



Open Access Journal Available Online

Safeguarding Taiwan's Sovereignty and Advancing Economic Relations with China: A Japanese Perspective

Adedotun Jamiu Saka

Department of Politics and Governance,
Kwara State University, Malete, Kwara State, Nigeria

Jasadot@gmail.com

and

Taofeek Opeyemi Olaiya

Department of Strategy and International Security,
University of Hull, Kingston upon Hull, England

Olaiyataofeek70@gmail.com

Accepted: 23.07.24

Date Accepted: 22.11.24

Abstract: The recent Taiwan and China conflict can be traced back to 1949 after the end of the civil war between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC); the PRC won the civil war, and they took over the Mainland China and the ROC retreated to Taiwan and maintain the control of Taiwan till date. The PRC wants a unified China, and the ROC wants an independent Taiwan, which has increased tension in Asia. Japan has official relations with the PRC and unofficial relations with the ROC. PRC is the biggest Japanese trade partner, and a full-blown PRC and ROC conflict will affect the bilateral trade between the PRC and Japan; hence, this paper focuses on how Japan can prevent the Chinese takeover of Taiwan and increase its economic ties with China. The paper adopted a qualitative research method; secondary data and thematic analysis were used to analyze the study's objectives. The study proposed policy recommendations on how Japan can prevent the PRC from taking over ROC and how Japan can improve economic ties with the PRC amid the conflict. Some of the proposed recommendations of the study are that Japan should broker a peace and conflict resolution between China and

261

Taiwan, Japan should review Article 9 of her constitution, a tripartite ministry of trade that involves China, Taiwan, and Japan should be proposed, and a prior agreement on the status and management of each waterway or straits for economic purpose.

Keywords: Conflicts, Japan, China, Taiwan, Economic Relations, Policy Recommendation

Introduction

Many events have taken place in the past that have shaped the international arena, leading to various alliances, counter-alliance, peace-building, conflicts, policies, international laws, and treaties; the conflicts between Taiwan and China are not far from this discourse. Taiwan's history, according to historical records, can be broadly divided into five periods: the Dutch (1624–1662), the Kingdom of Tungning (1661–1683), the Qing Dynasty (1683–1895), the Japanese (1895–1945), and the Republic of China (from 1945 till now) (Lee, 2014). Taiwan was partially colonized and controlled by the Dutch between 1624–1662. The Qing Dynasty ruled most parts of Taiwan as a prefecture from

1683 to 1895 (Life of Taiwan, 2023). Hsieh (2009) further reveals that Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895 as a result of the treaty of Shimonoseki that was put in place to ensure peace after the first Sino-Japanese war while the Qing Dynasty maintained control of Mainland China between 1911 and 1912.

The Empire of Japan had authority over Taiwan until it was defeated and surrendered to the Allied powers, which ended 50 years of the Japanese Empire's control of Taiwan in 1945 (Hsieh, 2009). In 1949, the communist party won the civil war and took over the control of Mainland China. The Republic of China retreated to Taiwan and maintained control of the Island. At the same time, the Communist Party renamed mainland

China to the People's Republic of China. After the civil war, Mainland China was controlled by the People's Republic of China (PRC), and Taiwan was under the Republic of China's (ROC) authority.

The Taiwan and the People's Republic of China crisis confused international communities and some countries' diplomatic missions and foreign policies. Some countries recognize the PRC as the legitimate government with which they interact internationally. In contrast, some countries do not clearly spell out their foreign policy relations with the PRC and ROC to avoid issues with either.

The crisis has tended to take a new turn over the years; the PRC maintains that there is one China, and the ROC maintains that they intend to gain independence and have been rallying support from other countries to ensure that they are given autonomy and also a seat at the United Nations. On the other hand, the PRC proposes a One-China and Two-System Policy where the PRC will maintain its current system of government, economic system, administrative system, and foreign relations; at the same time, the ROC will also retain its own political, economic,

and administrative system. However, the ROC has rejected the One-China and Two-System Policy as they maintain they want independence.

The interest of Japan in the conflicts can be dated back to when Japan lost control of Taiwan in 1945, and this further positioned Japan as a significant player in the conflicts in recent times not because of their political and economic status in the Asia Region but because of their history with both the present-day PRC and ROC. Moreover, Japan is one of the few countries that has diplomatic relations with the PRC and non-diplomatic ties with Taiwan, and Japan's strategic interest is centered around playing a pivotal role in balancing power dynamics and reshaping relations among Asian states, especially in Southeast Asia, to counter China's regional influence (Omar, 2023).

How does Japan come in in all of this

Japan has diplomatic relations with the PRC and non-diplomatic ties with Taiwan, which is a testament that both countries are of interest to Japan,

considering that Taiwan was once under the authority of Japan. The three actors are also from the same continent. Military action, peaceful resolution through the United Nations, diplomatic dialogue, and other non-kinetics approaches such as alliance, propaganda, diplomatic efforts, mutual trade agreements, and different strategies should be considered to resolve this crisis. However, some of the options highlighted above, such as military actions and peaceful resolution through the U.N., might prove abortive because Japan is hindered by Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, as it stops Japan from mobilizing its military for conflict outside the region of Japan. The second plan, the peaceful resolution through the U.N., will also be challenging to achieve because a party to the conflict, the PRC, will vote against it. Their status as permanent members of the Security Council of the U.N. will make it nearly impossible to achieve a resolution without the vote of China. Regardless of Japan's approach to prevent or avert the China-Taiwan crisis, Japan must ensure that its economic relationship with China and Taiwan does not deteriorate to hinder Japan's economic advancement.

Hence, further strategies will be discussed on how Japan can best prevent China from taking over Taiwan and enhance economic ties with China.

Having explained the background of the China and Taiwan conflicts, this study intends to develop a policy recommendation for Japan as a country to prevent the takeover of Taiwan by China and also increase economic ties with China.

Methodology

This paper relies solely on the qualitative research method. Secondary data will be used to analyze the objectives of the paper. The secondary data will be collected from journals, government publications, websites, newspapers, textbooks, and other relevant sources. The qualitative data was collected from academic sources such as Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Research Gate, Academia, Government Publications and Websites, International Organization Publications and Websites, and other relevant sources. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis to

ensure that the theme of the study synchronizes with the collected and available data to give room for an in-depth exploration of the research objectives.

Objectives of the study

This study seeks to make policy recommendations to

1. Identify strategies for Japan to deter the People's Republic of China (PRC) from annexing Taiwan
2. Explore strategies for Japan to enhance economic relations with China amidst tensions involving Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC)

What is Conflict

Discussing human existence, world politics, or past events will be rare without an iota of conflict. Many disputes, ranging from communal

conflicts to tribal or ethnic conflicts, wars, and other non-kinetic conflicts like the Cold War and cyber warfare, are due to the interests of humans, society, country, and even the world. When these interests clash, there is a tendency for conflicts because every party involved will protect their interests.

Cooper (2003) defines conflicts as the collision of two or more interests, leading to mild disagreements that can further lead to violent altercations such as war. Conflicting ideas, sentiments, attitudes, or feelings can lead to some of the most severe collisions. One of the major causes of the Taiwan and China conflict is the contradicting ideas of the two parties, which involve the economic system, political system, and even leadership ideology; hence, conflicts are states or circumstances of discord, disharmony, and opposition within, between, and among individuals, groups, and nations (Marsella, 2011). The discord is further centered around the citizens, political parties, and leaders of both China and Taiwan who believe their interests, beliefs, and ideology are eroded, hence, the conflicts.

Doss et al. (2023) see conflict as when opposing ideas, attitudes, or behaviors upset the status quo. Although there has been a status quo between Taiwan and China, where the PRC has maintained control of the Mainland while the ROC has maintained control of the Island, the status quo is currently being challenged. Consequently, the issue became a conflict because of the interests and attitudes of the actors such as Taiwan focusing on becoming an independent state, Taiwan increasing her military hardware and diplomatic relations, China conducting military action at the Taiwan straits, China proposing the one country two system policies and so on, has challenged the status quo of the two actors involved.

Nicholson (1992) posits that a conflict arises when conscious entities interact or may not be rational. He further explained that the people involved's needs, desires, or responsibilities define a conflict. The needs, desires, or responsibilities of the PRC are territorial expansion, excess to the resources of the opposing actor, the show of power, economic benefits, and improvement of her world prestige. On the other hand,

the ROC seeks to become independent and expand its economic and diplomatic ties with nations of the world.

Factors contributing to tensions between Taiwan and China

A famous saying says, 'There is no smoke without a fire.' The Taiwan and China conflict does not arise from the blue, but it arises as a result of some factors, which are;

1. Historical events
2. Chinese economic expansion
3. Taiwan's resistance to the One China Policy
4. Deteriorating Cross-Strait Relations

1. Historical Events

Historical events between Taiwan and China reveal that the two states were once under the same control and administration. One of the historical events that proved this was the Qing Dynasty, which ruled China and Taiwan for more than a century, and the

Republic of China ruled over Taiwan and China before the Civil War. These historical events have portrayed Taiwan and China as similar because they were both under the same leadership and authority before the civil war and the collapse of the Qing Dynasty. Based on its historical events, the PRC sees Taiwan as a rebel province and promises to eventually unify Taiwan with the Mainland (Maizland, 2023).

After the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan ruled Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, during which Taiwan saw significant industrialization and infrastructural development (Barclay, 2020); Japan's interest in the Taiwan-China conflicts can be traced to this colonial past and historical event.

2. Chinese Economic Expansion

The GDP of Taiwan is \$751.93 Billion, with a projected annual growth of 0.8%, which is about \$6 billion yearly growth in GDP (IMF, 2023c) which boasts a strong economy with a strong emphasis on the manufacturing of electronics, machinery, petrochemicals, and products related to information and

communications technology (Heritage Foundation, 2023).

China also sees the Taiwan Strait as an economic tool that can be used to improve its economic status and power internationally because the Taiwan Strait serves as a strategic passage for the movement of any ship heading to the essential ports in Northeast Asia, which is also beneficial to Japan and her trade partners. Although China is among the biggest economies in the world and seeks to become more prominent, they see the need to unify Taiwan with Mainland China to enhance China's economic growth and regional power.

3. Taiwan's Resistance to One China Policy

One reason for the escalation of the Taiwan and China conflicts is Taiwan's refusal to consider the China two-system policy, under which Taiwan would be unified with Mainland China and retain its political and economic system. Taiwan's constant refusal to consider this policy is one of the reasons China said it might consider force in its quest to unify Taiwan and Mainland China (Maizland, 2023).

While officially maintaining a One China policy, Japan has gradually moved towards a harder hedge against China since the 1990s (Hornung, 2014; Zakowski, 2022). This shift is driven by concerns over China's military buildup, deteriorating Sino-Japanese relations, and the decline of pro-Beijing factions in Japanese politics. Japan's stance on the One China policy has evolved due to changing regional dynamics and domestic factors (Zakowski, 2022).

4. Deteriorating Cross-Strait Relations

The relationship between Taiwan and China since the civil war has been highly politicized and tense. Hence, cross-strait relationships are used to express the relationship between China and Taiwan. Cross-strait relations refer to the intersecting political, economic, cultural, and social relationships between Taiwan and Mainland China, and institutional organizations, which are the Mainland Affairs Council in Taiwan and the Taiwan Affairs Office in the People's Republic of China, are established for healthy relations. (Harrison, 2012).

The Cross-Strait ties allow Taiwan's economy to be integrated with the Mainland through investment, trade, and tourism in both directions; more so, since the early 1990s, Taiwan has allowed its citizens to travel to the Mainland for business and tourism. From 2008 onward, the number of mainland visitors to Taiwan increased from less than 100,000 in 2008 to over two million in 2011, which shows that the cross-strait relations improved considerably under Ma Ying-jeou's presidency between May 2008 to May 2016 but has deteriorated since Tsai Ing-wen came to power since 2016 (Glaser, 2022; Harrison, 2012) due to her stance that Taiwan will seek to become an independence state rather than be part of One China which is a core policy of her political party, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

Recent events, such as the joint U.S.-Japan statement on Taiwan in 2021, show Japan is becoming more concerned about cross-strait stability and is prepared to intensify contingency planning for peace and conflict resolution (Liff, 2022).

The Impact and Future Implications of Taiwan-China Conflict on Japan

The Taiwan-China conflict affects not just the major players but also their trade partners, border countries, and even most of the world because of its domino or snowball effects. The following are the effects or potential effects of the Taiwan-China conflicts on Japan.

1. Economic Implication
2. Humanitarian crisis and socio-political unrest in the Asia Region
3. Uncertain or deteriorating diplomatic relations

1. Economic Implication

During conflicts, trade will likely be restricted between these two actors, hindering the bilateral trade between Japan and China and Japan and Taiwan. The Taiwan Strait is also a significant factor in both the export and import of other continents, and in the course of a full-blown war, ship movement will be restricted in the Taiwan Strait. Even before accounting for global reactions or second-order effects, a blockade of the

Taiwan Strait would cause disruptions to an estimated US\$2 trillion worth of economic activity (Vest et al., 2022).

Japan shares borders with the PRC and ROC, and these two are the principal actors of the conflict. Japan also has economic agreements (imports and exports) with the two actors involved in the conflicts. It is worth noting that Japan's export value to China in 2021 stood at \$ 206.2 billion. The import from China was \$165.9billion, which brought the bilateral trade between China and Japan to \$372.1billion (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023), while in 2022, Japan and Taiwan's bilateral trade amounted to US\$88.2 billion, with Japan exporting US\$54.6 billion to Taiwan and Taiwan exporting US\$33.6 billion to Japan. Japan is Taiwan's third-largest trading partner, while Taiwan is Japan's fourth-largest (International Trade Administration, MOEA, 2023); in a situation where there is a full-blown conflict between Taiwan and China, Japan is likely to lose a bilateral trade value of about US\$406.3 billion with Taiwan and China, which will significantly affect Japan GDP and might lead to a trade deficit for Japan.

Alas, the economic activities of the Asia region and, by extension, the world will be affected. Blaine Luetkemeyer (2024) posits that the long-term effects would be much greater as the China-Taiwan would cost about \$10 trillion and reduce global GDP by 10%, nearly twice as much as what was seen in the wake of the global financial crisis and the Covid pandemic. (Luetkemeyer, 2024).

2. Humanitarian crisis and socio-political unrest in the Asia Region

An attack on Taiwan by China is likely to lead to a humanitarian crisis in both countries as citizens who are affected or not interested in the conflicts might seek to move to another country to avoid the conflict's effect. Most of those leaving the conflict zone are likely to move to Japan because of its proximity to the two nations involved in the conflicts. If this happens, Japan's budgetary allocation and social amenities will also be stretched due to the inflow of refugees from the conflict zone. The Russia-Ukraine war can be used to project what will happen during a China-Taiwan Conflict. A third of Ukrainians have

been forced to flee their homes; about 3.7 million are currently displaced within the country, while about 5 million are displaced as refugees abroad (UNHCR, 2024).

More so, there will be unrest in the Asia region because of the conflicts, as most of the Asian countries will experience an influx of refuge from the affected countries, and this might also lead to alliance and counter-alliance to prepare for the uncertainty that might occur during or after the war. Existing policies might be reviewed, and new policies might be formulated or implemented to come to terms with the reality of the conflicts. This change might cause socio-political unrest because the politicians or the citizens might resent some of the policies.

3. Uncertain or deteriorating diplomatic relations

Japan has official diplomatic ties with China and unofficial relations with Taiwan. The USA, also interested in the conflict, has about 85 military facilities in Japan (U.S. Forces Japan, 2023). If the conflict becomes full-blown, then Japan will be left to choose between

diplomatic relations between its allies and other actors of the conflict. One thing is sure: regardless of the actors Japan decides to back, there will be an effect on her diplomatic relations with the opposite actors, and it might be difficult for Japan to stay extremely neutral when the conflict becomes full-blown.

Theoretical Framework

The conflict between Taiwan and China is one of conflicting interests and desires, which can spread to other countries with an interest in the two states or whose interests will be eroded when the conflict becomes tense. Hence, the conflict theory will be adopted for this paper to better explain the context and perspective of the conflict. Conflict theory is a theory that Karl Marx developed. Other scholars who helped develop conflict theory include Georg Simmel, John Stuart Mills, Adam Smith, Jean Bodin, and Thomas Robert Malthus (Turner, 1975). They opined that society is formed based on conflicts, and factors

such as historical events, social class, and balance of power are elements of conflicts used to create power structure, superiority, and economic development in society and among the comity of societies. Conflict theory holds that power dynamics define society and highlight the influence of class conflict, resource competition, and social inequality in forming the social order (Main, 2023). According to conflict theory, competition for scarce resources such as wealth, status, and power drives social group interactions, highlighting the role of power dynamics, economic interests, and social inequalities in shaping societal conflicts (Simon, 2016).

Cross-Strait conflicts result from internal political rivalry and power shifts in Taiwan and China (Wu & Chen, 2020). The struggle between Taiwan and China can be understood as a struggle over political sovereignty and national identity influenced by internal and external political rivalry. China sees Taiwan as a part of its territory, while Taiwan sees itself as a separate entity with its own government and democratic values. This creates a power struggle where each side seeks to assert its

legitimacy. The role of political dynamics in these conflicts is also influenced by external political rivalry and alliance, as the changes in U.S.-China strategic competition, power struggles, and U.S.-Taiwan relations all impact the conflict (Stošić, 2023).

The Taiwan-China Conflict can be related to a kind of power dynamics by China to take over the resources of Taiwan for her economic advancement. Taiwan plays a major part in international supply chains, particularly in manufacturing semiconductors and technology. One way to understand China's ambition to dominate Taiwan is as a component of a larger economic plan to strengthen its standing in international trade. China is the biggest economy with the military and technological strength to take over some Asian nations. There is a conflict between the dominant class and the subordinate classes because individuals in positions of power use their influence to maintain their advantages. At the same time, those with fewer resources aim for greater access to societal benefits (Main, 2023). The PRC can be seen as the dominant class trying to dominate

Taiwan, and this is made possible because of the influence China commands in terms of economic development, technology, and international politics. Taiwan, on the other hand, is ensuring that its sovereignty is not threatened.

Japan, a country in the conflict region, is also interested in disputes due to its geographical location and the diplomatic and bilateral ties that Japan has with Taiwan and China. Japan is also aware that a defeat of Taiwan by China is an expansion of China that will hinder Japan and its allies' interest in the Asian region. Hence, Japan and its allies, like the USA, are dragged into the conflict to check China's excesses and protect their regional interests. Hayes (2023) echoed that dominance and power rather than consensus and compliance maintain social order in a conflict, which is one of the reasons China has not attacked Taiwan because of the power that is also possessed by the Taiwan allies who, for some obvious reasons, want peace in the region.

Conflict theory explains the interactions between societies in turbulent and changing times, such as during

revolutions, strikes, or regular debates (Medler et al., 2008). Conflict theories see the Taiwan-China conflict as a conflict fueled by power, economic expansion, territorial expansion, etc.

Country Information

China

China is a country located in Eastern Asia. It is the second-largest economy in the world, with a GDP of \$17.7 trillion and a population of about 1.4 billion (IMF, 2023a). China covers almost one-quarter of Asia's landmass, or 9.6 million square kilometers (3.7 million square miles), making it nearly as big as Europe (Ebrey, 2023). The PRC is one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

China borders Russia, Mongolia, North Korea, and Afghanistan to the north; Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan border China on the west; India, Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, Laos, Vietnam, and Macau border China on the south. According to

Statista (2023), China has about 2 million active soldiers, and the official military budget as of 2023 was declared to be 1.55 trillion yuan, or roughly \$218 billion, making it the second largest in the world after the U.S. (Jash, 2023).

China has a cross-strait relationship with Taiwan, which spans tourism, socio-cultural, and economic relations. It also serves as a communication link between China and Taiwan and enhances the cross-strait relationship, institutional organizations, which are the Mainland Affairs Council in Taiwan and the Taiwan Affairs Office in the People's Republic of China, are established for cross-strait relations, but the relationship has since deteriorated since President Tsai Ing-wen was elected in 2016 as she continues to echo the pro-independence stance of her political party (DPP). China is officially known as the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Taiwan

Taiwan is located in the eastern part of Asia and is officially known as the Republic of China (ROC); it is bordered by the Philippines to the south, Japan to the Northeast, and the People's Republic

of China (PRC) to the northwest. Taiwan has a GDP of about \$ 751.93 billion and a population of 23.25 million (IMF, 2023c). Taiwan has a coastline of 1,566.3 km (973.3 mi) and a total land area of 36,197 km² (13,976 sq mi) (The World Factbook, 2021).

According to data from the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the Military Balance 2022 report states that Taiwan has 169,000 active military personnel on the Island and is currently supported by about 1.66 million reservists (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2023). To improve its air and naval combat systems, Taiwan's 2023 national defense budget had a nearly 15% increase from its 2022 military budget; this brings Taiwan's military budget for 2023 to roughly 500 billion Taiwanese dollars (\$19 billion) (De Guzman, 2023)

Taiwan ranked top in terms of total available reserve military workforce with approximately 1.5 million reserve personnel as of April 2023, which is roughly 6.4% of the total population; it also received a PowerIndex score of 0.3639 and performed well in terms of air power, possessing 285 fighter aircraft

and 91 attack helicopters, which together rank as the eighth largest fleets of their kind in the world (Baker & Spirlet, 2023).

Taiwan's diplomatic relations can be divided into three. The first one is official relations and countries in this category are just 13 in number, and they are Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Guatemala, Eswatini, Vatican City, Marshall Islands, Palau, Nauru, Paraguay, Saint Lucia, Tuvalu, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (MoFA Taiwan, 2023a). The second one is unofficial relations, whereby Taiwan does not have official diplomatic relations with a country. Still, they have a cultural and socioeconomic relationship with the country. Instead of an embassy, an office that monitors the affairs of Taiwan will be established in the country they have unofficial relations with. Taiwan has unofficial relations with four African Countries, one Supranational Union, which is the European Union; twenty Asia Countries and two territories in Asia; twenty European Countries, three North American Countries; six South American Countries; and four Countries and territories in the Oceania Region

(MoFA Taiwan, 2023b). The third type of relation is the non-representation relation, which is the absence of relations between Taiwan and other countries. They do not recognize Taiwan as an independent state or territory, so they do not seem to establish any diplomatic ties with them. Taiwan has Non-representation relations with Fifty African Countries, Twenty-Five Asian Countries, Twenty-One European Countries, and Thirteen North American Countries. Eight Oceania Countries and Five South American Countries.

Japan

Japan is an Asian country located on the East Asian Island, and China, North and South Korea, Taiwan, Russia, the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk, and the East China Sea surround it. It is situated in the Pacific Ocean. Japan has a GDP of \$4.23 trillion and is the world's third-largest economy, with a population of about 124.62 million (IMF, 2023b). Japan is currently part of the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member between 2023-2024.

According to GlobalFirepower (2023), Japan's Military ranks 8 out of the 145

countries in the Global Fire Power (GFP) Index. Japan has about 240,000 active personnel, including 150,000 Japan Ground Self-defense Force, 51,000 Imperial Japanese Navy, and 50,000 Japan Air-defence Force, and Japan also has an estimated 55,000 Reserved Personnel (GlobalFirepower, 2023). The Defence Ministry of Japan requested a record 7.7 trillion yen (\$52.67 billion) in spending for the 2024 fiscal year; this represents an increase of nearly a trillion yen over the 6.8 trillion yen budget from the previous year or roughly 13%. Should the budget be approved, spending will increase by approximately a trillion yen for an unprecedented two years (Murakami, 2023); this is a testament that Japan is also bracing for a likely full-blown conflict.

Japan, the primary focus of this paper, has an unofficial relationship with Taiwan, which has contributed to a bilateral trade of about US\$88.2 billion in 2022, and an official diplomatic relationship with China, which has contributed to the bilateral trade between China and Japan to the tune of \$372.1 billion in 2022 which makes China

the largest trading partner of Japan and most significant investment destination for Japanese companies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2023).

Japan is also allied with the USA and is a stakeholder in the conflicts because of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) enacted in 1979 by the United States Congress. The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) aims to arm Taiwan with defensive weapons and preserve the U.S.'s ability to thwart any use of force or other forms of coercion that could endanger Taiwanese security or the country's social or economic structure (Green & Glaser, 2022). So, an attack on Taiwan by China will attract the interest of the USA, and considering that they have a substantial amount of military facilities in Japan, Japan will be used as an attack base by the USA in the case of USA participation in the conflict. Moreover, Japan might be attacked by China due to the above-stated factors.

Along with Australia, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand, Japan is one of NATO's partners in the Indo-Pacific region; practical cooperation is being developed between NATO and Japan in several areas, such as cyber defense,

maritime security, non-proliferation, science and technology, human security, and Women, Peace, and Security (NATO, 2023).

What strategies can Japan adopt to deter the People's Republic of China (PRC) from annexing Taiwan?

1. Japan should broker a peace and conflict resolution between China and Taiwan:

Peace and conflict resolution do not necessarily mean each actor in the conflict will get their exact demand, but they can find common ground through which the dispute can be resolved without arms. As a tool for fostering peace, conflict resolution can be extremely important for averting confrontations and preserving the status quo (Wani, 2011).

Japan should also urge China to open official channels of communication and negotiation across the Taiwan Strait again to reduce the possibility of misinterpretation and error and offer

opportunities to resolve issues and narrow differences.

2. Alliance:

Considering China's military capability, it would be fair to say that Japan will have a difficult day containing China in a full-blown conflict. An alliance should be a viable option for Japan as this alliance will subdue China to have a rethink on attacking Taiwan. Japan should consider establishing a cyber, military, and cooperative partnership within the Asia Region, and it should also consider strengthening its cooperative alliance with NATO. The coalition aims to let China see that the conflict will not be easy, which might allow them to reconsider their stance.

A summit or conference of viable Asian Countries should be organized so that they can all have a collective and majority opinion on the Taiwan and China conflict. This would give Japan a collective privilege to resolve and prevent the conflict from escalating. It has been discovered that defensive alliances, in particular, discourage the start of disputes and reduce the

likelihood of international conflict (Johnson & Leeds, 2010).

3. Japan should improve her military hardware and personnel numbers:

Inequality among nations is one of the causes of conflict, as discussed in the conflict theory. To bridge the inequality gap in the military capability of China and Japan, Japan should improve its military capability by investing more in military hardware and research and increasing the number of its military personnel.

China is likely to accept a diplomatic resolution offered by a strong nation within her region rather than a resolution from a nation that is not close to her regarding military capability. Enhancing military equipment may help to end hostilities (Shim, 2022).

4. Japan should consider Ethical Propaganda:

Propaganda can be beneficial in settling disputes between Taiwan and China and can be very effective in discouraging China from invading Taiwan (Murphy & White, 2007). Propaganda is a positive conflict tool that can be used to change

the narrative of a scenario in order to achieve a predetermined goal. Ethical propaganda can be targeted towards the citizens of China so that they can see the prospective damage the conflicts will have on the Chinese citizens if the PRC does not follow diplomatic means in resolving the conflicts. Ethical propaganda can also be geared toward seeking public support among her citizens and international support during the conflict.

China, in this case, needed the full support of its citizens to execute the projected invasion of Taiwan. Hence, well-executed covert propaganda by Japan can make the Chinese protest or show disapproval against the invasion of Taiwan, which can, in turn, influence the Chinese government to rethink the Taiwan-China conflict.

An alternative Strategy Japan should consider

1. Article 9 of Japan's constitution should be revisited:

One of the factors hindering Japan in the China-Taiwan conflict is Article 9 of the Japanese constitution, which states that

'Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling the international dispute. To accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.'

The Article prohibits the Japanese military from settling an international dispute with force or military action except in self-defense. If the law is not amended, Japan's role in the Taiwan-China conflict will be left open for further debate.

The argument over changing Japan's Article 9, which forbids war, is intricate and nuanced. Hence, Martin (2012) makes the case for changes that would strengthen judicial review, create civilian authority over military personnel, and define the parameters of force limitations.

Article 9 does not portray Japan as a force of interest in the conflict because Article 9 deterred Japan's military from using force to settle international disputes. Considering that Japan is one of the region's most sophisticated nations but is limited from acting in the case of global conflicts, it is seen as an edge for China to invade Taiwan. Hence, Japan should consider reviewing Article 9 of her constitution as this will send a chill down the spine of China and show that Japan's stance on the conflicts should be resolved diplomatically is not a weakness because, in the case of force, Japan's military can be deployed.

One of the best ways to ensure peace is to prepare for war; hence, a review of Article 9 to allow Japan's use of military force to resolve international crises can make China consider her stance on the conflict and instead seek diplomatic means as against disputes.

Ways Japan can Boost Economic Ties with China amidst the Taiwan and PRC Conflict

1. A tripartite ministry of trade that involves China, Taiwan, and Japan should be proposed:

A tripartite ministry of trade between China, Taiwan, and Japan should be established, and each should have a permanent secretariat of the ministry in their territory. This will ensure that trade between the three countries is well coordinated, enhance their relationship, and reduce tension. Given the inverse relationship between trade and conflict, creating a Ministry of Trade between two or more states engaged in conflict may facilitate economic development (Hegre, 2000).

2. Japan should endeavor to propose a joint host of big sports tournaments with China:

Sport is one of the most unifying factors and a promoter of peace in the world. Sport is now acknowledged as a tool for promoting economic growth, resolving conflicts, and promoting peace (Cárdenas, 2012). Sporting events like the Olympics, World Cup, and regional sporting tournaments should be considered. Japan should consider co-hosting such events with China to

increase economic ties with China and bring about peace in the region. Sports can play a significant role in boosting international trade and advancing global economic integration. Participating in international sports can improve bilateral trade, with soccer matches as a potential catalyst (Hatzigeorgiou, 2016).

3. Status Quo should be maintained between China and Japan:

One way Japan can improve its economic ties is to ensure that the tension between China and Taiwan does not escalate or become a full-blown conflict. Hence, if Japan cannot resolve the conflicts between the two actors, It should ensure that the tension does not escalate, as this will maintain the current economic ties with China. Dumas (2011) proposed that although economic relations can effectively preserve peace, they must be handled carefully to prevent unforeseen consequences.

4. A trade policy framework should be established between China and Japan:

The framework should be legally bound and framed so that certain aspects of the economy will be exempted from the

cause of conflicts so that specific sectors of the economy will continue to enjoy bilateral trade even if there is a full-blown conflict between China and Taiwan. Despite European Union sanctions on Russia due to the Ukraine invasion, the European Union still patronizes Russia in the area of liquefied natural gas, Russian nuclear products, diamonds, and other Russian products (Al Jazeera, 2023). A cogent framework for trade policy is essential for developed nations to compete and gain from one another (Duval et al., 2007). Such a framework can increase trade and income convergence between countries, primarily through increased exports, even amid uncertainty.

5. A prior agreement on the status and management of each waterway or straits for economic purposes:

Many straits connecting Japan, China, and Taiwan carry much economic significance not just in the Asian region but worldwide. A prior agreement on the status or activities that should be carried out on the straits during conflicts between China and Taiwan should be reached so that some of the straits will be neutral and reserved for economic

purposes in the cause of full-blown conflicts.

The East China Sea is a Chinese Sea connected with the Tsushima Strait, Taiwan Strait, and Miyako Strait. They are all strategic to the economy of Japan and China, so a prior agreement on the status of the strait during a full-blown crisis will ensure transparency and accountability in the economy. Economic ties can be strengthened during wartime by a deal on the management of the maritime domain, primarily through mechanisms like Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Nemeth et al., 2014).

Conclusion

It will be easier to discuss international relations, politics, world history, and development with an iota of conflict in

such a discussion. In most cases, this conflict results from states' interests, personalities of leaders, ideology, inequality, power, and others.

The study identifies various strategies on how Japan can deter the People's Republic of China (PRC) from annexing Taiwan and also explores strategies on how Japan can enhance economic relations with China amidst tensions involving Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Some of the strategies proposed by the study on how Japan can deter the People's Republic of China (PRC) from annexing Taiwan are peace and conflict resolution, alliance, armament, and review of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution. Although the review of the Article 9 might sound overly ambitious if reviewed, coupled with an increase in military hardware, personnel, and budget, it will signal to the relevant stakeholders that Japan is ready to partake in regional military operations in the region. This strategy, if adopted, will further boost the position of Japan as a force to reckon with in the affairs of the Asian region, and it will further unite Japan's allies and probably gain more allies and support against the

Taiwan invasion. More so, It would be unfair to say that a complete military action can resolve the conflicts as everyone who engages in military actions will record loss and might find it hard to build burnt bridges after the military actions. Moreover, military actions do not guarantee victory. Also, China is the biggest trade partner of Japan, and Japan will not want to lose such economic ties due to the Taiwan-China tension; hence, to ensure that China does not invade Taiwan and, at the same time, improve economic ties, a non-kinetics approach is best suited.

The study also explores some strategies on how Japan can enhance economic relations with China amidst tensions involving Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Some of the strategies proposed are: a tripartite ministry of trade that involves China, Taiwan, and Japan should be proposed; Japan should endeavor to propose a joint host of big sports tournaments with China, trade policy framework should be established between China and Japan, a prior agreement on the status and management of each waterway or straits for economic purposes. Considering

Japan to be in the midst of the tension between China and Taiwan and also considering Japan has diplomatic relations and trade relations with both actors, Japan will have to coordinate efforts to ensure that the tension does not escalate and at the same time maintain its economic ties with both countries. For this to be possible, a non-kinetics approach is best for a situation like this. These strategies are centered around trade, sport, and policies, and this strategy seeks to ensure that socioeconomic relationships don't break even when efforts are made to avert conflicts. If this strategy is implemented accurately, it will strengthen Japan's relationship with China and Taiwan, end the conflicts, and unite the warring factions.

The approach proposed by this study to Japan in ensuring that China does not invade Taiwan and improving economic ties with China should center around armament, diplomacy, propaganda, alliance, policy, and other non-kinetic approaches. The impact of these approaches, if implemented by Japan, will ensure that regional peace and stability are restored and maintained in

the Asia region, and the tension around the Taiwan Strait and other strategic seas will be doused; these will ensure that economic activities in the region are sustained and improved upon, bilateral trade will be optimized among the actors which will further improve and enhance international trade and the world economy.

While on global geopolitics, the impact of Japan's approach, such as alliance, armament, soft power, and diplomacy, can influence a future collective international response against aggressive actions by any state, which could set a precedent for other countries to follow in dealing with global powers like China, thereby influencing norms of global sovereignty and territorial integrity and reshaping the rules-based international order. More so, Japan's influence might improve in the Asia region, which will likely bolster the USA's influence in the region, and this might lead to an aggressive response from China, which can further lead to a regional arms race and tension in the region that might necessitate other countries in the region to improve their military and protect their country and interest in the case of

escalation. Hence, Japan should ensure a balanced approach that will bring about positive regional stability and broader global geopolitics that will positively impact security, economic ties, and international within Asia and beyond.

This study proposed further research on the impact of domestic politics on the Taiwan-China conflict, the role of international organizations in mediating regional conflicts involving superpowers, and the role of regional security alliances in deterring conflicts and aggression.

References

Al Jazeera. (2023). Despite sanctions, EU keeps on doing business with Russia. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/29/despite-sanctions-eu-keeps-on-doing-business-with-russia>

Baker, S., & Spirlet, T. (2023). The world's most powerful militaries in 2023, ranked. *Business Insider Africa*. <https://africa.businessinsider.com/military-and-defense/the-worlds-most-powerful-militaries-in-2023-ranked/9yf5136>

Barclay, P. D. (2020). Japanese empire in Taiwan. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.376>

Cárdenas, A. M. (2012). Exploring the Use of Sports for Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution. *Semantic Scholar*. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:154825595>

Cooper, H. H. A. (2003). What is conflict? *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, 3(1), 85–100. https://doi.org/10.1300/j173v03n01_06

De Guzman, C. (2023). Taiwan is extending conscription. Here's how its military compares to other countries. *TIME*. <https://time.com/6245036/taiwan-conscription-military-comparison/>

Doss, K., Airth, M., & Pisano, G. (2023). *Conflict | definition, types & sources*. Study.com. Retrieved December 28, 2023, from <https://study.com/learn/lesson/what-is-conflict-sources-types.html>

Dumas, L. J. (2011). The Peacekeeping Economy. *Semantic Scholar*. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:152955025>

Duval, Y., Xuan, Y., & Bonapace, T. (2007). Towards Coherent Policy Frameworks: Understanding Trade and Investment Linkages. *Semantic Scholar*. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Towards-Coherent-Policy-Frameworks%3A-Understanding-Duval-Xuan/f56cccb20812e6b6cf7507fee4e40bf8e9eeca73>

Ebrey, P. B. (2023). *A Visual Sourcebook for Chinese Civilization*. Depts.washington.edu. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from

<https://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/geo/geo.htm#>

Glaser, B. S. (2022). *Managing Cross-Strait ties in 2017*.
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/managing-cross-strait-ties-2017>

GlobalFirepower. (2023). *2023 Japan military strength*. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from
https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=japan

Green, M. J., & Glaser, B. S. (2022). What Is the U.S. “One China” Policy, and Why Does it Matter? *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Retrieved January 2, 2024, from
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/what-us-one-china-policy-and-why-does-it-matter>

Harrison, M. (2012). *Cross-Straits Relations - the China story*. The China Story. Retrieved December 29, 2023, from
<https://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2012/cross-straits-relations/>

Hatzigeorgiou, A. (2016). Can sports promote exports? The role of soccer

matches in international trade. *Global Economy Journal*, 16(1), 1–32.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/gej-2015-0029>

Hayes, A. (2023). *Conflict Theory Definition, founder, and Examples*. Investopedia.

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/conflict-theory.asp>

Hegre, H. (2000). Development and the Liberal Peace: What Does it Take to be a Trading State? *Journal of Peace Research*, 37(1), 5–30.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343300037001001>

Heritage Foundation. (2023). *Taiwan Economy: population, GDP, inflation, business, trade, FDI, corruption*. Heritage. Retrieved December 29, 2023, from
<https://www.heritage.org/index/country/taiwan>

Hornung, J. W. (2014). Japan’s growing hard hedge against China. *Asian Security*, 10(2), 97–122.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2014.914497>

Hsieh, P. L. (2009). The Taiwan Question and the One-China Policy:

Legal Challenges with Renewed Momentum. *Die Friedens-Warte*, 84(3), 59–81.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23773999>

IISS. (2023). *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Military Balance 2022 report*. International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance>

IMF. (2023a). *China, People's Republic of Datasets*. International Monetary Fund. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/CHN>

IMF. (2023b). *International Monetary Fund Japan Dataset*. International Monetary Fund (IMF). Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/JPN>

IMF. (2023c). Taiwan Province of China Datasets. *International Monetary Fund*. Retrieved December 29, 2023, from <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/TWN>

International Trade Administration, MOEA. (2023). *International Trade Administration, Ministry of Economic Affairs :: Bilateral trade*. International Trade Administration. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.trade.gov.tw/english/BilateralTrade/BilateralTrade.aspx?code=7030&nodeID=4639#>

Jash, A. (2023). *China's 2023 defense spending: Figures, intentions and concerns - Jamestown*. Jamestown. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-2023-defense-spending-figures-intentions-and-concerns/>

Johnson, J. C., & Leeds, B. A. (2010). Defense pacts: a prescription for peace?1. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 7(1), 45–65. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2010.00122.x>

Lee, F. (2014). An introduction to the history of Taiwan. *Gdańskie Studia Azji Wschodniej*, 5. <https://www.ejournals.eu/pliki/art/3144/pl>

Life of Taiwan. (2023). *History of Taiwan | Life of Taiwan Tours*.

Retrieved December 24, 2023, from <https://lifeoftaiwan.com/about-taiwan/history/>

Liff, A. P. (2022). The U.S.-Japan Alliance and Taiwan. *Asia Policy*, 17(3), 125–160. <https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2022.0038>

Luetkemeyer, B. (2024). *Columns / U.S. Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer*. U.S. Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer. Retrieved October 14, 2024, from <https://luetkemeyer.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=401079#>

Main, P. (2023). *Conflict theory*. Structural Learning. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.structural-learning.com/post/conflict-theory>

Maizland, L. (2023). Why China-Taiwan relations are so tense. *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounders/china-taiwan-relations-tension-us-policy-biden>

Marsella, A. J. (2011). Culture and conflict. *The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology*.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470672532.wbepp074>

Martin, C. (2012). A Constitutional Case for Amending Article 9. *Semantic Scholar*. <https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:151283018>

Medler, B., Fitzgerald, J., & Magerko, B. (2008). Using conflict theory to model complex societal interactions. *Conference on Future Play*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1496984.1496996>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. (2023). *Japan-China Relations (Basic Data)*. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/china/data.html#>

MoFA Taiwan. (2023a). *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China(Taiwan)*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Republic of China (Taiwan). Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://en.mofa.gov.tw/AlliesIndex.aspx?n=1294&sms=1007>

MoFA Taiwan. (2023b). *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of China(Taiwan)*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Republic of China (Taiwan). Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://en.mofa.gov.tw/OverseasOfficeLink.aspx?n=1573&sms=957>

Murakami, S. (2023). *Japan makes record defence spending request amid tension with China*. Reuters. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/japan-makes-record-defence-spending-request-amid-tension-with-china-2023-08-31/#>

Murphy, D. M., & White, J. (2007). Propaganda: Can a word decide a war? *Parameters*, 37(3). <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.2383>

NATO. (2023, July). *Relations with Japan*. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50336.htm

Nemeth, S. C., Mitchell, S. M., Nyman, E., & Hensel, P. R. (2014). Ruling the

Sea: Managing Maritime Conflicts through UNCLOS and Exclusive Economic Zones. *International Interactions*, 40(5), 711–736. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2014.897233>

Nicholson, M. (1992). CONCEPTS OF CONFLICT. In *Cambridge University Press eBooks* (pp. 11–24). <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511598739.004>

Omar, E. M. (2023). Japan balances power dynamics in Southeast Asia: An analysis of Japan's role in crystalizing Asian relations. *Open Journal of Political Science*, 13(02), 180–204. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2023.132011>

Shim, J. J. (2022). A study on Conflicts related to Military real estate facilities: Focusing on measures to manage conflicts related to military ammunition storage facilities. *Bu'dongsan Hagbo*, 88, 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.31303/krear.2022.87.33>

Simon, R. (2016). The conflict Paradigm in Sociology and the Study of Social

Inequality: Paradox and Possibility. *Theory in Action*, 9(1), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.3798/tia.1937-0237.16001>

Statista. (2023). *Largest armies in the world by active military personnel 2022*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264443/the-worlds-largest-armies-based-on-active-force-level/>

Stošić, S. (2023). The nature of China and Taiwan conflicting relations. *Politika Nacionalne Bezbednosti*, 24(1), 107–130. <https://doi.org/10.5937/pnb24-44065>

The World Factbook. (2021). *Taiwan - the World Factbook*. Retrieved December 31, 2023, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20210109223447/https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/taiwan/>

Turner, J. H. (1975). Marx and Simmel revisited: Reassessing the foundations of Conflict Theory. *Social Forces*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/53.4.618>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2024). Ukraine. In *Global Focus*. UNHCR. Retrieved October 14, 2024, from

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/ukraine-2024-programme-summary>

U.S. Forces Japan. (2023). *About USFJ*. Retrieved December 30, 2023, from <https://www.usfj.mil/About-USFJ/>

Vest, C., Kratz, A., & Goujon, R. (2022). *The Global Economic Disruptions from a Taiwan Conflict – Rhodium Group*. The Rhodium Group. Retrieved October 14, 2024, from https://rhg.com/research/taiwan-economic-disruptions/#_ftn1

Wani, H. A. (2011). Understanding Conflict Resolution. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(1). https://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol._1_No._2;_February_2011/14.pdf

Wu, Y., & Chen, K. (2020). Domestic Politics and Cross-Strait Relations: A Synthetic perspective. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 55(2), 168–186. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909620905071>

Zakowski, K. (2022). A neoclassical-realist analysis of Japan's stance on cross-strait relations. *Deleted Journal*, 2, 25.

[https://doi.org/10.12688/stomiedintrelat.](https://doi.org/10.12688/stomiedintrelat.17590.1)

17590.1