong points from which the US and its allies seek to contain Chinese naval influence. This is due to the fact that these islands have only narrow gaps that the PLAN could use to travel into the open ocean and as such can be much more easily defended from attack. The PRC views this as a significant concern since adversarial presence in these islands can exert power on the PRC in many ways. The PRC has an export driven economy, with most of its trade relying on its seaports in the east. As such, US control of the area threatens to strangle the Chinese economy in the event of a war due to the potential of a blockade on Chinese mercantile shipping. In addition to this, the islands of the first island chain are situated close to many PRC population and industrial centres such as Shanghai, Beijing, and Shenzhen. This allows a potential enemy to threaten these centres with long-range precision-strike weapons from positions along the island chain. The islands itself can be stocked with anti-access/area denial systems such as anti-ship and surface-to-air missiles to further prevent access and limit the options of the PLA.

In the event of war, American bases in the Second Island Chain, in particular Guam, would be vitally important for resupply of forces in the area as well as hosting American fleets. Currently Guam is the home base for multiple units of the US Seventh Fleet.

Taiwan sits at the centre of the First Island Chain. If the PRA manages to capture the island of Taiwan, it will be able to break through the First Island Chain, allowing it to have much more strategic breathing room. To achieve this, the PRC aims to first try and wrestle complete control of the seas off its coast, allowing its own navy to operate uncontested in the area. The PRC has invested heavily in anti-access/area denial systems of its own to pose a threat to even the most well defended American Carrier Groups. In addition to this the PRA has embarked on massive naval buildup. Just recently the PRA unveiled its third ever aircraft carrier, the Fujian. The Pentagon estimates that the PLAN would expand to incorporate 400 ships by 2025, with a focus on surface vessels (LaGrone, 2022).

### ***Made in China 2025***

Made In China 2025 was launched by the Chinese government in 2015 as a ten-year plan to update China's manufacturing base by rapidly developing ten high-tech industries. These high-tech industries are:

1. electric cars and other new energy vehicles,
2. next-generation information technology (IT) and telecommunications,
3. advanced robotics and artificial intelligence.
4. agricultural technology;
5. aerospace engineering;
6. new synthetic materials;
7. advanced electrical equipment;
8. emerging bio-medicine;
9. high-end rail infrastructure; and
10. high-tech maritime engineering.

This ten-year plan is aimed at reducing China's dependence on foreign technology and promoting Chinese high-tech manufacturers in the global market, with an emphasis on semiconductors as they are essential to the production of electronic products. The plan sets a specific target of 70% self-sufficiency in China, and acquiring a dominant position in the global market by 2049. This is an effort from the Chinese government to shift China's economy from resource extraction and low value-added, low wage manufacturing, to a high-tech, high-productivity economy. This was done through the following actions:

- a. Provide direct subsidies, in the hundreds of millions, to targeted industries through state funding, low interest loans, tax breaks, and other subsidies
- b. Foreign investment and acquisitions, where Chinese companies, both private and state-backed, have been encouraged to invest in foreign companies, notably semiconductor firms, to gain access to advanced technology.
- c. Mobilising state-backed companies, by using state-owned enterprises or companies, or funds backed by the Chinese government, to pursue these foreign investments into advanced technology
- d. Forced transfer agreements, where foreign companies that invest or do business in China, are mandated to enter into joint ventures with Chinese firms under terms that require them to share sensitive intellectual property and advanced technological know-how

The “Made In China 2025” plan was criticised mostly by the United States and the western nations, where it is seen as a threat due to China’s attempts to control entire industries through China’s state-led economic models that limit participation of foreign companies and its ambition to control entire supply chains for resources, such as cobalt, which is one of the main components for lithium-ion batteries that commonly power electronic devices. It is also criticised that China’s subsidies skew global markets and lead to overproduction of cheap products, which allegedly has happened for solar panels. However, it is argued by China that it only imitates successful economic strategies made by the US, South Korea, and Germany, where industrialisation was supported through government tariffs and state-backed economic support. (McBride & Chatzky, 2018)

Such labours of efforts had seen meagre success in the initial years leading to the year 2025, as it struggles to decouple from western-linked firms while also attempting to attract foreign investments into its economy, which is key to help boost domestic production.

### ***Bashi Channel***

The Bashi Channel is crucial due to its strategic significance. Situated between Taiwan and the Philippines, it acts as a maritime route for China and its naval activities in the Pacific Ocean. It is also significant for communication networks, as many undersea communication cables pass through it. By controlling it, China will be able to cut off Taiwan from international support and supply lines in the event of conflict. It is essential for Taiwan to maintain control of the channel for the sake of its defence and to secure maritime access for its own navy.



## ADDITIONAL READING

Delegates **do not need** to cover everything in the additional reading section, these are simply resources delegates could use for their study.

- What Happens if China Invades Taiwan (Youtube):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNZ0so0LCoM&t=300s>
- The Strategic Significance of the Bashi Channel (Youtube):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRK2NuzVtH8>
- The American Department of Defense's 2022 Report on Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China:  
<https://www.defense.gov/CMPR/>
- China's Vision of Its Seascape: The First Island Chain and Chinese Seapower:  
<https://sci-hub.se/https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1943-0787.2012.01349.x>
- Japanese Defence Strategy & Rearmament - Japan's ambitious plans & lessons from Ukraine (Youtube):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BHnijL9xYc>



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