

US aims to Trap China in a Perpetual Taiwan Conflict

The US is directly undermining China's efforts to resolve the Taiwan issue peacefully.

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Global Research, June 23, 2022

[InfoBrics](#) 23 July 2022

Region: [Asia](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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For decades, Taiwan, a place mere 160 km from China’s mainland, has intermittently been the point of contention between the Asian giant and the political West, particularly the United States, a country nearly 11,000 km away from the island. Since 1949, Taiwan has been self-governing and although it does have attributes of a sovereign state, the United Nations, nearly the whole world, along with the entire political West, including the US itself, recognize the island as an inalienable part of China. Beijing has been extremely tolerant over the decades, even offering numerous benefits to the island’s mostly Han Chinese population.

Taiwan has enjoyed a massive economic boom as a result of its [relationship](#) with mainland China, making it one of the wealthiest areas in the Asia-Pacific region. Beijing never insisted on completely (re)integrating the island into its system of governance, offering instead a status not dissimilar to the one Hong Kong (or Macao) has within the People’s Republic of China. The idea is to make the (re)integration as painless as possible, with no disruptions to the everyday lives of the residents of Taiwan. China certainly has the military capacity to (re)take the island by force, but for Beijing, this is the absolute last resort, one it’s seeking to avoid.

However, the ever belligerent US has other plans. Seeing the “[benefits](#)” of the Ukrainian crisis, Washington DC seems to be determined to push for yet another world-changing conflict, but this time, it would involve China. Such a conflict wouldn’t just have potentially severe security consequences, but would also ravage the global economy. However, US political elites don’t even want to consider an off-ramp solution which would defuse the volatile situation.

During the early stages of the (First) Cold War, the US, its allies and regional client states had a decidedly anti-Beijing stance. At the time, Beijing was unable to launch a large-scale operation to (re)take the island, as it had established peace in the country only in 1949,

over a decade after the Japanese invasion and later the civil war between the communist and nationalist forces. By the 1970s, there was a thaw in US-China relations, with the Nixon administration seeking to establish closer ties to counter the then unrivaled and ever-growing might of the USSR. The government in Beijing was finally recognized as the only legal one, effectively freezing the Taiwan issue, as the US itself officially started adhering to the “One China” policy ever since.

After the end of the (First) Cold War, the US changed its stance. Since the early 1990s, Taiwan became a point of contention once again. With a relatively short strategic pause during the early 2000s, as the US was busy pillaging and destroying the world elsewhere, in particular the Middle East, Taiwan became increasingly important during the late 2010s. US Navy warships (re)started their more frequent transit through the Taiwan Strait, sailing from the East to the South China Sea several times a year, averaging at least one trip per month as of 2020. So far, in 2022, it has conducted at least five transits, according to data [compiled](#) by Bloomberg. The US insists this is in line with international law.

“The Taiwan Strait is an international waterway where freedom of navigation and overflight are guaranteed under international law,” US State Department spokesman Ned Price said in an e-mail. “The United States will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows, and that includes transiting through the Taiwan Strait.”

While it is true that sailing through the Taiwan Strait technically doesn’t violate international law, it does create unnecessary tensions, as the waterway isn’t of crucial strategic importance to the US, but it certainly is to China. In addition to US Navy incursions in China’s sphere of influence, both in the East and the South China Sea, Washington DC is also actively [arming](#) the government in Taipei. This presents a direct and clear danger to Chinese troops just across the Strait. And while the People’s Liberation Army vastly outmatches the island’s forces, US arms [deliveries](#) to Taipei are directly undermining China’s efforts to resolve the Taiwan issue peacefully.

The US strategic goal is to limit and undermine China’s power and influence in the region. With Taiwan in the firm grip of the political West, particularly the US, China’s power projection remains largely confined to coastal areas, while Washington DC gets to keep its so far unmatched control over most of the Asia-Pacific region. China, which has been building one of the largest and most powerful navies in the world, is becoming more assertive and determined to push the belligerent power in decline away from its shores.

Seeing what’s going on around the world, such as in Ukraine in recent years, but especially in the last 4 months, China is fully aware of the malignant US influence, which is now effectively sacrificing one client state after another to keep its geopolitical near-peer rivals busy, while trying to resolve numerous internal issues and prevent, or at least slow down its unrelenting [decline](#).

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