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Taiwan in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy: Implications for Regional Geopolitical Security in the Northeast Asia Region

台湾在美国“印太战略”中的地位：对东北亚地区地缘政治安全的影响

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Abstract: This study examines the implications of the United States' (U.S.) engagement with Taiwan within the framework of its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), focusing on the geopolitical security dynamics of the Northeast Asia region. The research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing secondary data sources such as academic articles, alongside primary materials including treaties, policy documents, white papers, and defense reports, to ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis.

The findings indicate that Taiwan has become a strategically significant component of U.S. regional engagement in Northeast Asia. However, the deepening involvement of the United States in Taiwan under the IPS may generate unintended consequences, including heightened geopolitical tensions and strategic risks. In particular, parallels are drawn with the case of Ukraine, suggesting that external support may be accompanied by substantial political and security costs.

This study contributes to the literature by offering a foundation for future comparative research on Taiwan and Ukraine, as well as broader analyses of great power involvement in regional conflicts. It also provides insights into whether U.S. engagement enhances deterrence or escalates risks in the Taiwan Strait.

Keywords: Taiwan; United States; Indo-Pacific Strategy; Regional Geopolitical Security; Northeast Asia.

关键词：台湾；美国；印太战略；区域地缘政治安全；东北亚

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Furthermore, the study highlights the relevance of neo-realist perspectives in advancing a more comprehensive understanding of regional power dynamics.

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摘要：

本研究旨在探讨美国（U.S.）在其“印太战略”（IPS）框架下对台湾的介入，对东北亚地区地缘政治安全格局所产生的影响。研究采用定性方法，结合学术文献等二手资料，并辅以条约、政策文件、白皮书及国防报告等一手资料，以确保分析的全面性与系统性。

研究结果表明，台湾已成为美国在东北亚地区战略布局中的重要组成部分。然而，美国在“印太战略”框架下对台湾不断加深的介入，可能带来一系列非预期后果，包括加剧地缘政治紧张局势和战略风险。特别是，与乌克兰案例的类比表明，外部支持往往伴随着显著的政治与安全成本。

本研究通过提供理论与实证分析基础，为未来有关台湾与乌克兰的比较研究以及大国介入区域冲突的相关研究提供参考。同时，研究还探讨了美国介入究竟是增强威慑还是加剧台海风险的问题。此外，研究强调新现实主义视角在深化区域权力结构与安全动态理解中的重要性。

1. Introduction

The relationship between the United States (U.S.) and China is marked by several strategic challenges that complicate their interactions. To begin with, U.S. involvement in the China-Taiwan issue exacerbates tensions. Although the U.S. does not explicitly endorse Taiwan's independence, it has continued to provide military assistance and financial aid to Taiwan since the mid-twentieth century (Masters and Merrow, 2024). Additionally, the trade war initiated by the U.S. in 2018 placed further strain on bilateral relations with China (Mullen, 2021), leading to heightened protectionism and economic decoupling that undermined their previously strong economic interdependence. This competitive dynamic is particularly evident in the technology sector, where disputes over intellectual property theft and enforced technology transfers have become increasingly contentious. Moreover, China's expanding military capabilities and assertive territorial claims, particularly in the Taiwan Strait, the Senkaku Islands, and the South China Sea, which raised concerns in Washington and among U.S. allies (Blackwill and Zelikow, 2021), fostering an atmosphere of insecurity and competition. In response, the U.S. has strengthened its military alliances and enhanced its regional presence.

Furthermore, geopolitical rivalry for influence in the Indo-Pacific constitutes another significant area of contention. Both the U.S. and China are seeking to expand their influence in the region, intensifying competition that has drawn the attention of other states in Northeast Asia, including Japan, South Korea, North Korea, and Taiwan (Chan and Lee, 2025). In 2013, China introduced the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was formally launched in 2015 (Xi, 2018). By establishing economic and political footholds across the region and beyond, the BRI challenges the U.S.-led international order. In turn, this has prompted Washington to adopt the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) as a countermeasure. At the same time, an ideological

divide deepens the rift between the two powers. The U.S. emphasizes democratic governance and human rights, whereas China upholds an authoritarian model, reinforcing mutual distrust and complicating diplomatic engagement.

Despite these tensions, both states must navigate pressing global challenges, including climate change, nuclear proliferation, and international terrorism, that necessitate cooperation. However, ongoing strategic frictions have hindered meaningful collaboration on such urgent issues. These dynamics illustrate the delicate balance of cooperation and competition that characterizes U.S.-China relations, underscoring the critical need for prudent management to avert conflict while addressing shared global challenges (Vinodan and Kurian, 2021).

The relationship between U.S.-China remains one of the most critical international ties today, drawing sustained attention from Congress on several key issues, particularly the Taiwan question (Arabia, Campbell, and Lawrence, 2024). Since the Chinese Civil War in 1949, Taiwan has been a focal point in bilateral relations, with the U.S. historically supporting Taiwan through legislative measures, most notably the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, which pledges U.S. support for Taiwan's defense (Denmark, 2014). China's firm stance on the Taiwan issue, coupled with its responses to U.S. actions, has compelled Washington to further strengthen its relationship with Taipei. Trade has also been a significant source of contention, particularly with the substantial increase in the U.S. trade deficit since the mid-1990s. Debates over trade policy, including China's Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status, as well as ongoing conflicts related to tariffs and trade practices, have elevated issues such as currency manipulation and intellectual property theft (Hogan, Mckibbin, and Noland, 2024).

Additionally, human rights concerns have played an influential role in shaping U.S. policy toward China, especially after the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. Since then, Washington has actively prioritized human

rights in its China policy, frequently holding congressional hearings and enacting resolutions aimed at addressing human rights abuses. Prominent lawmakers, such as Representative Christopher Smith, have been particularly vocal in advocating stronger measures against Beijing concerning political repression and the treatment of ethnic minorities. These issues carry significant domestic implications for the U.S. while also shaping the broader dynamics of international relations and security in the Asia-Pacific region (Xie, 2008).

The purpose of the introduction is to arouse the reader's attention and provide a general overview of the paper. The contents to be described in the introduction are roughly as follows: (1) First, the rationale, purpose, and background of the research should be reviewed. This part includes the question, the research object, its basic characteristics, what work has been done by other researchers on this issue, what the deficiencies are, what problems are expected to be solved, what the role and significance of the solution is, and what the background of the research work is. If a lot of questions are to be answered, only a brief explanation can be provided. Usually, one problem can be explained in one or two sentences. (2) The theoretical basis, experimental basis, and research methods are then introduced. If established theories, principles, and methods are followed, then the relevant literature should be noted. If a new concept or term is to be introduced, it should be defined or clarified. (3) The expected results and their status, role, and significance should then be outlined in a natural, general, concise, and precise manner. In the introduction, diagrams, tables, and formulas are generally not allowed.

2. The Significance of Northeast Asia Region to the United States

Northeast Asia represents a vital subregion within the Asia-Pacific framework, exerting significant influence on global political, security, and economic dynamics. Characterized by major power competition, historical rivalries, security dilemmas, and deep economic interdependence, the region remains central to U.S. containment strategies and to the dynamics of China's rise.

Geopolitically, Northeast Asia encompasses key states such as China and Japan, functioning as a crucial strategic hub that links the Pacific, Eurasia, and East Asia. China's position as the world's second-largest economy and its rise as a dominant power in the twenty-first century, coupled with Japan's formidable economic strength and advanced military capabilities, underscores the region's strategic importance. U.S. engagement in Northeast Asia, articulated through IPS, directly intersects with China's BRI, thereby intensifying regional competition. Within this context,

Taiwan emerges as a focal point and a critical battleground in the ongoing rivalry between Washington and Beijing.

The China-Taiwan issue transcends domestic politics and reflects the broader strategic contest between the U.S. and China. Taiwan is essential to U.S. defense strategy in the Indo-Pacific, serving as a linchpin of containment against China's maritime expansion. Should China annex Taiwan, it would be able to project naval power more freely into the Pacific, undermining U.S. strategic dominance and that of its allies. China's unwavering claim over Taiwan, framing it as a province awaiting reunification, which contrasts with the U.S. policy of strategic ambiguity, under which Washington refrains from formally endorsing Taiwanese independence while continuing to provide military assistance.

Northeast Asia is also of geopolitical importance to U.S. containment policies through its robust military presence in the region. The U.S. maintains a substantial deployment in South Korea (Republic of Korea) and Japan, two of its most significant security and economic partners in Asia. The U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, signed in 1953 at the end of the Korean War, institutionalized this alliance. Currently, the U.S. has stationed approximately 28,500 military personnel in South Korea to counter the threat posed by North Korea (CRS, 2023). Concurrently, about 50,000 U.S. troops are deployed in Japan, which also participates in regular security dialogues with Washington to enhance military cooperation and deter Chinese aggression (Kosuke, 2024).

3. United States Various Policies in Taiwan

In 1979, the U.S. severed official diplomatic ties with Taiwan and established formal relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). In the same year, however, the U.S. Congress enacted the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to preserve Taiwan's security amid concerns that the shift in diplomatic recognition would weaken Taipei's position (Bush, 2004). The TRA embodied Washington's commitment to Taiwan and contributed to decades of relative stability across the Taiwan Strait. Nevertheless, while the TRA promoted peace, it also strained relations between Taipei and Beijing, particularly during President Tsai Ing-wen's administration beginning in 2016, and further complicated U.S.-China relations. Although the TRA remains foundational in shaping U.S. policy toward both Taiwan and China, some scholars, such as Sacks, argue that its effectiveness in maintaining stability has diminished over the past 45 years due to China's growing military capabilities (Sacks, 2024). Beyond the TRA, the U.S. reinforced Taiwan's security through the "Six Assurances," which included commitments such as continuing arms sales to Taiwan without time

limitations and refusing to pressure Taipei into negotiations with Beijing. These assurances further underscored the U.S. support for Taiwan's security, strengthening its defensive posture in response to China's expanding military presence (CRS, 2024).

4. The U.S. Containment Policy: Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) and its Outcomes

Despite establishing numerous policies to demonstrate support for Taiwan, the U.S. places greater emphasis on the IPS as a means of counterbalancing the influence of China's BRI. The IPS focuses on strengthening alliances and partnerships, cultivating robust ties with regional allies such as Japan, India, and Australia, while facilitating collaboration with Southeast Asian nations through innovative multilateral frameworks such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). This strategy promotes economic cooperation through trade, investment, and supply chain initiatives designed to enhance prosperity and stability (U.S. Department of State, 2024). It also seeks to address infrastructure gaps and foster sustainable growth while enhancing security cooperation to deter potential threats and reinforce regional stability through military alliances, counterterrorism efforts, maritime security, and disaster response.

Through IPS, the U.S. actively supports Taiwan's defense capabilities by reaffirming its commitment to Taiwan's right to self-defense and its capacity to resist coercion, particularly from China (Reuters, 2025). This support includes arms sales and military assistance aimed at bolstering Taiwan's defensive resources. Furthermore, the U.S. advocates for Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations and forums, seeking to mitigate the effects of its diplomatic isolation resulting from pressure by Beijing. Such participation is essential for Taiwan's engagement in global issues relating to health, economics, and security (Chung and Yeh, 2025).

The IPS also underscores the importance of peaceful Cross-Strait relations, emphasizing the need for dialogue to maintain a stable status quo while discouraging coercive measures by China against Taiwan. Recognized as a critical component of the Indo-Pacific security architecture, Taiwan plays a pivotal role in collaborating with U.S. allies to deter Chinese aggression and maintain stability. This reinforces mutual defense commitments and highlights Taiwan's integration into U.S. regional security considerations (U.S. Department of State, 2024). Consequently, the broader IPS reflects Washington's emphasis on security in response to regional challenges, including rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and North Korea's nuclear program. Through its "hub-and-spokes" alliance

system and strategic coalitions such as the Quad, the U.S. seeks to contain China's expanding influence while safeguarding its own strategic and economic interests (Bush et al., 2022).

To protect these interests, the U.S. has prioritized the development of a robust Indo-Pacific alliance network, promoted peace and economic stability, and responded to China's coercive actions. Key measures include strengthening alliances, deepening economic engagement through initiatives such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), and enhancing deterrence strategies regarding Taiwan and the South China Sea. China's expanding power in the Indo-Pacific presents significant challenges to U.S. interests, particularly as Beijing leverages the BRI to enhance regional connectivity and assert leadership. This threatens both U.S. influence and regional stability, prompting Washington to accelerate its IPS as a countermeasure (Ibid).

IPS officially released in February 2022, envisions a free and open Indo-Pacific, with a focus on security, connectivity, prosperity, and resilience (The White House Washington, 2022). The strategy highlights U.S. efforts to advance regional stability and confront transnational threats while reaffirming American leadership. Two years into its implementation, the IPS has produced tangible results. For example, Washington reinvigorated the Quad, which has since emerged as a cornerstone of regional security. Initially established to coordinate disaster preparedness, the Quad has expanded its agenda to include broader economic, security, and health issues. This evolution reflects shared concerns about China's ambitions, particularly after the 2020 China-India border conflict, which reinforced India's participation in the grouping (Smith, 2021). In 2019, U.S. trade passing through the region generated approximately \$1.9 trillion in value, underscoring the Indo-Pacific's economic significance (Department of States, 2019). While China initially dismissed the Quad as ineffective due to divergent member interests, it later framed the grouping as a "small clique" aimed at containing Chinese influence, thereby exacerbating regional tensions (Rudd, 2021).

In addition to the Quad, the U.S. has advanced AUKUS as a strategic mechanism to counterbalance China's influence. This trilateral partnership, comprising Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S., focuses on enhancing military capabilities, including sharing advanced technologies, and jointly producing nuclear-powered submarines. AUKUS is designed to strengthen regional security and deepen defense cooperation, while deterring Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific (Freeman et al., 2024). Beijing perceives AUKUS as a challenge to its interests and has accelerated its military modernization, including increases in defense spending, in response to perceived pressures from the alliance (Imannuridin, Sudiarso, and

Sianturi, 2024).

The IPS also emphasizes strengthening bilateral partnerships. The U.S. has cultivated an extensive defense relationship with India through joint exercises and technology cooperation. For instance, the U.S. and India conducted the joint military exercise Yudh Abhyas 2024 in India to enhance defense cooperation and bilateral ties (Adil, 2024). Although it does not explicitly directed against China, this exercise reflects shared concerns about Beijing's regional activities and serves as a potential deterrent, contributing to the Indo-Pacific security framework that counters Chinese influence.

The U.S. IPS has directly affected China's interests. China views diplomatic outreach in the Indo-Pacific as central to its ambition of attaining global dominance alongside Australia, Japan, and India. However, China's growing influence has altered the strategic positions of these three states, thereby intensifying regional power imbalances (Wu and Colombage, 2019). The implementation of the IPS seeks to counteract the influence of China's BRI in the region. Consequently, China must address the challenges posed by the IPS by demonstrating that the BRI is purely an economic initiative linked to the global supply chain, rather than a project with military or strategic undertones. Additionally, China could strengthen cooperation with the U.S. to mitigate the risks associated with the IPS.

Before China's rise, power in the Indo-Pacific was relatively balanced, with Australia, Japan, and India serving as key regional actors. Japan and India are regarded as secondary strategic players in the U.S.-China rivalry. Their diplomatic engagement helps to offset the weaker aspects of the IPS and contributes to sustaining the liberal international order (Yoshimatsu, 2024). In response to China's growing influence in Northeast Asia, Australia and Japan have expanded their defense cooperation with the U.S., encouraging Washington to bolster its military presence at northern bases to support their efforts to counterbalance Beijing (Needham, 2024).

In sum, U.S. containment policy in Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific pursued through both multilateral and bilateral frameworks, highlights the geopolitical complexities of balancing China's ambitions with U.S. strategic interests. The IPS, Quad, and AUKUS collectively serve as crucial mechanisms for maintaining American influence and promoting regional stability in the face of Chinese assertiveness. Initially, this containment policy proved effective. In 2024, Washington imposed restrictions on China's semiconductor industry, prohibiting U.S. suppliers from exporting products to Chinese firms without special licenses (Freifeld and Shepardson, 2024). The U.S. also banned its companies from providing advanced microchips and chip-manufacturing equipment to China, effectively isolating Beijing's technology sector

and limiting its capacity for innovation (Schuman, 2024). Moreover, allies such as Japan and the Netherlands adopted similar measures, further constraining China's access to critical semiconductor technologies. Although these restrictions created significant obstacles, they also spurred China to accelerate domestic innovation, resulting in the development of its own microchips, branded "Wukong" (Global Times, 2025). Therefore, the initial implementation of the chip ban contains China; however, China successfully finds a way to overcome the obstacles and respond accordingly.

5. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Northeast Asia Region

President Xi Jinping's administration places significant emphasis on the BRI as a tool for expanding China's influence in Northeast Asia. The BRI's primary objective is to stimulate economic growth in China and partner countries by enhancing trade, investment, and infrastructure development. This includes establishing transportation and logistics networks, such as roads, railways, ports, and energy projects to create smoother and more efficient trade routes (Zhao, 2020).

The BRI also provides Chinese companies with opportunities to invest in overseas infrastructure projects, generating returns and expanding China's corporate presence while reducing reliance on the domestic market. By developing both physical and digital infrastructure, the initiative aims to enhance regional connectivity, foster cooperation, and advance economic integration. Between 2013 and 2018, more than 80 countries and international organizations had joined the initiative. President Xi emphasized that the BRI was not intended to undermine geopolitical stability or promote exclusionary blocs (Xi, 2020). In practice, however, Taiwan has been excluded. Despite this, Taiwanese businesses remain engaged due to their close ties with the Chinese economy and their cooperation with multiple BRI participant states (Kastner, 2023). However, the BRI has been rejected by England, while Germany and France are still in consideration to join BRI (An and Borsoi-Kelly, 2018). England's rejection of the BRI caused by China's human rights violations in Hong Kong and Xinjiang. This has raised concerns in England because it doubted the realizability of strong economic ties through BRI if there are underlying tensions (Ashbee, 2024). Although Germany and France did not formally join China's BRI, they promoted a united European policy in 2019 to engage in cooperation with China (Zhang, 2020). In sum, despite some countries refuse to join China's BRI, the number of participating countries reached 149 in 2025, with 29 of them from Europe (Fudan University, 2025).

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has generated geopolitical instability, despite President Xi's claims

that it does not carry geopolitical motives (Xi, 2020). The BRI creates other countries' economic dependencies on China, particularly for those that take on large-scale loans for infrastructure projects (Wang and Yue, 2021). If these countries are unable to pay the loan, they may have to negotiate with China while China would use this opportunity to influence those countries politically. In addition, China's BRI targets Europe as the destination for its goods and continues to build infrastructure through Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East as part of its six corridors connecting China to Europe since 2013. China's BRI focuses on Europe, many of its partners are wary of trade imbalances and China's growing economic and political influence in the region (An and Borsoi-Kelly, 2018). Thus, the heavier the trade flow through these regions, the high possibility that the traditional sea routes through Northeast Asia will be reduced.

China's global ambitions through the BRI have raised concerns among other nations because they evoke historical memories of Chinese imperialism (Daly and Rojansky, 2018). They further emphasize that the cooperation of Eurasian neighbors is crucial to the initiative's success. Although these states welcome projects that contribute to national development, they strongly resist China's cultural practices, political ideas, and demographic expansion westward or northward. The BRI, therefore, represents an effort to expand China's geopolitical influence by strengthening ties with participating states and increasing its soft power through large-scale infrastructure investments. It envisions a new international economic order led by China, one that challenges the Western-dominated frameworks and promotes multilateralism and cooperative economic engagement (Zhao, 2020).

The BRI exemplifies China's strategic use of economic statecraft to reshape the international order and consolidate power. It functions as a mechanism to adjust the regional balance of power by enhancing China's economic influence while marginalizing potential rivals such as Taiwan. By excluding Taiwan, the BRI aligns with China's broader strategy to consolidate its economic authority and suppress alternative centers of power in Asia. This exclusion also ensures China's control over trade networks and strategic connectivity, further entrenching its dominance in the region.

In response, Taiwan has worked with the United States to develop measures to counter the BRI (Chang, 2020). Given that the BRI's large-scale infrastructure projects have raised concerns about China's growing influence and the potential for "debt traps" in developing countries, the U.S. has strengthened partnerships with Asia-Pacific democracies such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia. Through initiatives like the Blue Dot Network, these countries collectively finance infrastructure projects and promote high-

quality, transparent investment standards. Additionally, Taiwan has aligned itself with this approach by actively participating in Indo-Pacific infrastructure development and supporting the vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific."

6. Taiwan's Roles in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS)

The U.S. IPS positions Taiwan as a critical component, emphasizing defense enhancement, particularly in air superiority and sea control to counter China's military influence. Taiwan's planned acquisition of F-35 fighter jets from the U.S. is pivotal, as these aircraft are designed to neutralize China's air capabilities (Chang, 2024). By strengthening its military capacity, Taiwan seeks to deter potential Chinese aggression while securing the defensive perimeter essential for U.S. trade under the IPS, thereby playing a strategic role in containing China's regional influence. Moreover, U.S. arms sales to Taiwan signal Washington's commitment to preventing conflict, reinforcing Taiwan's deterrence posture while safeguarding broader geopolitical stability.

Taiwan's collaboration with the U.S. extends beyond defense to economic and technological sectors, notably in the semiconductor industry, where Taiwan's role is indispensable. In 2016, President Tsai Ing-wen introduced the New Southbound Policy (NSP) to enhance Taiwan's relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), as well as with Australia and New Zealand. The NSP rests on four pillars, which are promoting economic collaboration, fostering people-to-people exchanges, enhancing resource sharing, and forging regional linkages. For example, Taiwanese companies cooperated with partners in Japan and Indonesia to build Jakarta's first mass rapid transit line (Glaser et al., 2019).

To counter growing Chinese pressure, President Tsai employed diplomatic strategies that shifted Taiwan's focus toward deepening ties with the U.S., Japan, and Europe. During her administration, she strengthened these relationships as an alternative means of addressing Beijing's hostility while expanding Taiwan's diplomatic partnerships. For instance, the U.S. enacted the Taiwan Travel Act in 2018, encouraging visits between officials at all levels (Wees, 2018). Consequently, the U.S. also approved a \$330 million arms sale to Taiwan (Selby-Green, 2018).

Apart from that, Japan was also shifting its views on Taiwan security compare to the past. It shifted from careful navigation in the past to openly mention that Japan wanted to protect Taiwan as a democratic country. Although this statement had not put into binding document, it showed Japan's intentions to protect Taiwan if China were to attack it (Ashley, 2021). Similarly, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning China's misinterpretation of UN

Resolution 2758 and its military provocations in the Taiwan Strait. The resolution was overwhelmingly adopted with 432 votes in favor, 60 against, and 71 abstentions (Tien and Kao, 2024). This shows Europe's supports for Taiwan and its intention to enhance Taiwan's international visibility.

Furthermore, Taiwan has sought to integrate its NSP with the U.S. IPS, thereby diversifying its economic ties to reduce reliance on China while promoting regional stability (Hsiao and Yang, 2024). Both policies emphasize people-to-people connections, democratic values, and security cooperation, creating strategic synergy between Taipei and Washington. Economically, the U.S. remains Taiwan's second-largest trade partner, with bilateral trade reaching \$103.9 billion in 2019. The Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA), signed in 1994, further institutionalized commercial ties and reinforced U.S.-Taiwan relations (Baudouin, 2023).

Nevertheless, the U.S. appears to be shifting from strategic ambiguity to strategic clarity. Under Biden's administration, he stated that the U.S. would use military force to defend Taiwan if China were to attack (Brunnstrom and Hunnicutt, 2022). Biden's public remarks astonished his officials, who attempted to clarify that the U.S. policy remained unchanged (Crabtree, 2024). Strategic ambiguity persisted under President Trump, who refused to answer questions regarding the China-Taiwan issue (Hunnicutt, 2025). Therefore, the U.S. is inclined to maintain its strategic ambiguity to ensure its ability to influence the China-Taiwan issue.

7. The U.S. Cooperation with Taiwan

Although the U.S. remains committed to the One China Policy and the associated communiqués with China, it continues to intervene in the Cross-Strait issue by providing defensive arms to Taiwan (Cash and Schmollinger, 2024). The U.S. engages in the Cross-Strait issue from multiple dimensions, such as political, military, and economic, with the aim of containing China's rising power. Arms sales to Taiwan, primarily through policies such as the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), are intended to counter threats from China, safeguard Taiwan's security, and ensure regional stability. By enhancing Taiwan's defense capabilities, the U.S. seeks to maintain stability in the Taiwan Strait and minimize the risk of armed conflict (Kan, 2014).

Military support is one of the important means for the U.S. to contain China. The U.S. has strengthened Taiwan's defense capabilities and deterred China through arms sales, joint military exercises and military deployments in the Indo-Pacific region. The supplement of the arms to Taiwan remains until now. In 2015, Obama approves \$1.83 billion weapons to Taiwan (Cohen, 2015). In 2024, Biden had approved \$571 million military aids to Taiwan as support for its defense (Reuters, 2024). The U.S. also approved a sale

that included \$320 million worth of spare parts and support for F-16 fighters, as well as Active Electronically Scanned Array radars and associated equipment, aimed at strengthening Taiwan's air and coastal defense capabilities (Shakil, 2024). Concurrently, Taiwan has committed to purchasing \$7 to \$10 billion in U.S. weapons, further solidifying military cooperation (Martina, Lee, and Blanchard, 2025).

Economic and technological cooperation also constitute an integral component of the U.S.-Taiwan partnership, particularly in safeguarding the semiconductor supply chain. Through initiatives such as the Chip 4 Alliance, the U.S. not only strengthens Taiwan's role in the semiconductor industry but also leverages these collaborations to impose sanctions on China, restricting its access to U.S. technologies (Freifeld, 2024). Additionally, there is growing cooperation in infrastructure investment. The U.S.-Taiwan framework agreement promotes high quality infrastructure projects in emerging markets, aligning U.S. IPS with Taiwan's New Southbound Policy (NSP). Taiwan's contribution emphasizes clean and transparent infrastructure financing, which contrasts with the construction-heavy and finance-driven projects typically associated with China's BRI. Ongoing discussions between Washington and Taipei aim to encourage private sector engagement, strengthen regional debt markets, and support the development of favorable financial and legal environments for infrastructure and energy sectors in the Indo-Pacific and Latin America.

Such collaboration also helps boost Taiwan's diplomatic relations and international influence by promoting economic engagement, countering China's coercive tactics, and enhancing Taiwan's global standing. U.S.-Taiwan cooperation is explicitly designed to mitigate China's expansionist strategies and strengthen Taiwan's ties with its remaining diplomatic allies in regions such as the Indo-Pacific and Latin America. China's provision of infrastructure projects and financial incentives to Taiwan's allies has caused Taipei to suffer multiple diplomatic setbacks. In response, Washington seeks to counter China's influence in Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Latin America, with Taiwan playing a pivotal role through clean and transparent investment initiatives.

8. China's Responses to the Involvement of the United States in Taiwan

The implementation of the 2018 Taiwan Travel Act, which allows senior U.S. and Taiwanese officials to exchange visits, has raised the level of official exchanges between U.S. and Taiwan (Wees, 2018), leading to tougher Chinese countermeasures, such as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Pelosi's visit in 2022, where China immediately launches

military exercises around Taiwan (Blanchette, 2022). Pelosi's visit triggered a significant military reaction from China, which included extensive military drills surrounding Taiwan. This has shifted military dynamics to the forefront of U.S.-China relations, complicating diplomatic efforts in the immediate future. In the aftermath of the visit, both countries engaged in a struggle for narrative dominance regarding the events. China characterized Pelosi's visit as a provocative action that jeopardized its sovereignty, while the U.S. maintained that it was merely a routine congressional delegation. This clash of narratives underscores the growing distrust and rivalry between the two nations, ultimately affecting diplomatic initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region (Ibid).

In addition, the U.S. has dispatched advisory missions to assist Taiwan in military training, thereby enhancing the combat readiness of the Taiwanese armed forces (Youssef and Lubold, 2023). However, this has irritated China, which has responded by increasing military aircraft activity around Taiwan (Chang and Regan, 2024), conducting military exercises, and enhancing its missile deterrence capabilities. These developments have heightened tensions across the Taiwan Strait and carry the potential to escalate into armed conflict.

9. The Geopolitical Security Implications in the Northeast Asia

The U.S. IPS affects not only the territorial integrity of China but also the stability of the Northeast Asian and broader Asia-Pacific regions. China has repeatedly emphasized that it will not tolerate foreign intervention in its internal affairs, a stance reinforced by its military drills following U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

The Cross-Strait issue has a chain reaction. It is not only an internal affair of China but also a point of contention between U.S. and China. President Trump also refused to comment on questions regarding whether the United States would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion (Johnson, 2025). He further mentions U.S. and China have a good relationship. However, he then launches a trade war in March 2025 by imposing tariff against three U.S. biggest trading partners which are Canada, Mexico, and China (Boak et al., 2025). He imposed 25% on the imports from Mexican and Canadian, with a 10% levy on Canadian energy. He also doubles the tariff on China's products to 20%. China has taken a quick action which it increases tariffs up to 15% on different kind of U.S. agricultural exports (Ibid).

The relationship between Canada and the U.S. has deteriorated, leading to product boycotts against the U.S. (Otte, 2025). Consequently, the U.S. is still considering increasing tariffs on Taiwan's chipmakers

by 100% (Matsakis, 2025). However, the effectiveness of the tariff may be limited because the companies like Apple and Nvidia are the largest consumers of Taiwan (Gairola, 2025). Taiwanese firms will be forced to pass the costs to consumers, resulting in higher prices for electronic products (Hsieh et al., 2025). In April 2025, the U.S. took further action by imposing a 145% tariff on China's products (Huld, 2025) while this prompted China to retaliate with an 125% tariff on U.S. goods (Cash and Zhang, 2025).

As U.S.-China relations shift due to recent tariff measures, the security environment in the Northeast Asian region is increasingly affected. The U.S. is placing greater emphasis on Taiwan, as the enhancement of Taiwan's defense capabilities is not only significant for its own security, but also contributes to strengthening the U.S. strategic posture and reestablishing deterrence in the region (Younger, 2025). President Trump also prioritized deterring China's aggression in the Indo-Pacific, expressing confidence that China would not launch an attack on Taiwan during his administration (Ibid).

China mentioned Cross-Strait issue was its internal affairs while taking assertive actions towards Taiwan such as conducting Joint Sword military drills in 2024 (Blanchard and Torode, 2024) and Joint combat readiness patrols around Taiwan Strait since February 2025 (Chung, 2025). It raised concerns in Japan which prompted it to expand its military capabilities. For instance, Japan has strengthened its naval forces to prepare for potential threats in the region, particularly in the East China Sea around Taiwan. It also enhanced its domestic arms industry to manufacture advanced military equipment (Schöttli, 2024). Japan and the U.S. are strengthening military cooperation, with the U.S. military expanding its presence in Japan and promoting the revision of Japan's pacifist constitution to enhance the role of the Self-Defense Forces in regional security (France, 2024).

South Korea has also stepped-up security cooperation with the U.S. and Taiwan on semiconductors and military technology (Hu, 2017). On the other hand, North Korea may take advantage of U.S.-China's tensions to accelerate the development of nuclear weapons to bolster its own security. However, Russia's cooperation with China is deepening day by day (Fong and Maizland, 2024), and it may strengthen military coordination with China in Northeast Asia to counter U.S. IPS.

The U.S. IPS has led to the strengthening of military alliances in Quad and AUKUS which can help to counter China's influence. This strategic rivalry has placed ASEAN countries under pressure to choose sides. For example, country such as the Philippines chooses to strengthen cooperation with the U.S. (Nadarajah and Iskandar, 2024) while country like Cambodia chooses to lean towards China (Lim, 2024).

In addition, the intensification of regional arms races, such as increased discussions in the U.S. and South Korea on the development of nuclear weapons, has further heightened regional security instability (Mackenzie and Plett, 2023). This has compelled China to bolster its regional influence, for instance, through the BRI, to deepen economic cooperation with Southeast Asian countries and counter U.S. military and economic containment.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper examined the implications of United States (U.S.) engagement in Taiwan through containment policies such as the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) in the context of Northeast Asia region. Washington's containment strategy toward China has heightened geopolitical tensions in the region. Beijing has responded with a dual-track approach, which are soft power initiatives, such as economic cooperation and cultural diplomacy, alongside assertive military actions, such as drills around Taiwan. Taiwan remains a critical flashpoint in this struggle, as U.S. efforts to contain China provoke increasingly assertive responses from Beijing. The risk of conflict, particularly in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, continues to grow. The U.S. relies heavily on alliances such as the Quad and AUKUS to balance China's rise. Japan has aligned closely with U.S. policy, strengthening its military, and potentially revising its pacifist constitution. Australia, while economically tied to China, has reinforced its security partnership with Washington through the Quad. India, balancing its strategic autonomy and resistance to Chinese aggression, has engaged cautiously with the Quad's initiatives.

For the U.S., these alliances are essential to sustaining its hegemonic influence in the region. Yet the growing militarization of the Indo-Pacific through joint exercises, defense partnerships, and expanded deployments risks polarizing the region and creating a more volatile security environment. The triangular relationship between the U.S., China, and Taiwan remains at the heart of these tensions. As China asserts its influence and the U.S. seeks to contain it, the potential for military conflict persists as a major threat to international security.

Although U.S. policies are designed to strengthen Taiwan's defense against China, they may inadvertently place Taiwan in a vulnerable position. This recalls President Trump's handling of Ukraine, where he accused President Zelensky of heightening tensions and risking a global conflict, thereby weakening President Zelensky's leverage in negotiations. Currently, Trump has recalibrated the U.S. military aid to Ukraine, reducing support and diminishing Ukraine's ability to counter Russian aggression. Henry Kissinger's warning that "being America's enemy is dangerous, but being its friend is fatal" serves as a cautionary reminder for

Taiwan. Like Ukraine, Taiwan's reliance on U.S. military assistance could ultimately expose it to a similar fate should American interests shift.

11. Limitations and Further Study

This study comes with several limitations such as the rapid changing international environment, causing the current events become quickly outdated. However, future study can also use this study to incorporate with neo-realist concept to provide more comprehensive knowledge on the subject understudy.

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