

## Brief History/Introduction of Committee

The United Nations Security Council (also referred to as UNSC) is one of six major bodies of the United Nations. The UN Charter establishes the UNSC as the body responsible for investigating and maintaining international peace. Towards this goal, this committee has several named powers, including that of investigating any international situations that arise, suggesting economic reactions to evolving international situations, and calling upon member nations to take up military action in response to any such situation. These powers, and particularly the last power, establish the UNSC as arguably the most powerful part of the United Nations, and as such, the UNSC is often tasked with the biggest issues at hand.

## **Topic 1: Cross Strait Tensions**

### Executive Summary

2021 has marked a dramatic increase in tensions between The People's Republic of China (PRC) and The Republic of China (ROC), otherwise known as Taiwan. Taiwan has a long colonial history, including Dutch, Spanish, and Japanese rulers until returning to Chinese possession following the Japanese surrender of World War II in August 1945. Following the Communist Revolution in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek, having been ousted by Mao Zedong and the People's Liberation Army, fled to the island of Taiwan, which he declared as a temporary capital of the Republic of China without ceding claims of the mainland.

In the decades since, both nations have contended with the other's national status. Following the revolution, both countries claimed to be the legitimate Chinese government, but in recent years, the ROC has encountered an ongoing debate between potential reunification with mainland China and maintaining independence. On the other hand, the PRC has consistently refused to acknowledge Taiwan's independence, instead asserting their claim over the territory. Since the victory of President Tsai Ing-wen, who has harshly pushed back against Chinese claims to the island, in the 2016 Taiwan general elections, relations between the PRC and the ROC have steadily deteriorated, so much so that in October 2021, following an intrusion of Chinese military jets into Taiwanese airspace, Taiwanese Defense Minister Chiu Kuo-cheng warned that relations between the two were at their worst in 40 years.

### Conceptualization of Topic

The historical division between Taiwan and China has taken cultural, economic, and military forms. For much of their histories, the two regions developed independently — aside from a brief four year stretch where both were controlled by the ROC, the two nations were often isolated — even when they were both under Qing control, Taiwan was largely governed as an independent province from the rest of mainland China. As a result, though Taiwan shares some historical and religious traditions with mainland China, there are many cultural nuances that distinguish the two societies. For instance, most point to the ethnic minorities in both regions as the biggest sign of their differences. Mainland China is almost entirely composed of the Han Chinese ethnic group, but Taiwan consists of a variety of indigenous groups that existed on the island prior to the arrival of the ROC, including a series of aboriginal tribes who are more closely related to other Pacific Islanders than the Chinese population in Taiwan.

Taiwan and China both boast strong economies, albeit ones of different formats. Taiwan operates under a free market system much like the United States, which prioritizes limiting government involvement in financial interactions. However, following major economic reforms established by Deng Xiaoping during the 1980s and 1990s, mainland China has transitioned towards a socialist market economy, which emphasizes incorporating some level of public ownership in a largely government controlled economy. Over the years, China has managed to leverage its large population towards dominating manufacturing fields. Taiwan has gradually reduced its reliance on local mineral and mining industries but have simultaneously become the sole power in the industry of silicon chip production.

Politically, both countries differ drastically. The PRC is a socialist state currently controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and led by President Xi Jinping. Until 2018, the nation held a two term rule for the president, but since then, the rule has been removed. The PRC and CCP recognize Taiwan as their 23rd province even though they do not have any political control over the island.

Modern-day Taiwan has a democratic state with a popularly elected President and representative body. From 1948 to 1991, the nation was placed under a state of emergency in the fear of attacks from the mainland, during which the nation's constitutional and democratic policies were largely prohibited. For much of its early history, Taiwan recognized mainland China as an extension of the ROC, but lately, the country has begun to focus more on asserting their own national independence in the eyes of the global community, which remains split in their interpretation of Taiwanese sovereignty.

## Topic History

Beginning in 1683, the Qing dynasty, the current leaders over Mainland China, incorporated the neighboring island of Taiwan into its Fujian province. Over the next several centuries, though, the Qing government would put little emphasis in governing over Taiwan. However, by 1850, foreign powers had turned towards Taiwan for its prime location for naval conflict and its copious resources, and consequently, the Qing attempted to cement their control over the island through a rapid push to modernize the island.

Taiwan quickly became the most modern region of the entire empire, but at the same time, the Qing empire continued to cede power and control to foreign spheres of influence. With regards to Taiwan, this phenomenon came to a head during the First Sino-Japanese War. Beginning in 1894, the Qing dynasty fought with the Japanese Empire over the province of Korea, but within a year, the Chinese lost major port cities and were forced to surrender, ultimately ceding Taiwan in the process of peace negotiations.

Over the next 50 years, Taiwan and mainland China developed completely independently, with the former under Japanese rule. During this time, the Qing dynasty fell to the Republic of China (ROC) in 1912, then ruled by the Kuomintang (KMT) party, following the Xinhai Revolution. Following Japan's defeat in World War II in 1945 and the KMT's subsequent annexation of Taiwan, tensions began to fester among local residents upset about mainland rule.

These tensions were reignited by the Chinese Civil War, where in 1949, the KMT faced defeat to Mao Zedong's People's Republic of China and fled to Taiwan. The PRC was unable to encroach into Taiwan, and as a result, two separate governing bodies existed: the PRC which now controlled mainland China and the ROC, which established control over the entire Taiwanese island. Even with these clear political distinctions, both nations claimed status as the "legitimate government of China." Later in 1949, the PRC attempted to reclaim Taiwan but failed, establishing a thirty year long stalemate from 1949 to 1979. In the meantime, the ROC attempted to plan a recapture of the mainland through Project National Glory, ultimately abandoning the effort in 1972 in the wake of the United Nations recognizing the PRC's sovereignty.

The United States remained fervently on the side of Taiwan until the early 1970s, when President Richard Nixon's visits to mainland China began to thaw relations between the U.S. and the PRC. In 1979, the United States and the ROC broke off official relations, though the U.S. continued to financially support Taiwanese independence as seen in the Taiwan Relations Act. In response, Premier Chiang Ching-Kuo of the ROC instituted the "Three Noes" policy, which declared that Taiwan would not declare independence, unite with the PRC, and use military force to demand themselves, in essence vowing against all contact with the PRC. However, over the course of the next 20 years, the PRC and ROC began to ease into interactions with one another, with various laws and regulations enacted by both nations in order to foster Cross-Strait relations. For

instance, in 1988, the PRC instituted the 22 point regulation which encouraged investments from people on the island of Taiwan into institutions in mainland China. By the late 1990s, though, Taiwan's politicians began moving towards a formal declaration of independence and away from its previous one China policy, which established itself as the lone Chinese government, thereby breaking down communications between the two nations once again.

Since 2000, the two nations have gone through phases of contact and non-contact depending on political leanings of elected officials. Taiwan's leader since 2016, President Tsai Ing-wen, has refused to accept China's version of the one China policy, and as such, communications have stalled between the nations and relations have soured. Additional American antagonism of the PRC through President Donald Trump's 2018 China-United States trade war and aggressive interactions between President Joseph Biden's administration and the current PRC have only served to worsen those relationships, and in 2021, Taiwan and China have seen the most militarily interactions between the two nations in nearly 50 years since the ROC last attempted to reclaim the mainland.

## Case Examples

### Encroachment of Chinese Airforce into Taiwanese Airspace

In several instances throughout October 2021, Taiwan detected over 150 Chinese aircrafts having entered the island's airspace, a stark escalation in relations between the two countries. The United States, Japan, and Australia expressed concern over these interactions, committing to investigating the situation more closely and supporting stability in the region. The Taiwanese government claimed this as a sign that tensions between the two nations were at its worst in more than forty years. The Chinese government made no official statement regarding the situation, but national news sources claimed the intrusion as a sign of Chinese dominance over Taiwan.

### 1992 Consensus

In 1992, indirect representatives for the PRC and ROC met in British Hong Kong to discuss cross communication channels. In this meeting, the two sides agreed that only one China existed — however, both parties held different interpretations of this statement. The PRC believed that they were the official China and that Taiwan would become a “Special Administration Region” following a potential unification, whereas the ROC believed that they were the one true Chinese state living in exile from mainland China. This meeting is credited for establishing a basic diplomatic channel for both nations to communicate effectively across, but it's effectiveness has weakened due to a lack of official recognition of the validity of the meeting. Current president of Taiwan Tsai Ing-wen rejects the ramifications of the meeting, instead arguing that the agreement reached by both parties was skewed towards Chinese special administration over Taiwan as opposed to Taiwanese independence.

### Questions to Consider

- 1) What side does your country take in this issue? How does it balance official recognition of a certain China with its interaction with the other one?
- 2) How can major foreign powers not directly involved in the Cross-Strait conflict maintain political and economic ties with both nations without straining stability in the region?
- 3) Given recent Chinese encroachments, should foreign nations involve themselves in this conflict? If so, how?
- 4) If your country supports Chinese visions for unification, would that be logistically and culturally possible?

