

# ZISMUN

Zurich International School MUN



Dear Delegates,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that we welcome you to the Security Council of ZISMUN 2026! As your chairs, we are thrilled to have this opportunity to engage in meaningful and diplomatic dialogue alongside each one of you. As we tackle some of the most pressing issues of this day, we look forward to seeing the energy, creativity, and passion that you will bring to this committee.

Order remains imperative for the United Nations. The Security Council (SC) has a particularly important role in ensuring the security and freedom of member states. Our topics, *The disarmament of the Korean Peninsula* and *Addressing the Risk of Military Escalation in the Taiwan Strait through Preventive Diplomacy*, closely align with the goal of the SC to maintain international peace and security for its member states.

As the Security Council, we hope to create lasting change for both our members and the global community. Hence, it is critical to consider not only the needs of our individual member states, but the collective interests of the world. These include but are not limited to the Global South, the European Union, NATO, the African Union, MEDCs (more economically developed countries), and LEDCs (less economically developed countries).

We aim to produce focused, enforceable resolutions with precise mandates, defined actors, timelines, and enforcement mechanisms. Debate should prioritize concrete policy choices such as sanctions, peacekeeping mandates, authorization of force, monitoring mechanisms, and diplomatic leverage. Delegates are expected to engage with these realities actively from their country's perspective, have a sound understanding of both topics, and ultimately bring an open mindset to collaborate with member states of the SC. Both topics are challenging and require you to be mindful and respectful to all delegates. Nevertheless, make sure to represent your country's position as accurately as you can, even if you are controversial! That is what makes debate truly enjoyable!

We cannot wait to see what you will bring to the table and look forward to the upcoming days of fruitful debate. Remember, above all else, debate is at the heart of what we do, but diplomacy is the foundation upon which MUN thrives.

Warm regards,  
Your Chairs,  
Ishan Wadhwani and Ethan Kahn :)

# *Addressing the Risk of Military Escalation in the Taiwan Strait through Preventive Diplomacy*

## General Overview of the Situation:

The Taiwan Strait represents one of the most dangerous flashpoints in contemporary international security. Unlike other regional disputes, a military conflict here would almost certainly involve direct confrontation between nuclear-armed great powers, with catastrophic implications for global stability, the world economy, and the post-1945 international order. The challenge before the Security Council is not resolution of the underlying sovereignty dispute, which remains intractable, but rather the application of preventive diplomacy to reduce escalation risk, prevent miscalculation, and preserve conditions for peaceful management of cross-strait relations.

Preventive diplomacy, as defined by successive UN Secretaries-General, encompasses actions taken to prevent disputes from arising, prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflict, and limit the spread of conflicts when they occur. Applied to the Taiwan Strait, this framework shifts attention away from the question of Taiwan's political status, on which no consensus exists, toward the more tractable goal of preventing military confrontation. The distinction matters: preventive diplomacy does not require resolving the dispute, only managing it.

The situation is shaped by competing claims and interpretations. The People's Republic of China (PRC) considers Taiwan an inalienable part of Chinese territory, temporarily separated due to the unfinished Chinese Civil War. Beijing has never renounced the use of force to achieve reunification and views any movement toward formal Taiwanese independence as a red line justifying military action. The government in Taiwan/Chinese Taipei, while maintaining its own complex constitutional claims, operates as a de facto independent state with its own military, currency, elections, and foreign relations. Most Taiwanese citizens, particularly younger generations, identify primarily as Taiwanese rather than Chinese and oppose unification under current conditions.

The United States occupies a pivotal position. Washington formally recognizes the PRC as the sole legal government of China and does not maintain official diplomatic relations with Taiwan/Chinese Taipei. However, the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 commits the United States to providing Taiwan with defensive arms and maintaining the capacity to resist any resort to force that would jeopardize Taiwan's security. This policy of strategic ambiguity, neither confirming nor denying whether the United States would intervene militarily, has historically served to deter both a PRC attack and a unilateral Taiwanese declaration of independence.

The Security Council faces severe structural constraints on this issue. China, as a permanent member with veto power, blocks any formal Council engagement that it perceives

as interference in internal affairs or implicit recognition of Taiwan as a separate entity. This reality must inform any discussion of preventive diplomacy: the Council's direct role is limited, and meaningful action requires creative approaches that work around or alongside this constraint rather than against it.

Regional dynamics compound the complexity. Japan views Taiwan's security as directly linked to its own, given geographic proximity and sea lane dependence. South Korea balances alliance commitments with economic ties to China. Southeast Asian states, many with their own South China Sea disputes with Beijing, generally avoid taking sides but have strong interests in preventing conflict. Australia has aligned more closely with Washington, while European powers increasingly frame Taiwan Strait stability as a matter of global rules-based order.

The economic dimension cannot be overstated. Taiwan produces over 90 percent of the world's most advanced semiconductors, components essential to everything from smartphones to weapons systems. A conflict that disrupted this production would trigger global economic shocks far exceeding those of the COVID-19 pandemic. Shipping through the Taiwan Strait carries a substantial portion of global trade. These interdependencies create both deterrent effects and potential coercion vectors.

The trajectory over the past decade has been toward increased tension rather than stability. PLA modernization has dramatically shifted the military balance. Air and naval incursions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone have become routine. Rhetoric from Beijing has hardened. The space for ambiguity and quiet management has narrowed. Preventive diplomacy is therefore not an abstract concept but an urgent operational necessity: mechanisms to prevent accidents from becoming incidents, incidents from becoming crises, and crises from becoming wars.

## Key Definitions:

### **Preventive Diplomacy:**

Action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and to limit the spread of conflicts when they occur. In the Taiwan Strait context, this encompasses communication mechanisms, confidence-building measures, risk reduction protocols, and diplomatic engagement aimed at preserving stability without necessarily resolving underlying political disagreements.

### **One China Principle:**

The position held by the PRC is that there is only one China, that the PRC is the sole legal government of China, and that Taiwan is part of China. Beijing insists that diplomatic relations with the PRC require acceptance of this principle and considers it non-negotiable.

**One China Policy:**

The policy adopted by the United States and many other states, which acknowledges the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China but does not explicitly endorse it. The distinction between "acknowledge" and "recognize" or "accept" is diplomatically significant. Various states interpret and implement their One China policies differently.

**Strategic Ambiguity:**

The United States policy of deliberately not specifying whether it would militarily defend Taiwan in the event of a PRC attack. This ambiguity is intended to deter both Chinese aggression (by preserving the possibility of intervention) and Taiwanese independence moves (by not guaranteeing support). The policy has come under increasing scrutiny and pressure.

**Status Quo:**

The existing situation in which Taiwan/Chinese Taipei operates as a de facto independent political entity while most states do not formally recognize it as a sovereign state. All major parties officially claim to support the status quo, though they define it differently and accuse others of changing it.

**Cross-Strait Relations:**

The relationship between the PRC and Taiwan/Chinese Taipei across the Taiwan Strait. This term is used to discuss interactions without prejudging political status.

**1992 Consensus:**

A purported understanding reached between representatives of the PRC and Taiwan/Chinese Taipei in 1992, in which both sides agreed there is one China but maintained their own interpretations of what that means. The existence, content, and current validity of this consensus are disputed. Beijing treats acceptance of it as a precondition for dialogue; Taiwan's current governing party rejects it.

**Reunification:**

The PRC's stated goal of bringing Taiwan under its sovereignty. Beijing frames this as restoring national unity rather than annexation. The timeline and means remain officially open, though Xi Jinping has suggested reunification cannot be postponed indefinitely.

**Independence:**

A formal declaration by Taiwan/Chinese Taipei that it is a sovereign state separate from China. Beijing considers this a red line that would trigger military action. Taiwan's current government maintains the position that Taiwan is already effectively independent and therefore no declaration is necessary.

**Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ):**

An area extending beyond a state's sovereign airspace in which aircraft are expected to identify themselves. Taiwan's ADIZ overlaps with Chinese territory and has become a

frequent zone of PLA Air Force activity. Incursions into the ADIZ are distinct from violations of sovereign airspace but contribute to escalation dynamics.

#### **Grey Zone Tactics:**

Actions below the threshold of armed conflict designed to gradually shift the status quo, exhaust the opponent, or test responses. In the Taiwan Strait, these include frequent air and naval patrols near Taiwan, cyberattacks, economic coercion, information operations, and administrative measures asserting jurisdiction.

#### **Salami-Slicing:**

A strategy of achieving objectives through incremental actions, each too small to justify a major response, but cumulatively significant. China has been accused of salami-slicing in both the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea.

#### **Extended Deterrence:**

A commitment by one state to use its military capabilities, potentially including nuclear weapons, to defend an ally. The United States provides extended deterrence to treaty allies in Asia, though its application to Taiwan is ambiguous given the absence of a formal alliance.

#### **Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD):**

Military capabilities designed to prevent an adversary from entering or operating freely within a geographic area. China has invested heavily in A2/AD systems aimed at limiting U.S. military options in the Western Pacific, with direct implications for any Taiwan contingency.

## **Historical Situation:**

The Taiwan Strait dispute originates in the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Following Japan's surrender in 1945, which ended fifty years of Japanese colonial rule over Taiwan, the island was placed under the administrative control of the Republic of China (ROC). The subsequent civil war concluded on the mainland in 1949 with Communist victory. The KMT government, led by Chiang Kai-shek, retreated to Taiwan along with approximately two million soldiers, officials, and civilians, establishing Taipei as the temporary capital of the ROC and claiming continued legitimacy as the government of all China.

For the next two decades, both the PRC and ROC claimed to be the sole legitimate government of China, and both maintained that Taiwan was part of China, differing only on which government rightfully ruled it. The United States initially continued to recognize the ROC and signed a mutual defense treaty in 1954 following the First Taiwan Strait Crisis, during which PRC forces shelled Kinmen and Matsu islands. A second crisis in 1958 involved more intense bombardment but no invasion. Throughout this period, the U.S. Seventh Fleet patrolled the Taiwan Strait, and American military advisors were stationed on Taiwan.

The strategic landscape shifted dramatically in the early 1970s. Seeking leverage against the Soviet Union, the United States under Nixon pursued rapprochement with Beijing. The 1972 Shanghai Communiqué established the framework for normalization: the United States acknowledged that Chinese on either side of the Strait maintain there is one China and that Taiwan is part of China, affirmed interest in peaceful settlement, and committed to progressively reducing forces on Taiwan. In 1979, the United States formally switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing, terminated the mutual defense treaty, and withdrew remaining military personnel.

However, Congress simultaneously passed the Taiwan Relations Act, which committed the United States to provide Taiwan with defensive arms, maintain the capacity to resist force or coercion, and treat any non-peaceful means of determining Taiwan's future as a matter of grave concern. This legislation created the legal basis for the unofficial relationship that continues today, conducted through the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States.

The 1982 Six Assurances, communicated privately to Taiwan, clarified that the United States had not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales, would not consult with Beijing on arms sales, would not mediate between Taipei and Beijing, would not pressure Taiwan to negotiate, had not altered its position on sovereignty, and would not formally recognize Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan. These assurances, later made public, remain reference points for U.S. policy.

Taiwan itself transformed during this period. Martial law, in effect since 1949, ended in 1987. The first direct presidential election occurred in 1996, prompting the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis when China conducted missile tests and military exercises intended to intimidate voters. The United States responded by deploying two aircraft carrier battle groups to the region, the largest American military deployment in Asia since the Vietnam War. The crisis demonstrated both the potential for escalation and the effectiveness of deterrence.

The subsequent two decades saw fluctuating cross-strait relations. Periods of engagement under KMT administrations, particularly during Ma Ying-jeou's presidency from 2008 to 2016, produced expanded economic ties, direct flights, tourist exchanges, and the institutionalization of dialogue mechanisms. Periods of tension under Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) governments, which reject the 1992 Consensus and emphasize Taiwanese identity, saw reduced official contact and increased PRC pressure.

Throughout this history, a critical demographic and identity shift occurred. Whereas early ROC arrivals and their descendants once dominated politics and maintained Chinese nationalist ideology, subsequent generations of native Taiwanese increasingly identified as distinctly Taiwanese rather than Chinese. Opinion polling consistently shows declining support for unification and growing preference for maintaining the status quo indefinitely or eventual independence. This shift has occurred even as economic integration deepened, suggesting that interdependence alone does not produce political convergence.

Xi Jinping's consolidation of power from 2012 onward marked an inflection point. The PRC adopted a more assertive posture globally and specifically toward Taiwan. Xi declared that the Taiwan issue cannot be passed from generation to generation indefinitely, eliminating previous assumptions about infinite patience. Military modernization accelerated, closing capability gaps with the United States. The Hong Kong national security crackdown in 2020



effectively ended "one country, two systems" as a viable model for Taiwan, further hardening attitudes on the island.

## Current Situation:

The current situation in the Taiwan Strait is characterized by eroding stability, increased military activity, hardening political positions, and diminished space for diplomatic maneuver. The trajectory is concerning: nearly all indicators point toward heightened escalation risk rather than sustainable equilibrium.

Military dynamics have shifted substantially. The People's Liberation Army has undergone decades of modernization specifically oriented toward a Taiwan contingency. China now possesses the world's largest navy by ship count, advanced anti-ship ballistic missiles capable of targeting aircraft carriers, integrated air defense systems, cyber and space warfare capabilities, and an amphibious assault capacity that continues to expand. The PLA conducts regular exercises simulating blockade, invasion, and strikes against Taiwan and intervening forces. Annual defense white papers and military publications emphasize reunification as a core mission.

PLA Air Force and Navy operations near Taiwan have intensified dramatically. Incursions into Taiwan's ADIZ, once rare, now occur almost daily and sometimes involve dozens of aircraft including bombers,

fighters, and drones. Naval vessels regularly cross the median line in the Taiwan Strait, an informal boundary that was previously respected. These operations serve multiple purposes: training, signaling resolve, testing Taiwan's responses, exhausting Taiwan's aging fighter fleet, and normalizing a PRC military presence near the island.

Taiwan's military capacity faces structural challenges. Defense spending, while increasing, remains modest relative to the threat. Conscript periods have been extended but military readiness varies. Reliance on major weapons platforms from the United States involves long lead times and potential vulnerability to blockade. Taiwan has shifted toward an asymmetric defense concept emphasizing mobile, survivable, and cost-effective systems, but implementation is ongoing.

The United States has increased arms sales to Taiwan, approved transactions including F-16 fighters, Harpoon missiles, and various defensive systems, and conducted more frequent naval transits through the Taiwan Strait. Senior officials have made statements suggesting movement away from strategic ambiguity, though policy formally remains unchanged. Military planning for Taiwan contingencies has reportedly intensified. These measures aim to bolster deterrence but are perceived in Beijing as provocative interference.

Diplomatically, cross-strait relations are frozen. Formal communication channels established during the Ma administration are inactive. Beijing refuses contact with the DPP government, which it labels separatist. Taiwan's current president, Lai Ching-te, who took office in 2024, is viewed in Beijing as more independence-leaning than his predecessor. His



election, despite Chinese pressure campaigns, demonstrated the limits of coercion and the resilience of Taiwan's democratic process.

International attention has elevated Taiwan's profile. Major powers increasingly frame Taiwan Strait stability as a global concern rather than a purely regional matter. Japan has explicitly linked Taiwan's security to its own in official documents. European states have sent naval vessels through the Strait. G7 communiqués reference peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. This internationalization provides Taiwan with diplomatic support but also risks provoking stronger Chinese reactions.

Economic factors cut multiple directions. Taiwan's semiconductor dominance makes it strategically indispensable: disruption would cripple industries worldwide. This creates incentives for all parties to avoid conflict but also makes Taiwan a more valuable prize. China has pursued semiconductor self-sufficiency with limited success. Meanwhile, economic coercion against Taiwan, banning imports, restricting tourism, sanctioning firms, has increased, testing the boundaries of grey zone pressure.

The risk of accidental escalation has grown. With military assets operating in close proximity, communication channels limited, and political flexibility constrained, the margin for miscalculation has narrowed. An accident, a collision, a system malfunction, a misread signal, could trigger responses that spiral beyond control. Crisis management mechanisms that exist between the United States and China are thin; those between the PRC and Taiwan are essentially nonexistent.

Preventive diplomacy in this context confronts fundamental obstacles. China considers Taiwan an internal affair and rejects any international role. The Security Council cannot act over China's veto. Yet the alternative, allowing drift toward conflict, carries catastrophic risks. The challenge is identifying measures that reduce escalation risk without requiring resolution of status issues or formal Council action that China would block.

## Key Treaties/Agreements:

### **The Cairo Declaration (1943) and Potsdam Declaration (1945):**

Wartime statements by Allied powers that Japanese-held territories including Formosa (Taiwan) should be restored to the Republic of China. These declarations are cited by the PRC as establishing Taiwan's status as Chinese territory. Their legal force as treaties versus political statements is debated, and subsequent developments complicated their implementation.

### **The San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951):**

The treaty formally ending World War II between Japan and Allied powers. Japan renounced all right, title, and claim to Taiwan but the treaty did not specify to whom sovereignty was transferred. Neither the PRC nor ROC signed the treaty. This ambiguity in international law remains relevant to sovereignty disputes.

**The US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty (1954):**

A security alliance between the United States and the Republic of China, committing each party to meet an armed attack on the other. The treaty was terminated by the United States in 1980 following normalization with the PRC, but its existence for 25 years shaped the strategic environment.

**The Shanghai Communiqué (1972):**

The joint statement issued following Nixon's visit to China. The United States acknowledged that Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is one China and that Taiwan is part of China, and did not challenge that position. The United States also affirmed its interest in peaceful settlement by the Chinese themselves. The communiqué established the basis for subsequent normalization.

**The Joint Communiqué on Normalization (1979):**

Established diplomatic relations between the United States and the PRC. The United States recognized the PRC as the sole legal government of China and acknowledged the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China. The United States stated it would maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.

**The Taiwan Relations Act (1979):**

United States domestic legislation passed by Congress following normalization. The act commits the United States to make available defensive arms to Taiwan, to maintain the capacity to resist any resort to force that would jeopardize Taiwan's security, and to consider any effort to determine Taiwan's future by non-peaceful means a threat to Western Pacific peace and of grave concern to the United States. The act provides legal authority for the unofficial relationship and arms sales.

**The August 17 Communiqué (1982):**

A joint statement in which the United States declared its intention to gradually reduce its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over time to final resolution. China stated its fundamental policy of striving for peaceful reunification. Interpretation of this communiqué has been contested, with the United States maintaining that arms sales are conditioned on China's continued commitment to peaceful resolution.

**The Six Assurances (1982):**

Private assurances from the Reagan administration to Taiwan, later made public and affirmed by Congress. The United States stated it had not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales, had not agreed to consult with Beijing on sales, would not mediate between Taipei and Beijing, would not pressure Taiwan to negotiate, had not altered its position on sovereignty, and would not recognize Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan.

### **The 1992 Consensus:**

A claimed understanding between representatives of Beijing and Taipei that both sides adhere to one China, with each maintaining its own interpretation. The term was coined later and the content is disputed. The KMT in Taiwan and the PRC treat it as a foundation for dialogue. The DPP rejects it, arguing either that no consensus occurred or that its content is unacceptable. Beijing has made acceptance a precondition for official contact.

### **The Anti-Secession Law (2005):**

PRC domestic legislation stating that Taiwan is part of China, opposing and checking Taiwan independence, and authorizing the state to employ non-peaceful means if independence forces cause the separation of Taiwan from China, if a major incident occurs entailing separation, or if possibilities for peaceful reunification are exhausted. The law codified circumstances under which force would be used.

### **The Taiwan Travel Act (2018):**

United States legislation encouraging visits between officials of the United States and Taiwan at all levels. The act signaled increased U.S. willingness to engage with Taiwan officially, prompting strong Chinese objections.

## **Key Country Positions:**

### **People's Republic of China:**

China considers Taiwan a core interest on which no compromise is possible. Beijing insists that Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory and that reunification is a historical inevitability. The PRC opposes any action that implies Taiwan is a sovereign state, including official diplomatic relations, UN membership, and arms sales. China has not renounced the use of force and the Anti-Secession Law specifies conditions under which non-peaceful means would be employed. Beijing rejects any international role in what it considers an internal affair and would veto Security Council action. At the same time, China officially prefers peaceful reunification and has proposed the "one country, two systems" framework, though Hong Kong's experience has eliminated this model's credibility in Taiwan. Preventive diplomacy, from Beijing's perspective, means external parties not interfering and Taiwan not pursuing independence.

### **Taiwan/Chinese Taipei:**

Taiwan operates as a democratic, self-governing entity with strong interests in maintaining the status quo and avoiding forced unification. The current government rejects the 1992 Consensus, maintains that Taiwan is already a sovereign country (formally the Republic of China), and sees no need for independence declarations that would provoke conflict. Taiwan seeks international space, meaningful participation in international organizations, and security partnerships that deter PRC coercion.

Taiwan supports preventive diplomacy mechanisms that reduce escalation risk, including confidence-building measures and communication channels, but participation is

constrained by Beijing's refusal to engage with the current government. Taiwan's position emphasizes that any change to its status must have the consent of its 23 million people.

#### **United States of America:**

The United States maintains a One China policy while preserving robust unofficial relations with Taiwan. Washington opposes any unilateral attempt to change the status quo by either side. The Taiwan Relations Act obligates provision of defensive arms and maintenance of capacity to resist coercion. Strategic ambiguity on intervention remains official policy, though statements by senior officials have tested its boundaries. The United States supports Taiwan's self-defense capability, encourages cross-strait dialogue, and views stability in the Taiwan Strait as essential to regional and global security. Preventive diplomacy efforts focus on deterrence, communication with Beijing to avoid miscalculation, and maintaining space for peaceful resolution.

#### **Japan:**

Japan considers Taiwan Strait stability directly linked to its own security, given geographic proximity and dependence on sea lanes passing near Taiwan. Official documents now reference Taiwan contingencies explicitly. Japan hosts U.S. forces that would be involved in any Taiwan scenario and has begun discussing roles it might play, within constitutional constraints, in supporting U.S. operations. Japan maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan and economic ties are substantial. Tokyo supports preventive diplomacy through deterrence, alliance coordination, and regional stability frameworks.

#### **South Korea:**

South Korea maintains a delicate balance between its alliance with the United States and its economic relationship with China. Seoul has been cautious about Taiwan statements, given vulnerability to Chinese economic pressure and the priority of managing North Korea. South Korea has unofficial relations with Taiwan and some economic ties but avoids actions Beijing would consider provocative. Preventive diplomacy from Seoul's perspective emphasizes stability and avoiding being drawn into conflict.

#### **Australia:**

Australia has aligned more closely with the United States on Indo-Pacific security, including Taiwan. The AUKUS partnership reflects concern about regional military balance. Australian officials have made statements supporting Taiwan Strait stability and the importance of peaceful resolution. Economic friction with China has reduced leverage concerns. Australia supports preventive diplomacy through alliance coordination and regional security architecture.

#### **France:**

France supports a rules-based international order and opposes unilateral changes to the status quo. French naval vessels have transited the Taiwan Strait. France emphasizes European strategic autonomy and interests in Indo-Pacific stability. Paris supports peaceful resolution and dialogue while maintaining unofficial relations with Taiwan. France would

likely support Security Council engagement on Taiwan Strait risk reduction but recognizes China's veto constraint.

**United Kingdom:**

The United Kingdom maintains a One China policy with unofficial Taiwan relations. British naval presence in the Indo-Pacific has increased, including Taiwan Strait transits. The UK frames Taiwan Strait stability as a matter of international rules and norms. London supports preventive diplomacy through coordination with allies and emphasis on peaceful resolution.

**Germany:**

Germany has significant economic ties with both China and Taiwan, particularly in technology sectors. Berlin has historically prioritized economic engagement with China but has shifted toward greater concern about security and values. Germany supports peaceful resolution, opposes unilateral changes to the status quo, and emphasizes dialogue and rules-based order. German Indo-Pacific engagement remains limited compared to Anglophone allies.

**Russia:**

Russia rhetorically supports China's position on Taiwan, framing it as an internal Chinese affair and opposing external interference. Moscow has drawn parallels between Taiwan and its own territorial claims. Sino-Russian strategic partnership has deepened, though Russia's direct stake in Taiwan is limited. Russia would support China's position in the Security Council and oppose any action Beijing considers interference.

**India:**

India maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan and some economic ties. New Delhi's approach is shaped by its own complicated relationship with Beijing, including border disputes. India avoids provocative statements on Taiwan but has interests in Indo-Pacific stability and rules-based order. India generally supports peaceful resolution and would likely prefer avoiding Security Council involvement that could set precedents for Kashmir.

**ASEAN States:**

Southeast Asian nations generally avoid taking sides on Taiwan while preferring stability. Many have their own disputes with China in the South China Sea and concerns about great power competition. ASEAN emphasizes dialogue, peaceful resolution, and avoiding actions that could escalate tensions. Individual states vary in their alignment with Washington or Beijing.

## Possible Solutions:

The following solutions address preventive diplomacy in the Taiwan Strait within realistic constraints. They acknowledge that the Security Council cannot act over China's veto on sovereignty issues, that underlying political disputes will not be resolved near-term, and that the goal is risk reduction and escalation prevention rather than comprehensive settlement.

### **Crisis Communication Mechanisms:**

Establish or strengthen hotlines and communication channels between military commands to prevent accidents from escalating. Priority areas include direct military-to-military links between the United States and China, mechanisms for real-time communication during incidents, and protocols for managing encounters at sea and in the air. While China has historically been reluctant to formalize such mechanisms (preferring ambiguity), the increased density of military activity raises stakes for all parties. The Security Council could encourage such mechanisms through presidential statements that do not require China's affirmative vote.

### **Incidents at Sea and Air Protocol:**

Develop or revitalize bilateral agreements governing conduct when military vessels and aircraft operate in proximity. The existing US-China Military Maritime Consultative Agreement and Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea provide frameworks but require strengthening and consistent implementation. Clear rules for approaching, signaling, and disengaging reduce miscalculation risk without addressing political disputes.

### **Secretary-General Good Offices:**

The UN Secretary-General possesses independent capacity to offer good offices for conflict prevention. While formal mediation on Taiwan would be rejected by Beijing, quieter engagement on risk reduction, humanitarian issues, or technical matters might find space. The Secretary-General could appoint a special envoy for regional confidence-building without formally addressing Taiwan's status, focusing on preventing conflict rather than resolving sovereignty.

### **Track 1.5 and Track 2 Dialogue Support:**

Academic, former official, and civil society dialogues have historically provided channels when official contact is constrained. The Security Council or UN system could encourage and support such dialogues focused on risk reduction, scenario planning, and confidence-building. These tracks allow exploration of sensitive issues without committing governments and can generate ideas that later inform official policy.

### **Regional Security Architecture Development:**

Promote broader regional security frameworks that include risk reduction and confidence-building as components. This could involve strengthening existing mechanisms

like the ASEAN Regional Forum, developing new formats that address maritime security and military transparency, or building on bilateral and minilateral arrangements. Taiwan's participation would remain constrained, but frameworks that reduce regional tensions indirectly benefit cross-strait stability.

#### **Transparency and Arms Control Measures:**

Encourage greater military transparency including advance notification of major exercises, limitations on certain destabilizing capabilities or deployments, and information exchanges on military doctrine. While comprehensive arms control is unrealistic, targeted measures addressing specific escalation risks could find acceptance. The Security Council could endorse general principles even if detailed implementation requires bilateral negotiation.

#### **Economic Interdependence Safeguards:**

Recognize that economic decoupling increases conflict risk by reducing mutual stakes. Encourage maintenance of economic channels and oppose coercive economic measures. While the Council has limited economic jurisdiction, statements emphasizing the link between economic engagement and stability could reinforce norms against weaponizing trade and investment.

#### **Humanitarian and Disaster Response Cooperation:**

Build cooperation on less politically sensitive issues, disaster response, maritime safety, public health, environmental protection, that establish working relationships and communication habits potentially useful in a crisis. Such functional cooperation can occur without resolving status questions and creates patterns of interaction that may reduce hostility margins.

#### **Preventing Third-Party Escalation:**

Address risks that parties other than the direct actors could trigger escalation, whether through provocative actions, misinformation, cyberattacks, or involvement of non-state actors. The Security Council's general mandate for international peace and security provides a basis for addressing escalation risks without taking positions on underlying disputes.

#### **Normative Framework Development:**

Develop or reinforce international norms against unilateral changes to territorial status by force. While China would object to Taiwan-specific language, general principles opposing acquisition of territory by force and supporting peaceful dispute resolution have broad acceptance and indirectly apply. Strengthening these norms raises costs of aggression without requiring Council action specific to Taiwan.



## Further Readings:

"The Taiwan Strait Crisis and U.S. Policy" by Richard Bush Brookings Institution

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-taiwan-strait-crisis-and-u-s-policy/>

"China's Military Threat to Taiwan" by Ian Easton Project 2049 Institute

<https://project2049.net/chinese-invasion-threat/>

"Cross-Strait Relations: First the Easy, Now the Hard" by Alan Romberg Stimson Center <https://www.stimson.org/content/cross-strait-relations>

"Taiwan's Defense and Deterrence Strategy" by Drew Thompson War on the Rocks <https://warontherocks.com/taiwan-defense-strategy/>

"The Taiwan Relations Act at 40" by Bonnie Glaser Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) <https://www.csis.org/analysis/taiwan-relations-act-40>

"One China, Multiple Interpretations" by Jacques deLisle Foreign Affairs <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/one-china-multiple-interpretations>

"Why Taiwan Matters" by Shelley Rigger Rowman & Littlefield (book excerpt) <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442204805>

"U.S.-China Military Relations" by David Shambaugh Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-china-military-relations>

"Taiwan's Semiconductor Dominance" by Chris Miller Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/article/taiwan-semiconductor-dominance>

"Preventive Diplomacy: Delivering Results" by the UN Secretary-General United Nations <https://www.un.org/undpa/en/preventive-diplomacy>

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