

Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Issue: The question of Taiwan

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INTRODUCTION

Taiwan, officially called the Republic of China (ROC), is an island located in southeastern Asia. Following the end of the Chinese Revolution (1949), where the Communists gained power over Chinese territory and established the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Nationalists fled to Taiwan and for almost 30 years both the PRC and the ROC claimed to be the only rightful government of the Chinese people. Nowadays, although the PRC is internationally recognized and considered to be the rightful government of China, Taiwan still struggles to be acknowledged by the international community. The ROC has limited allies with only 21 UN member states and the Holy See recognizing its sovereignty, since it lost its UN seat to China in 1971. Thus, although both the PRC and ROC claim to be the governors of all China, internationally the ROC is widely recognized as a part of China.



Figure 1: Taiwan political map

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

East and South China Sea

Located in the Pacific Ocean, the East and South China Sea encompasses approximately 4750000 km². China, Taiwan, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, ROK and Japan are located in the East and South China Sea. It also

includes the disputed Spratly, Pratas and Senkaku (called Diaoyu by the Chinese) Islands and the Dong Island.

Nine-dash line

At first, the nine-dash line was actually an eleven-dash line, drawn by the Chinese in 1947, but in 1950, two dashes were removed. China claims that all areas within the nine-dash line should be under its sovereignty. The nine-dash line surrounds almost 90% of the disputed area and runs 2000 kilometers from Chinese mainland to within a few hundred kilometers of Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Non self-governing territory

According to the UN Charter, non-self-governing territories are defined as “territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government”¹

Kuomintang (KMT, National People’s Party)

The KMT is the party that ruled China from 1928 to 1949 and then ruled Taiwan and won most of the elections until 2016.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)

The DPP was founded in 1986 by those who wanted self-determination for ethnically Taiwanese people, a multiparty system and the initiation of economic relations with the PRC. After years as opposition to KMT, it is currently the main party in Taiwan, with its leader Tsai Ing-wen being Taiwan’s president.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History of Taiwan

Taiwan’s history dates to as early as 3rd century AD, but Chinese settlement began in the early 17th century. The island also attracted Europeans; in 1590 the Portuguese visited the island and failed to settle, but the Spaniards and the Dutch were more successful with the Spaniards controlling the north and the Dutch the south. In 1683, almost 20 years after the Dutch abandoned the island, Taiwan became part of the Fukien Province and it surrendered to the Ch’ing. In the mid-19th century Taiwan was China’s main provider of rice and sugar and the island’s population was approximately 2.500.000. In 1886, Taiwan was a separate province

¹ "UN Charter." UN News Center. UN, n.d. Web. <<http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/index.html>>.

of mainland China with T'ai-chung as its legal capital and Taipei as the temporary one, although it became the legal capital in 1894. However, in 1895, after the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese took over Taiwan and the Pescadores/Penghu Islands as a result of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. The Japanese were not welcomed by the Taiwanese people and thus, they faced many problems with their occupation.

After Japan's defeat in WWII, the Chinese Nationalist government recovered Taiwan as a consequence of the Cairo Agreement of 1943. The Taiwanese people welcomed this change, only to find out later that there was no difference mainly because both the Japanese and the Chinese used the island in order to provide for their mainland. Following the Nationalists' flee to Taiwan after the Communists won in the mainland, Taiwan fought to be recognized as the only government of the Chinese people. The United States of America and the ROC later signed the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954, which pledged the US to defend Taiwan and the Pescadores/Penghu Islands.

In 1955 talks between the US and the PRC took place in the hope that China would agree to a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue. Nonetheless, by 1958 the PRC had adopted a more aggressive approach, thus ending the hope of a peaceful solution.

Throughout the 1960s, from an 'aid client' of the US, Taiwan became one of its trade partners, because the US had a growing demand for Taiwanese products, which actually helped the KMT strive for economic development. From 1969 to 1971 the US facilitated American-Chinese trade and travel and many countries ended their diplomatic ties with Taiwan. 1971 is marked as the year that Taiwan was replaced by the PRC as the representative of China in the UN through the UN General Assembly Resolution 2758. In 1972 the US began quasi-diplomatic relations with the PRC. Taiwan, then began getting ready to be more internationally isolated, however a stalemate between the US and China around the mid-1970s temporarily relieved the island, which ended in 1979 when the US formally recognized the PRC and the two countries established formal diplomatic relations signing the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations. Later on, in 1979, the US passed the Taiwan Relations Act, which permitted socioeconomic ties with the ROC. Moreover, the US unilaterally announced that it would carry on providing Taiwan with defensive arms, which hindered US-China talks regarding defense collaboration.

Political situation in Taiwan

Following the death of Taiwan's leader Chiang Ching-kuo in 1988, Taiwan began progressing to a political democratization. More and more Taiwanese politicians received

important positions in the KMT party and in the elections of 1989, parties other than the KMT were allowed to be involved. Due to the Soviet Union's and western-communist governments' collapse, Taiwanese-US relations became better and Taiwan began the process of normalizing diplomatic talks with China. In the beginning of the 21st century, the DPP began rising as a political force in Taiwan having fully removed the KPT from power in the government. In the elections of 2008, the KMT regained full government control and relations with China started to improve. Nevertheless, there were many protests from pro-independent forces in Taiwan as regards KMT leader's Ma Ying-jeou way of dealing with the PRC. In 2016, Taiwan elected Tsai Ing-wen, leader of the DPP, as their first female president.

Because of China's universal position, which includes a seat in international organizations such as the UN and the WTO, Taiwan's international role is restricted, which means that the ROC does neither have many allies nor is internationally recognized. The ROC's isolation aggravates China's military threats, mainly because little external help and support is provided to Taiwan, thus making Taiwan dependent on the US' political and military support. However, Taiwan-US relations are not of a formal character based on an alliance or diplomatic relations, but instead take on commercial, cultural and other forms. Thus, Taiwan needs to strengthen ties with its main ally without endangering itself more.

South-East China Sea dispute

Ever since the end of WWII, there has been an ongoing dispute between China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei with regard to the sovereignty of Islands located in the South and East China Sea. Due to the islands' importance in international trade routes, numerous fishing stocks and their possible oil reserves,

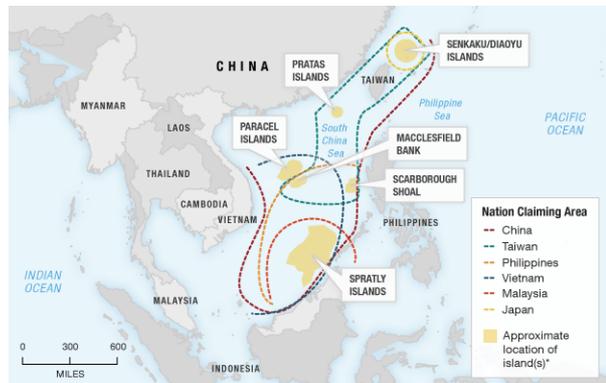


Figure 2: A map from 2012 shows the approximate territorial claims in the South China Sea. Brunei's claims are not included. (<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/01/30/464966081/u-s-sails-near-disputed-island-in-south-china-sea>)

the aforementioned nations have all claimed the islands as their own. The main disputed areas include the Spratly and Paracel Islands in the South and the Senkaku (also called Diaoyu) Islands in the East. These claims have led to the international disagreement which could easily become armed conflict not only between nations fighting for the islands' sovereignty but also including other countries with significant international trade positions.

Taiwanese claims

Islands located within the nine-dash/U-shaped line, which includes the Spratly and Paracel Islands, the Pratas (also called Dongsha and Tungsha) Island and Macclesfield Bank, are claimed by the ROC. Taiwan administers the Taiping Island (largest island of Spratlys) and the Pratas Islands. In 1990, Executive Yuan –the executive branch of Taiwan’s government– agreed to place Taiping and Pratas Islands under short-term jurisdiction of Kaohsiung’s (special municipality in Taiwan) municipal government and in 1992, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense announced a 30-nautical-mile restricted air zone and a 24-nautical-mile restricted zone, in which foreign ships and aircraft were prohibited, although for the Taiping and Pratas Islands, a 4.000-meter forbidden sea zone and a 6.000-meter restricted sea and air zone were declared. When a Vietnamese cargo vessel trespassed the prohibited sea zone surrounding the Taiping Island, warning shots were fired at it, in order to make Taiwan’s intentions clear.

The ROC has used state-owned vessels, in order to make its sovereignty claims in the South China Sea stronger and, at the same time, it has also constructed infrastructure in the Xisha (Paracel) and Nansha (Spratly) Islands, in order to have active military presence in the disputed area. This led to protesting responses from Vietnam and the Philippines and it also concerned Japan and the US. Moreover, Taiwan has proposed the South China Sea Peace Initiative that asks nations to end disputes peacefully and encourage common development.

Chinese claims

China claims the biggest part of territory in the disputed Area basing its claims mainly on historical reasons. According to the PRC, it should have sovereignty over the islands because of the nine-dash line it drew in 1947. However, the nation does not abide by the international protocols of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and it has previously had military conflict with Vietnam and the Philippines because of the Paracels and Spratlys. Moreover, it has not agreed to work with ASEAN (regional body).

China has increased island development, constructing, as was seen through satellite images, helipads, and radar and surveillance structures in the Spratlys, which are also being claimed by Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines. Concerning the Paracels, in 1974 they were seized by the Chinese from Vietnam, with the Chinese causing the death of more than 70 Vietnamese troops. Island building and increasing infrastructure can play a major role in expanding China’s power in the area, because although artificial islands built by the Chinese throughout the Spratly archipelago do not actually enhance its territorial claims and maritime

rights, but they provide military bases that can be used to strengthen China's power position in the disputed area, which also includes China's power position over Taiwan.

Security challenges in Taiwan

China's growing economy includes, amongst others, an emerging defense budget, whose aims are modernization of defense and armed forces. China has conducted several military exercises mainly along the Taiwan Strait (strait separating the PRC from the ROC). The PRC will not allow Taiwan to become independent and internationally recognized and that is why the Taiwanese live under constant threat of the Chinese. According to the US-DOD's Military Power of the People's Republic of China Report, "Since 2000, the military balance in the Taiwan Strait has continued to shift in Beijing's favor, marked by the sustained deployment of advanced military equipment to the Military Regions opposite Taiwan"². China has improved its missiles programme, thus meaning that the possibility of striking Taiwan is increasing.

The PRC has previously announced circumstances under which it had warned it would use force against the ROC. These are:

1. Official declaration of the ROC's independence,
2. Unclear actions towards the ROC's independence,
3. Internal conflict in Taiwan,
4. Taiwan as a nuclear weapons state,
5. Hindered cross-Strait dialogue aiming for unification,
6. External intervention in the ROC's internal matters,
7. And external forces stationed in the ROC.

China is ready at all times for a Taiwan conflict, which means that its military is equipped with:

1. Missile forces ready to attack Taiwan's facilities,
2. Air forces ready to carry out ground-attack operations against the ROC,
3. Navy forces with sea platforms in position to attack Taiwan in a cross-Strait dispute,
4. And ground forces preparing for a Taiwan invasion situation.

² Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2009. Rep. Office of the Secretary of Defense, n.d. Web. <http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/China_Military_Power_Report_2009.pdf>.

Taiwan Strait Military Balance in 2015, Ground Forces			
	China		Taiwan
	Total	Taiwan Strait Area	Total
Personnel (Active)	1.25 million	400,000	130,000
Group Armies/Army Corps	18	8	3
Infantry Divisions	12	4	0
Infantry Brigades	23	7	5
Mechanized Infantry Divisions	7	4	0
Amphibious Mechanized Infantry Divisions	2	2	0
Mechanized Infantry Brigades	25	8	3
Armor Divisions	1	0	0
Armor Brigades	17	7	4
Amphibious Armor Brigades	1	1	0
Army Aviation Brigades and Regiments	11	6	3
Artillery Brigades	22	9	5
Airborne Divisions	3	3	0
Marine Brigades	2	2	2
Tanks	7,000	2,800	1,100
Artillery Pieces	8,000	3,900	1,600

Note: In 2015, People's Liberation Army (PLA) active ground forces were organized into group armies and independent airborne and marine units deployed through seven military regions (MRs). A significant portion of these assets were deployed in the Taiwan Strait area (the former Nanjing, Guangzhou and Jinan MRs), including coastal defense, border defense, headquarters, and administrative units reflected in the personnel total but not tabulated in detail. Taiwan has three army corps and four principle defense commands. Each army corps contains an artillery command roughly equivalent to a brigade plus. The numbers of specific systems are approximate.

As can be seen in the figure, China's ground forces outnumber Taiwan's, which means that China has the upper hand in military Chinese-Taiwanese issues. As a result, the Taiwanese government must always proceed with care so as to not have a military response from the Chinese.

China's influence on the ROC

China's growing military, which is a constant threat to the Taiwanese, has had a crucial effect on the government and as a result, Taiwan does not have relations with other governments due to Chinese pressure. Moreover, during the first Taiwanese elections in 1996, the Chinese conducted missile tests in order to 'warn' the Taiwanese to not vote for the electorate Lee Teng-hui, however the people voted and he became President.

For many Taiwanese, the KMT's Chinese-friendly policies are often seen as stronger PRC dependence, which can result into Taiwan becoming a second Hong Kong and accepting the "one country, two systems" policy proposed by the Chinese (further explained in Countries involved).

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

ROC/Taiwan

According to Taiwan, the ROC is the legitimate government of the Chinese people. During the 1980s, the KMT dismissed China's approach for talks aiming at reunification but in 1985 Chiang Ching-kuo began communications with the PRC. After lifting the martial law in 1987, the Taiwanese were permitted to travel to China. Taiwan's previous president Ma Ying-jeou (KMT, 2008-2016) had mentioned a Three-Noes policy that he would implement if he won the 2008 election. More specifically, the Three-Noes stand for "no unification, no

independence, no use of force”³. Taiwan’s current president has not mentioned anything concerning the Three-Noes policy and she has also said that Taiwan will carefully handle Taiwanese-Chinese relations so that trust is gradually built.

Concerning, however, the opinion of the Taiwanese residents, today there are more people that want independence compared to older generations and there are many habitants of Taiwan who identify as Taiwanese and not Chinese. More specifically, according to a survey conducted on May 27 by the Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation, 80.8% of the locals identify as Taiwanese, 8.1% as Chinese and 7.6% as both Chinese and Taiwanese. Moreover, 51.2% wish that Taiwan becomes independent, 14.9% want unification and 16% believe that Taiwan and the mainland are part of one China.

PRC/China

The Chinese consider Taiwan to be a ‘rebel’ province, which must be united again with its mainland (PRC). This means, that the Chinese may also be willing to, someday, use force in order to achieve their goal of unification. Moreover, the ROC’s lack of international recognition proves, according to the Chinese, that the PRC is the rightful and only government of China, thus that Taiwan needs to be reunited with its mainland under the government of the PRC. For the Chinese, Taiwan is valuable because controlling the island means that the PRC will control international sea trade routes essential to strengthen the Chinese economy.

The PRC has previously proposed the “one country, two systems” system (The same system was applied to Hong Kong). With this system, there are two systems coexisting in one country; the PRC remains under communist rule, while Taiwan will be under capitalist system (like Hong Kong). According to the Chinese, should the “one country, two systems” be implemented, then this would not change the lives of the Taiwanese, however, the ROC denied this proposal.

The Unites States of America (USA)

The USA recognizes the PRC as the government of China, but it has, maintained some unofficial ties with the Taiwanese, meaning that Taiwan and the US are not bound by official diplomatic ties. After WWII, the US provided Taiwan with significant assistance in order to help rebuild its economy, but currently no development assistance is provided to Taiwan. According to the U.S. Department of State: “The United States supports Taiwan’s membership in international organizations that do not require statehood as a condition of membership

³ Cossa, Ralph A. "Taiwan’s Three-No Policy." The Korea Times. N.p., 2012 Feb. 2001. Web. <http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2008/02/137_18355.html>.

and encourages Taiwan’s meaningful participation in international organizations where its membership is not possible.”⁴ Recently, the US government under Obama administration sold arms worth \$1.83 billion to Taiwan, in order to help it build more effective defense systems. This sale, however, has not changed the U.S.’ views on the issue, meaning that it still accepts the “one-China” policy.

United Nations

The United Nations previously recognized the ROC as the Chinese government, but after passing resolution 2758, this changed and now it recognizes only the PRC. Taiwan has previously tried to become a legitimate UN member, but China has disagreed.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
17/04/1895	Treaty of Shimonoseki is signed
1927-1950	Chinese civil war between KMT- and CPC-forces
1943	Cairo agreement is signed
1949	Chinese Nationalists flee to Taiwan
3/03/1955	Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty goes into effect
25/10/1971	UNGA resolution 2758 is passed
1/01/1979	Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and the US is signed.
31/12/1979	Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty expires
1992	1992 Consensus agreement
June 2008	Resumption of cross-strait dialogue after 10 years

⁴ "U.S. Relations With Taiwan." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, 12 Feb. 2015. Web. <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35855.htm>>.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- UNGA resolution 2758, adopted on 25/10/1971 by a vote of 76-35-17
The PRC becomes internationally recognized as the only rightful government of China and is the only acceptable UN representative of China.
Full text can be found here: <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/un2758-XXVI.htm>

Other important treaties and events

- Cairo agreement of 1943, 1/12/1943
Japan must return the islands of the Pacific Ocean, including Taiwan (Formosa Island)
Full text can be found here:
http://www.ndl.go.jp/constitution/e/shiryo/01/002_46/002_46tx.html
- Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty 1954, effective from 3/03/1955 until 31/12/1979
China cannot use force against Taiwan, thus take over it.
Full text can be found here: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/chin001.asp
- Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, 1/01/1979
US officially recognizes the PRC as the government of China and diplomatic relations between the US and the PRC are established.
Full text can be found here: <http://www.taiwandocuments.org/communique02.htm>
- 1992 Consensus
During the meeting between the PRC and ROC in 1992, they both agreed that there is one government of the Chinese; that is the PRC according to the PRC and the ROC according to the ROC. As it can be understood, during the '92 Consensus, both agreed that there is one Chinese government, only that there was a 'misunderstanding' to which the government is.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Previously, there have been some measures taken in order to solve the issue, but there have been no results. Because both the ROC and the PRC claim to be the legitimate Chinese government, their relations have had many setbacks. In 2008, cross-strait dialogue was resumed, prioritizing economic talks instead of political negotiations. China's "one country, two systems" proposal could have solved the issue, or have made an important step towards solving it, however the ROC did not accept it.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Firstly, and most importantly, stability in the region must be achieved, in order to make any progress towards solving the issue. This means, that Chinese forces need to stop threatening Taiwan, something that can be achieved by the international community adopting measures that will prevent China from attacking Taiwan in cases where they feel threatened through the use of incentives and sanctions. Additionally, it is important for the international community to ensure that Taiwan can be protected by external forces.

From a long run perspective, stability in the region means that the PRC and the ROC can coexist peacefully, which in the end can also result in peaceful unification of both governments or an acceptance of the PRC and ROC as two independent sovereign states. If unification is to prevail, there are two basic aspects that need to be taken into consideration: One is the question of which will be the rightful government –the PRC or ROC- and the other one is the Taiwanese people’s reaction to unification process. Because more than 50% of the island’s residents do not want unification, doing that could have as a result instability within Taiwan, seeing as the government will not act as its people want. This all reflects the importance of the international community providing the PRC and ROC with a formal platform for dialogue for the resolution of this issue, as well as with guidance over how to resolve the issue of PRC’s sovereignty.

Last but not least, the dispute of the South and East China Sea plays a major role in the issue and solving it is crucial to Chinese-Taiwanese relations. One way of solving it is to provide the PRC and ROC with a platform to discuss a compromise on the issue, whilst international law needs to be stricter in order to avoid any future military attacks between both.

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Figures

Figure 1: Taiwan Political Map. Digital image. OnTheWorldMap. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://ontheworldmap.com/taiwan/taiwan-political-map.html>>.

Figure 2: Domonoske, Camila. A map from 2012 shows the approximate territorial claims in the South China Sea. Digital image. NPR. N.p., 30 Jan. 2016. Web.

<<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/01/30/464966081/u-s-sails-near-disputed-island-in-south-china-sea>>.

Figure 3: ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2016. Rep. Office of the Secretary of Defense, 26 Apr. 2016. Web. <<http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2016%20China%20Military%20Power%20Report.pdf>>.