

THE SINO-TAIWANESE CONFLICT: BACKGROUND AND STAKES



Dr/ Bengana Chaneze

Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations

University of Algiers 3

Bengana.chinez@univ-alger.dz

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Abstract:

The Sino-Taiwanese war is one of the major contemporary geopolitical conflicts that dates back to the Chinese civil war, which ended with the triumph of communism and the retreat of the Kuomintang party to Taiwan. Since then, Chinese efforts to restore the island were met with Taipei's determination to achieve independence.

The issue of Taiwan has significant geopolitical and economic stakes for both China and the United States, as China's control over Taiwan would increase its regional influence. Therefore, China seeks by all means to recover Taiwan, which results in raising fears of war in the Taiwan Strait.

keywords: China; Taiwan; Conflict; the United States; Stakes.

ملخص:

يعد الصراع الصيني التايواني أحد الصراعات الجيوسياسية الهامة في عصرنا الحالي، وتعود جذوره إلى الحرب الأهلية الصينية التي انتهت بانتصار الشيوعية و تأسيس جمهورية الصين الشعبية، وانسحاب حزب الكومينتانغ إلى تايوان، ومنذ ذلك الحين تسعى الصين إلى استرجاع هذه الجزيرة، بينما تصر السلطات التايوانية على الاستقلال. وتعتبر القضية التايوانية ذات رهانات اقتصادية و جيوسياسية مهمة لكلا من الصين والولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، فسيطرة الصين على تايوان سيعزز من نفوذها الإقليمي، لذلك تسعى الصين بكل الطرق سواء كانت سلمية أو عسكرية لاسترجاع تايوان، ومن ثمة زادت المخاوف من نشوب حرب في مضيق تايوان .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصين؛ تايوان؛ الصراع؛ الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية؛ الرهانات.

Introduction:

The conflict between China and Taiwan has been ongoing for decades and remains to be one of the most significant geopolitical conflicts of our era.

For Beijing, reunification with Taiwan is a matter of national sovereignty and an essential step in asserting its status as a great global power. The current Chinese president, Xi Jinping, plans to reunite China with Taiwan before 2049, the year marking the People's Republic of China centenary (Duchatel, 2019, p. 62).

However, Beijing's ambitions to retake the island have been constrained by Taipei's determination to preserve its autonomy. Over the past years, China has increased military maneuvers in the Taiwan Strait, which resulted in raising concerns about a potential armed conflict, especially since the stakes are immense, both for the Asia-Pacific region and for the world order.

Research Question:

China seeks to recover the small island at all costs and has implemented the resources necessary to further its aims. This article seeks to answer the following research question: **what are the causes and stakes of the Sino-Taiwanese Conflict?** And is there a risk that this conflict would turn into an armed conflict?

Hypothesis:

This article rests on the following hypothesis:

The risk of a Chinese invasion in the short to medium term is low, however, there is a serious possibility of a Chinese invasion of the island in the long term.

Aims:

This article aims to analyze the historical roots of the conflict as well as demonstrate the stakes and importance of Taiwan for China and the United States. Furthermore, the article explains the different methods deployed by China to recover Taiwan before evaluating the risks of a military escalation.

Methods:

In the first place, the article explains the historical roots of the Sino-Taiwanese conflict before studying the stakes Taiwan entails for both China and the United States and finally, it analyzes the different policies implemented by China to restore Taiwan.

The Historical Roots of the Sino-Taiwanese Conflict

In order to get a better sense of the roots and current stakes that fuel tensions between the two countries, a historical overview is paramount.

1 The Scramble for the Island of Taiwan

Over the centuries, the island of Taiwan has been a coveted region, successively crossed by various peoples. The first peoples to settle in Taiwan were the Austronesian tribes, descending from Southern China.

In 1622, in order to facilitate trade with China and Japan, the Dutch settled on the Pescadores islands, located 45 kilometers southwest of Taiwan. In 1624, the Dutch were dislodged by the Chinese and had to move back to Taiwan, where they brought back with them Chinese laborers to assist in agriculture(Niquet, 2023, p. 43).

Whilst the Dutch occupied the island, China has already been under the reign of the Ming Dynasty for three centuries.

In 1640, Manchu warriors managed to progressively conquer the whole of China and established the Qing dynasty. The Chinese general, Zheng Chenggong, better known as Koxinga, was one of “the opponents” of this new dynasty, therefore, he launched a military campaign to restore the former dynasty. After several defeats, Koxinga, accompanied with his troops, left the mainland and headed to Taiwan. After driving out the Dutch, the general founded the Tunging Kingdom that dominated the southwestern parts of Taiwan. The Taiwan island was set as a rearguard to set out to reconquer China and drive out the new dynasty. It was during this period that the Chinese population became the majority on the island (Cabestan, 2013, p. 24).

Eventually, the Qing dynasty seized control of the island in 1683 after defeating the former dynasty loyalists. For two centuries, the island was under the control of imperial China, consequently, since the 17th century, a large number of Chinese migrants flocked to the island (Elisseeff, 2004, p. 123).

In 1894, the first Sino-Japanese war broke out and lasted till April 1895. In the aftermath of the military defeat of China, the latter was obliged to sign the Shimonoseki Treaty which stipulated the cessation of Taiwan and the Pescadores islands to the Japanese empire (Niquet, 2023, p. 55).

The Japanese rule over Taiwan lasted for 50 years, a period characterized with intensive industrialization. The Japanese implemented an agricultural policy, largely developed railroad and road infrastructure and established a public education system.

In 1945, by the end of the Second World War, Japan was constrained to restore Taiwan and the Pescadores islands to the Republic of China.

2 The Chinese Civil War and the Beginning of the Sino-Taiwanese Conflict

The Manchu-led Qing dynasty ruled over China which was then inhabited by a majority of the Han ethnicity. Many of the Chinese subjects viewed their ruling class as foreign, unwelcome and heavily criticized its management methods; on top of that, the Chinese territories were controlled by local officials who benefited from numerous privileges. The culmination of these factors enraged the communities and led to the formation of opposition groups, then known as secret societies. One of the most important groups was the Tongmenghui, of which Sun Yat-sen was one of the founding members (Gravereau, 2023, p. 32).

Popular upheavals against the imperial regime broke out around 1911 and several provinces seceded from China. In January 1912, Sun Yat-sen proclaimed the first republic of China in the south of the territory, and became president of the provisional government.

Yuan Shikai, commander of the imperial army, allied with the revolutionaries on the condition of becoming president of the republic in place of Sun Yat-sen. Following all of these events, the emperor eventually abdicated (Fairbank, 2019, p. 367) .

Shortly after Yuan Shikai's death to illness, China succumbed to instability and entered a dark period known as the "warlords' period", during which each warlord governed a part of the territory and frequently engaged in wars against the other warlords. While the latter were active in the north, the Kuomintang party, under Sun Yat-sen, governed the south. In 1923, the Kuomintang party allied with the new Chinese Communist party to unify the country (Elisseeff, 2004, p. 154).

In 1925, Sun Yat-sen died and was replaced by Tchang Kai-shek to lead the Kuomintang. Despite his wariness of the communists, Kai-shek led the Northern Expedition with their help between 1926 and 1928 with the aim of driving out the warlords and restoring order in the country. The alliance between the two parties was fruitful and led to the expansion of the youthful republic, however, the communist party started to represent major competition to the nationalist republican party (Fairbank, 2019, p. 410).

In 1927, communists led by Mao Zedong started to orchestrate uprisings against the nationalist republican government. The latter forcefully repressed the uprisings and initiated a bloody repression (the Shanghai Massacres). The culmination of these events signaled the beginning of the Chinese civil war between the two parties (the Kuomintang versus the communists).

Faced with the Japanese threat in the north, Tchang Kai-shek had to agree to a truce and ally with the communists, once more, in order to fight against their common enemy. The Chinese communists took advantage of the Japanese decline to strengthen their position in the north (Cabestan, 2013, p. 33).

Shortly after the end of the Second World War, the Chinese civil war resumed and the communists progressively managed to seize territories in the south. In 1949, in mainland China, following the triumph of the communists in the civil war, Mao Zedong declared the founding of the People's Republic of China. Meanwhile, the Kuomintang nationalists retreated to Taiwan and established the government of the Republic of China in exile. Thereby, creating a second de facto Chinese state. Each state reclaimed the territory of the other, however, in the time being, the Taiwanese authorities no longer claim to represent China. Instead, they emphasize on the fact that Taiwan is not a part of China.

Stakes in Taiwan for China and the United States

There are high stakes in Taiwan for China and the United States alike, which will be demonstrated in the following chapter.

1- Stakes in Taiwan for China

Taiwan stands out as a central challenge for China on all historical, political, geostrategic and economic accounts. The following are the major stakes in Taiwan for Beijing:

*Historical reasons: Chinese authorities stress on the fact that, from a historical standpoint, China was a Chinese province that must be restored at all costs. They also consider the resolution of the Taiwanese question a historical mission and an unshakeable commitment of the Communist party of China.

China perceives the reintegration of Taiwan as a symbolic challenge that constitutes a core element of its national identity as well as the final piece of the restoration work on its national unity (Duchatel, 2019, p. 66) .

As a matter of fact, reunification with Taiwan is of paramount importance to the Communist party as it would symbolize that China has fully recovered from the century of humiliations, during which it was unable to maintain its territorial integrity.

*Political Reasons: after several decades of dictatorship, Taiwan paved the way through democratization following the death of Chang Kei-Shek and the end of the single party era in 1986 in result of the emergence of the first opposition party in the history of Taiwan, the Democratic progressive party (Bisschop, 2023, p. 44). Since the 1990's, Taiwan has transitioned into a democracy by organizing free elections and establishing its own people-supported democratic institutions. However, the democratization of Taiwan widened the gap with the People's Republic of China. Democratic Taiwan falls into contradiction with the discourse of the Chinese authorities which stipulates that: "Chinese values are incompatible with liberal democratic institutions". In addition, they even worry about the ideological distance between China and Taiwan and actively work on erasing a counter-model that is extremely inconvenient for the Communist party.

*Geostrategic reasons: the Chinese coasts face what is referred to as the “first island chain”, which comprises the Japanese Archipelago, South Korea, Taiwan, The Philippine Archipelago and Indonesia. Beijing maintains relatively hostile relations with the aforementioned states, which makes China somewhat locked in the Chinese seas and obstructed from having a direct access to the Pacific.

On top of that, these states are renowned U.S. allies. All of Japan, South Korea and the Philippines have signed a mutual defense treaty with the United States, offering them vital security guarantees (Pincas, 2022, p. 21). In this regard, South Korea houses two American naval airbases whereas Japan is home to six. In addition, the Philippines signed a security agreement in 2014, granting the U.S. air force five military bases on the Philippines territories.

The second island chain encompasses the Northern Mariana Islands, harboring the Large U.S. naval base of Guam as well as the Island of Palau, a territory formerly occupied by the United States and the Japanese archipelago of Ogasawara islands (Dagorn, 2022).

Seizing control of Taiwan would breach the tightly-knit network of U.S. alliances and allow China to weaken the U.S. presence in the region as it impedes China’s access to naval trade routes. Over a third of Chinese exports and nearly 80% of energy supplies are annually transported through these routes. In case of an interruption, Beijing would suffer from severe economic repercussions (Rivest, 2023).

In fact, Taiwan harbors considerable geographic advantages for China. For instance, the island would allow China to expand its exclusive economic zone and support its claims in the China Sea, where China is trying to strengthen its position on the one hand; and on the other hand, China would be able to seize control of the Taiwan Strait, which represents a major maritime crossroads. Taking over the Taiwan Strait would allow China to impose restrictions on navigation, control commercial flow and impose the right to monitor merchant shipping. If China manages to reach this milestone, it would possess a powerful tool to put pressure on its neighbors and further its interests.

Moreover, China faces another geostrategic challenge. Chinese coasts are shallow whereas commercial traffic is heavy, thereby impeding Chinese nuclear submarines from conducting discreet maneuvers (CESM, 2022, p. 2). This is the reason why seizing control of Taiwan would grant China a direct access to the Pacific and guarantee a more discreet passage for Chinese submarines. More importantly, China would be able to install new submarine bases on the eastern coast of Taiwan, drawing it closer to the U.S. coasts. This close proximity would allow China to display its power in the region; a maneuver that would be perceived as a direct threat by the United States.

As a result, China would be able to achieve the goal of asserting dominance in the South China Sea; a region considered its own and necessary to its security. In addition, Beijing would be able to further coerce regional actors into conforming to its preferences (Peutrec, 2024, p. 4) and would reduce the U.S. influence in the region. Thus, the conquest of Taiwan is a decisive factor in the U.S.-China struggle over dominance in the Pacific.

*Economic Reasons: Taiwan is a strategic piece of the technological chessboard. Taiwanese high-tech enterprises are renowned for their know-how, namely the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), which is a leading company in the manufacturing of cutting-edge electronic chips and semiconductors (Rémy, 2022). The conquest of Taiwan would allow China to control the electronic chips and semiconductor market as well as have a head start in the field of artificial intelligence and next generation weaponry.

The economic challenge is of paramount importance to China, especially since the United States has waged a technological war against Beijing by banning all chips and semiconductor manufacturers, such as TSMC, from exporting to China.

All in all, taking control of Taiwan is the answer to several historical, political, geostrategic as well as economic challenges and objectives.

2- The Stakes in Taiwan for the United States

In 1949, Mao Zedong won the civil war and proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Nonetheless, the United States refused to recognize the Chinese Communist party and considered Taiwan, under Tchang Kei-shek, the only legitimate government of China. Close ties were forged between the two countries, especially after the Korean war outbreak in 1950. Washington was heavily worried about the spread of Communism in Asia and in the view of the United States, Taiwan represented the "free China" that stood against Communism. In this context, the United States interposed a U.S. Navy fleet on the island, rendering it a U.S. military outpost in the region. To seal these close bilateral relations, the two countries signed a mutual defense treaty in 1955 (Bisschop, 2023, p. 48).

In result, two Chinas stood in opposition to one another. On the one hand, the Republic of China (Taiwan) which holds permanent membership in the UN security council with the U.S. support, and on the other hand, the People's Republic of China, of communist orientation and ally with the USSR.

However, following the death of Stalin, relations between the two Communist world powers deteriorated and escalated into what was referred to as the Sino-Soviet split in 1963, especially when the Soviet Union took side with India in the Sino-Indian war.

The United States, aware of the profits that could be drawn from the Sino-Soviet split, concluded that it was in its interest to establish relations with mainland China, particularly in the Cold War context. Washington entered into secret negotiations with mainland China (Bonneville, 2021); the stakes were high as they consisted of dividing the Communist camp and forming a common front to weaken the USSR.

The PRC premier, Zhou Enlai formulated four essential requests to normalize relations with the United States, amongst which was the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Taiwan and admission of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations organization (Bonneville, 2021). Shortly after, as requested, the UN adopted the 1971 resolution that admitted China and expelled the Republic of China from the UN (Dougnaç, 2024).

In February 1972, President Nixon paid a visit to China where he met with Chairman Mao and signed the Shanghai Communiqué.

On January 1st, 1979, the United States and China established diplomatic relations, under President Carter (Donnet, 2022), which meant that Washington had to terminate official ties with Taiwan and close down the U.S. embassy in Taipei. The Mutual Defense Treaty was annulled and the American bases in Taiwan were closed down. However, the termination was not fully complete as Washington maintained an informal presence in Taipei through the American Institute in Taiwan, a private corporation carrying diplomatic activities (BBC, 2021).

Furthermore, in 1979, the U.S. Congress enacted the Taiwan Relations Act which required the United States to provide Taiwan with arms to defend itself in case of coerced reunification force (Shinzō, 2022). So, even if the United States did not officially recognize Taiwan, it sold arms in support of Taiwan's defense. In reality, Washington adopted a "strategic ambiguity policy" vis à vis its support of Taiwan in the event of a war. This policy aims to maintain the status

quo by dissuading China from attacking Taiwan and impeding Taiwan from unilaterally declaring independence.

Thus, even if Taiwan was not recognized by the U.S. diplomacy, it continued to receive support, particularly under the Trump Administration. In 2018, the Taiwan Travel Act established a framework to encourage visits from high level officials from Taiwan to the United States and vice versa.

In a follow up to the Taiwan Travel Act, the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative Act was enacted in 2019 to assist Taiwan in diversifying its diplomatic relations and world-class partnerships (Rémy, La guerre à Taïwan est-elle imminente ?, 2022)

In the same course, only a few days before the end of President Trump's term, Mike Pompeo, then secretary of state, lifted all restrictions on official contacts between U.S. officials and their Taiwanese counterparts (Corcuff, 2022, p. 52).

The U.S. support of Taiwan is motivated by the fact that the latter plays a crucial role in the U.S. dominance of the Indo-Pacific region and the curtailment of China. On top of that, the U.S. technology industry, equally to China's, heavily relies on Taiwanese high-end semiconductors, which means that in case China initiated an attack on Taiwan, it would provoke an economic contraction in the U.S. and jeopardize the U.S. leap in critical fields, such as artificial intelligence, and induce disastrous repercussions on the U.S. dominance.

In Sum, the United States has ideological interests in maintaining a democratic regime in Taiwan as the latter stands as a regional political counterpoint to the authoritarian regime in mainland China.

Chinese Policies Aiming at the Restoration of Taiwan

Chinese authorities have consistently affirmed that Taiwan remains a Chinese province. Resolving the Taiwan issue is a historical mission and an unshakeable commitment of the Chinese Communist party. The latter has adopted several policies in order to reintegrate Taiwan within Mainland China.

1-Shifting from the Peaceful Reunification Policy towards the Military Reunification Policy:

In 1979, Deng Xiaoping, then secretary of the Communist party launched "the policy of peaceful reunification" and introduced the concept of "one

country, two systems”. According to this principle, Taiwan would enjoy a high degree of autonomy and get to maintain its capitalist democratic system if it accepts to be under the Chinese rule, a proposal which was rejected by Taiwan. Nowadays, most of Taiwan’s population is skeptical about this concept, especially in consideration of the 2019 Hong Kong protests. The ex-British colony, that was returned in 1997, is a witness to a growing influence of Beijing, in breach of the “one country, two systems” principle and Taiwan fears enduring the same fate.

China has been recurring to various methods to promote pacific unity with Taiwan, such as:

*Diplomatic pressure: China seeks to isolate Taiwan in diplomatic spheres and has successfully replaced Taiwan in the UN. In this course, Beijing uses all its leverage in the world economy as well as the checkbook diplomacy (financial aids and investments) to encourage all countries to cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Accordingly, in the pursuit of maintaining relations with China, a strategic partner nowadays, states have been gradually renouncing recognition of Taiwan. Currently, only 12 countries maintain official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, although informal relations are considerable (Dournac, 2024).

*Cyberattacks and propaganda campaigns: China has been conducting several propaganda campaigns through its media and social media platforms to attain various interrelated objectives: discredit the government of Taiwan and present it as illegitimate, promote the concept of ‘one China’ and that Taiwan forms an integral part of the Chinese territory, in addition to encourage citizens of Taiwan to embrace the idea of peaceful reunification with the mainland.

*Economic exchange: there is a strong economic interdependence between China and Taiwan. Many Taiwanese enterprises, such as Foxconn and TSMC, have manufacturing subsidiaries in the mainland and both countries have implemented advantageous tariff regimes on a large number of products (Alsif, 2023). By weaving this economic interdependence, China seeks to win the support of Taiwan’s population and weaken nationalist sentiments; it also encourages Taiwan to favor peaceful reunification.

*Trade sanctions: the Chinese authorities additionally weaponize trade sanctions. For instance, in August 2022, Beijing blacklisted around a hundred of Taiwanese food companies and, in parallel, suspended sand exports, an elementary component in the manufacturing of concrete, asphalt and semiconductors (Fouquet, 2023).

*Tourism: tourism between China and Taiwan is highly encouraged with the aim of promoting exchanges between the two peoples.

It is important to note that early on, cross-strait relations were strained, but started to improve in the 1980's, when Taiwan relaxed restrictive laws on visits and investments in China. However, over the millennium, bilateral relations deteriorated again following the election of Chen Shui-bian as a president in Mai 2000, a candidate of the Democratic Progressive party who openly advocated for Taiwan's independence. A year after the reelection of Chen Shui-bian, China passed an Anti-Secession Law, which stipulated that China shall employ "non-peaceful means" against Taiwan if it acts to secede from China (Cabestan, 2013, p. 120).

In 2008, Ying-jeou, the Kuomintang candidate won the presidential elections and strived to improve relations between China and Taiwan by establishing economic agreements. Meanwhile, China's government sought to favor the idea of peaceful rapprochement.

Eight years later, in 2016, Tsai Ing-wen, leader of the pro-independence party, was elected and followed by William Lai of the same party in 2024 (Dougnaç, 2024). In reaction, China has exerted unprecedented military pressure on the island. Since 2019, we have witnessed almost permanent presence of the Chinese air force and naval aviation in the Taiwan air defense identification zone, coupled with the constant violation of the median line that serves as a de facto border between China and Taiwan. For instance, over 1700 Chinese air intrusions have been recorded in 2022 (Fouquet, 2023).

In recent years, China has intensified military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, especially in the aftermath of the visits of senior American and Taiwanese officials. China's objective is to assert the fact that Taiwan constitutes an integral part of China and to dissuade every formal secessionist declaration.

Faced with the repetitive show of force by the Chinese army, the world wonders whether a Chinese military invasion is probable.

2- The likelihood of a Chinese Military Invasion

China exerts an ever-growing military pressure on Taiwan, raising fears of invasion. However, before China takes this decision, it must weigh the pros and cons as the stakes of a such an operation are stark.

In the time being, we count several factors that would dissuade the Chinese authorities from taking the decision of invading Taiwan, such as:

* the tremendous cost of invasion: the campaign would be highly costly and complex with high chances of failure.

*devastating economic repercussions: China's technology sector is heavily reliant on Taiwan (which is the main supplier of semiconductors and electronic chips). If China decides to coercively retake Taiwan, it would expose itself to a semiconductor shortage, which would seriously cripple its technology manufacturing capacities (Dougnaç, 2024).

Furthermore, the repercussions of this invasion would not be limited to China only, but reverberate on the global economy because it will disrupt semiconductors supply chain and lead to market shortage, inflation, high unemployment rates and social unrest.

Waging war on Taiwan would also echo on China's export markets, direct foreign investments and disturb its plans, whether it is the "Belt and Road" initiative (BRI), the "Made in China 2025" initiative or any other development plan. Thus, an invasion at the present moment would jeopardize China's economic growth.

*U.S. intervention (world's first military power): coerced reunification of Taiwan with mainland China would inevitably trigger the involvement of the United States. As a matter of fact, for the United States, supporting Taipei in the event of a conflict is one way to prevent Chinese hegemony and remain credible in front of the network of U.S. alliances in the region.

The U.S. implication in Taiwan would probably take an indirect approach, through the provision of arms, as is currently the case with Ukraine. It also avoids the U.S. to engage in a direct military collision with mainland China.

* Geographical challenges: invading Taiwan is a difficult endeavor as it is surrounded by cliffs and jungles and regularly exposed to typhoons and high waves, which would hamper the operational effectiveness of the Chinese army (Rémy, *La guerre à Taïwan est-elle imminente ?*, 2022).

In the short to long term, China will not proceed to invade Taiwan as the odds of failure are too high and the implications of losing in Taiwan would be detrimental to the Communist party legitimacy.

For the time being, China would probably do with propaganda campaigns, economic pressure, step up Taiwan's isolation and multiply incursions in the island's maritime and airspace.

Beijing's strategy is to subjugate Taiwan without fight, exert constant pressure to undermine Taiwan's willingness to maintain a de facto

independence, on the condition that Taipei does not officially declare independence because in that case, China will intervene even if it is not ready.

However, it is highly unlikely that Taiwan declares independence at present, because the military power balance is in China's favor. In addition, Taipei mainly relies on its U.S. ally for protection, which, in its turn, aims to maintain the status quo.

Whilst war is not necessarily imminent, it poses a serious possibility in the long term as the invasion of Taiwan is only a matter of time. China has long been preparing for this mission and initiated military reforms to modernize its military forces for this purpose. Meanwhile, the Chinese military forces have improved significantly, however, the modernization track is not finished yet (Niquet, 2023, p. 177).

China would also wait for the appropriate time to engage in Taiwan, for instance, the weakening of the U.S. army in case it goes to war with other countries, such as Russia.

Conclusion:

Taiwan holds a significant strategic, economic and historical importance for China. The latter recurs to different methods to promote unity with Taiwan. Nonetheless, the population of Taiwan has developed its own national identity, rendering any prospect of unification under the auspices of Beijing a remote possibility.

The deterioration of the situation in Taiwan is a part of the Sino-American competition over hegemonic influence in East Asia.

The risk of a Chinese invasion in the short to medium term is unlikely, but highly possible in the long term.

A Possible invasion would entail drastic consequences, not only for the Asia Pacific region but also on the international level, in economic, military and technological spheres. The quest for a peaceful and sustainable solution is, therefore, an absolute necessity.

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