

Memorandum to: **The Next President of the United States**

From: **The Project 2049 Institute**

Subject: **The Inheritance in the Indo-Pacific and the Challenges and Opportunities for Your Presidency**

Mr. President-elect, you are assuming office at an unprecedented moment in American history, with remarkable challenges and tremendous opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to disrupt the global economy and the supply chains that are crucial to maintaining interconnectivity between allies and partners. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and 5G communications, are shaping daily life for Americans and compounding the challenges of the current threat environment. Breakthrough technologies are evolving the character of conflict and blurring previously set red lines. The evolving and still nascent potential of artificial intelligence, the Internet, and the interconnected nature of the 21st Century remain opportunities of unparalleled potential. Yet hacking, intellectual property theft, insidious propaganda, and unmanned warfare are all tools that our adversaries use to erode American credibility around the world on a daily basis. These technologies, and the associated gray-zone tactics, will only become more complex and insidious as technological capabilities rapidly continue to expand. Beyond that, great-power competition with Russia and especially the People’s Republic of China (PRC, China) is a major and growing concern. Both authoritarian regimes aim to reshape the world to their benefit and will continue to go to extreme lengths to achieve their objectives. Mr. President-elect, if the United States does not carefully manage the current landscape, you could potentially face a world shaped by principles and values that would undermine the existing world order, and which are unequivocally un-American. This slate of issues requires strong and decisive leadership and demonstrates the absolute necessity of protecting the fundamental principles that have guided the U.S.-led liberal democratic world order to unprecedented levels of prosperity.

The Resilience of American Fundamental Principles

America’s fundamental principles—which guide the U.S. policymaking community— have proven resilient. In the Indo-Pacific region, these principles are especially important. They are: (1) strengthening ties based on common principles and ideals among like-minded partners and allies; (2) promoting democratic governance in the Indo-Pacific; (3) countering the increasing threat posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); (4) and encouraging free and fair trade among Indo-Pacific nations. These are the compass that should guide your administration’s Indo-Pacific policy.

Of course, while our principles are steadfast, our policies should not be stagnant. Policies created to support U.S. security interests in the Indo-Pacific must evolve—guided by our anchoring principles—but driven by the threat environment. As the threat environment evolves, so should our direction. This is what we have seen over the last few administrations. In the recent past,

uncertainty about the PRC's political direction undergirded a hopeful policy of engagement. As America's understanding of the Chinese Communist Party has become more informed, and the Party under Chairman Xi Jinping has failed the world in its duties as a responsible stakeholder, we have necessarily evolved to strategic competition. This is an environment in which we cooperate where we can and compete where we must.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Policy Evolution is Threat-Driven

The Obama administration's "Pivot to Asia," while not a concrete strategic set of guidelines with explicit end goals, was based largely on the principles of mutual economic growth, trade, democratic governance, and human rights. Similarly, the Trump administration's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy is defined through goals such as free, fair, and reciprocal trade, open investment environments, good governance, and freedom of the seas, which, at their core, are consistent principles to the ones espoused by the previous administration.¹ While observers will cite that the Trump administration has been more confrontational with China on certain issues, this change in policy does not reflect a change in priorities or principles. Rather, the U.S. government's strong support for the Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan), and increasing challenges posed by Chinese Communist Party CCP influence operations, stem from the fact that the threat posed by the CCP against the principles of fair trade, democracy, and human rights is greater than ever before.

Analyzing U.S. foreign military sales trends toward Taiwan offers an example to defend this concept. While arms sales to Taiwan were one aspect of the U.S. government's relationship with Taiwan in 2010, the United States stopped short of selling new F-16 fighter aircraft at the time.² However, the threat Taiwan faces is much more daunting in 2020; as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) continues to modernize its own technology and weaponry, while also increasingly provoking Taiwanese security through airspace violations and naval threats, the U.S. government has worked to provide defensive capacity and capabilities to its like-minded partner; one component of this increased engagement with Taiwan has been more frequent, regularized, and substantive foreign military sales.³

A Tradition of Principle-Guided Regional Support

Across presidential administrations, America's commitment to democratic governance is evident in our diplomatic initiatives, security alliances, and close cooperation with Indo-Pacific allies. To uphold independent sovereignty and ensure regional security, the U.S. government has created, maintained, and increased bilateral security alliances, including those involving arms sales, military training exercises, intelligence-sharing, and operational planning. Amid increasing political warfare from the PRC, America stands for the preservation of democratic institutions, and the U.S. government has bolstered partnerships with allies like Taiwan, Japan, Australia, and India to promote government transparency, anti-corruption efforts, democratic reforms, and the rule of law in Indo-Pacific states. As a country that lives by the values of a secure and liberal democracy, the United States is constantly engaged in, and working with, multilateral institutions like the United Nations (UN) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to combat transnational issues like human trafficking, environmental conservation, humanitarian relief, and

cybersecurity. The results of American resilience on democratic values are clear. New and existing diplomatic frameworks show that multilateral work to spread liberal democratic values is an enduring outcome of U.S. foreign policy.

The United States has long upheld the values of supporting human rights and freedoms around the world. In international areas like the South China Sea, U.S. government officials have utilized diplomatic and military capabilities to assert that all nations must comply with international law and freedom of navigation. Together with Indo-Pacific and worldwide allies, U.S. government officials have condemned, and held to account, countries that abuse human rights and violate an individual's right to democratic participation. American allies and partners, like Taiwan, have expressed the same sentiment and solidarity given our shared values of freedom and democracy.⁴ The U.S. government and the American people have strongly condemned the unjust persecution of ethnic groups like the Uyghurs and Rohingya people. When the CCP imposed major authoritarian crackdowns on Hong Kong starting in 2019, U.S. lawmakers and government officials from both sides of the aisle unanimously passed and enforced legislation and resolutions to reinforce our defense of Indo-Pacific democratic systems and way of life. The message was clear: throughout all presidential administrations, the United States will continue to lead and uphold our values and support for human rights and freedoms across the world.

Standing for the right of independent and sovereign states to pursue fair economic competition, America has been leading regional efforts for a more prosperous Indo-Pacific. Actively working with multilateral institutions, like the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and nation-state partners, the U.S. government has invested in Indo-Pacific states and promoted fairer trade practices, market access, entrepreneurship, and other economic reforms. As major strategic competitors like the PRC have expanded economic policies that undermine our principles of free and fair trade, the U.S. is seeking to expand its economic ties with existing partners who share our principles on economic freedom and prosperity. For example, due to growing appreciation for Taiwan as a close partner, bipartisan U.S. government officials and lawmakers have encouraged the U.S. to pursue closer economic ties through a prospective U.S.-Taiwan free trade agreement.⁵ In Taiwan, an overwhelming 85% of adults support closer economic ties with the U.S., and 79% support closer political ties.⁶ The widespread support for stronger economic ties with Indo-Pacific allies and friends is a culmination of America's years-long adherence to fair and open economies.

Today, the Chinese Communist Party's actions pose one of the most significant threats to the United States and its like-minded allies and partners. Your administration's policies would do well to remain rooted in the same fundamental principles and concepts that have guided U.S. policy for decades, and the evolution of your policies ought to be calculated in accordance with the threat posed to the United States within the changing international order.

The Indo-Pacific Fulda-Gap

The PRC has embarked on a long and intense competition for dominance over the Indo-Pacific region. Taiwan is at the geographic and political heart of this competition. To illustrate with an imperfect but useful analogy, Taiwan is the Fulda Gap of the Asia-Pacific. The "Taiwan issue" is

not a mere problem to be managed as part of a delicate U.S. relationship with the PRC. Rather, Taiwan is the front line of growing regional and strategic competition, and key to preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific. Your administration should recognize the urgency of this situation and develop appropriate options with a sense of purpose. If our policymaking community does not innovate quickly enough, the risks of conflict increase.

During the Cold War, the Fulda Gap in West Germany was a potential flashpoint for conflict. NATO war planners saw this as a weak point and a potential route for a Soviet push into Western Europe. American and allied military weapon systems and strategies were built around this potential battlefield. As such, successful planning and adaptation toward the flashpoint led to broad strategic stability. The U.S. should see Taiwan as today's Indo-Pacific Fulda Gap. This analogy is useful to contextualize Taiwan as a specific geographic location wherein political and military interests collide. As with the Fulda Gap, the stability surrounding Taiwan will have ramifications not only for the major powers involved, but for the entire international community.

Strategic competition between the U.S. and the PRC lends weight to the analogy. Communist China's long-term goal is absolute control and domination over the Indo-Pacific. The CCP's far-reaching political ambitions are a dangerous mix that will spell disaster if not dealt with correctly. Current maritime tensions in the East China Sea and South China Sea, while serious, pale in comparison to this flashpoint. The long-term stability of Taiwan requires a continued push of resources, a more competitive posture, and a rapid re-assessment of military requirements needed to compete successfully. Taiwan is the front-line in which regional and strategic competition will develop, and is an integral part of maintaining a true free and open Indo-Pacific.

Increasingly so, China's acquisition of weapons such as pin-point accurate anti-ship ballistic and cruise missiles, hypersonic flight vehicles, and autonomous weapons call into question the United States' ability to enter battlespace to defend Taiwan if required. As the Fulda Gap scenario in Europe once required the U.S. to invest in capabilities to prevent conflict from unfolding, the same adaptation and innovation is needed in the Indo-Pacific. Stability within the region exists due in part to the military balance between U.S. forces and the PLA. However, if the United States is to prevail against this modern Fulda Gap scenario, the critical role of partners and allies in the region cannot be under stressed.

An Evolving Regional Response to the Asia-Pacific Fulda Gap

The United States, Japan, Australia, India and Taiwan are strong democracies that view a free and open Indo-Pacific as a lead guidepost for the future, and rely on open lines of communication to maintain the free flow of trade. The U.S. shares formal security treaties with Japan and Australia, and regularly trains and performs military exercises with both partners. Just as stability in the Fulda Gap relied on NATO, Taiwan's safety will depend on a collaborative effort between the U.S., and its regional allies and partners. Although the United States is the majority stakeholder in maintaining a military balance vis-à-vis the PRC, Japan and Australia have ramped up their contributions by undertaking gradual changes to declaratory policy, as well as force posture.

Japan's "Defense of Japan 2020" summarizes that its surrounding environment is increasingly dangerous, and uncertain.⁷ In response, Japan spent the past decade developing and modernizing its Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to meet regional standards. The 2018 National Defense Program Guidelines prioritize building a "multi-domain defense force," or developing its joint forces in addition to a greater focus on space, cyber, and electromagnetic capabilities.⁸ The purpose of these new force planning guidelines is to respond to grey-zone activities, defend its remote islands, and counteract cyber-attacks. Recently, Japan put on hold its purchase of AEGIS Ashore systems, and is considering multiple options such as new missile defense platforms, and long-range strike capabilities.⁹

In response to changing regional dynamics, the Australian government's "2020 Defense Strategic Update" set forth three primary strategic objectives. These are "to shape Australia's strategic environment; to deter actions against Australia's interests; and to respond with credible military force, when required."¹⁰ Within each of these goals, the Australian Defense Force places a premium on modernizing its partnerships through defense diplomacy, increasing coalition operations when possible, and prioritizing a shift from a "defensive force" to one that can "hold potential adversaries' forces and infrastructure at risk from a greater distance, and therefore influence the calculus of costs involved in threatening Australian interests."¹¹ As its coinciding 2020 Force Structure update report lays out, Australia looks to increase inventory of long-range strike weapons, UAVs, and even mining capabilities to achieve its previous goal of holding adversaries' assets at risk from afar.¹² Similar to Japan, it also views space, cyber, and electromagnetic warfare domains as critical to its operational capabilities.

The Indian Ministry of Defense views the regional environment similar to Japan and Australia. In order to adapt to "rapid and unexpected" changes to Indo-Pacific stability, India views its partnerships with Japan and Australia as essential.¹³ Although India historically values its strategic independence from other states, pressures from the PLA in the maritime and land domains are shifting that point of view. This year's border clashes between Indian and Chinese forces exemplify the reasons behind India's push for greater cooperation in maintaining balance within the Indo-Pacific. Just this year, India and Japan signed an agreement to provide each other logistics and supplies if needed, further solidifying future cooperation.¹⁴ Australia and India also agreed to allow use of military bases, paving the way for additional defense cooperation.¹⁵ India's investment in partnerships signal a firm interest in the safety and stability of the Indo-Pacific, which could be leveraged by the United States.

Beyond defense, Japan, Australia, and India have increased their relations with Taiwan in the past decade. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, speaking at an Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) event, underlined the importance of increasing cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners to offset the PRC's attempts to undermine Asia-Pacific stability.¹⁶ Citing recent cyber-attacks on Australian and Taiwanese infrastructure, the ROC government hopes to develop greater communication between regional partners to protect against future cyber-attacks. Today, the U.S., Japan, and Taiwan all cooperate under the Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF). GCTF primarily focuses on collaboration in humanitarian assistance, public health, environmental protection, and education, yet its structure serves as a plausible framework for expanding the scope

of cooperation to include defense.¹⁷ Although India's ties to Taiwan are not as robust, both parties are increasingly open to cooperation where interests meet.¹⁸

Just as the United States' view of the Fulda Gap made clear, its vision of the Indo-Pacific must stand for peace and prosperity, not unwanted aggression.¹⁹ The U.S. is not alone in this push. Partners such as Japan, Australia, and India are making substantial progress in developing the capabilities and frameworks that will act as pillars to maintain freedom and prosperity for years to come. Stability will also require increasing collaboration with Taiwan on multiple dimensions, including defense cooperation. Although individual, unilateral investments are critical, a collective approach to the defense of the region greatly speaks to the principles for which the United States stands.

Developing the international space for Taiwan and its regional, like-minded partners is essential in upholding the current international order. Taiwan's excellent response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which leveraged its outstanding technological capabilities, in addition to applying lessons from previous health crises such as the 2003 SARS outbreak, clearly signaled that it can offer much on the international stage. For Taiwan to contribute successfully, the United States and its allies must leverage their positions to bring Taipei into international organizations. Beyond that, the U.S. will need to assist in developing Taiwan's current diplomatic partnerships. The CCP continues to apply massive pressure on Taiwan's ability to maintain official ties with its allies through myriad coercive measures. While it is certainly appropriate for Taiwan to continue to cultivate its formal treaty partners, it is of greater strategic importance to strengthen ties with the United States, Japan, Australia and the European Union.

The United States, in partnership with Japan, Australia, Taiwan, India, and other like-minded allies and partners, should continue to develop policy continuity shaped by the fundamental principles put forth earlier. Mr. President-elect, we must actively take measures with our partners to prevent conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Those measures ought to create international space for Taiwan to operate and contribute to multiple dimensions ranging from global health, information sharing, and even defense. These actions will not go unchallenged. Through the Fulda Gap lens, the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait is not as favorably distributed as it once was. As the balance shifts away from the United States and toward Communist China, room for miscalculation, and even conflict, grows. The PRC is clear in its intent toward Taiwan and is not empty-handed in its threats toward the U.S. and its allies. The United States' advantage is eroding amidst a gathering storm characterized by massive investment on the part of the Chinese Communist Party, its armed-wing, the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and other coercive tools.

The Perfect Storm

It is likely that events in the Taiwan Strait, more than any other geographic location outside our borders, will pose the most difficult challenges and gravest threats to our national security during your tenure as President. Over the past five years, the Taiwan Strait has become deeply imbalanced in favor of the PLA, encouraging aggression from the CCP regime.

Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, the Indo-Pacific region has flourished largely because of the unquestioned primacy of our nation and the strength of our alliance system. Our leadership in East Asia has encouraged countries to set aside subversion, coercion, and the use of armed force as tools of statecraft. However, in recent years PRC leaders have repeatedly signaled that they will not honor past practices and norms as their country rises. Xi Jinping has publicly stated that achieving the CCP's collective vision for the PRC's future, something it calls the "great Chinese rejuvenation," can only occur once Taiwan is annexed or "unified" under its authority. According to this narrative, the PRC cannot become a true great power until Taiwan submits to CCP control.

Taiwanese election results and public polling indicate Beijing's attempts to use political, economic, and cultural measures to infiltrate and control Taiwan have failed. This has led the CCP to rely more heavily on armed coercion and hostile propaganda to advance its objectives for the future. In recent months, the PRC has sharply escalated military tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the CCP's propaganda services have openly threatened to invade Taiwan and "wipe out" the President of Taiwan.

The determination of Xi Jinping and the CCP to make conquering Taiwan the primary feature of party-state policy is an event of first magnitude in world affairs. A perfect storm of unprecedented and unparalleled challenges is fast emerging. Of great significance is the deep and growing imbalance of power across the Taiwan Strait, which has combined with the COVID-19 pandemic, and is what the CCP likely sees as a window of opportunity regarding forcible reunification. Quite simply put, an open-ended crisis is now underway that could result in a catastrophic war between our country and the PRC.

Although the previous administration made laudable steps to improve our defense and security ties with Taiwan, and Taiwan's government made efforts to reform its own defensive posture, the PRC's military buildup has accelerated and far outpaced the countervailing defensive programs. Taiwan punches above its weight compared to our other allies and partners of comparable size, but there is simply no way it can effectively deter and defeat a Chinese attack alone. No matter what we might sell Taiwan, and what they might decide to spend on indigenous defense programs, it will almost certainly not be sufficient to meet the threat if Taiwan remains isolated. The PRC has vast military potential, and Beijing is in the process of mobilizing its entire society for a future offensive campaign against Taiwan.

In 2016, the Beijing authorities began a sweeping military reform and reorganization program with the aim of being able to fight and win the most stressful future scenarios planners in Communist China could envision: an all-out invasion and occupation of Taiwan in the face of joint U.S.-Taiwan attempts to stop them. According to the Defense Department's latest report to Congress, Beijing's efforts have proved largely successful. The balance of power across the Taiwan Strait has shifted more rapidly than anyone seems to have anticipated.

While the previous administration deserves credit for shifting our China policy away from strategic collaboration toward strategic competition, not enough was done to raise the costs the CCP paid for its coverup of the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, its human rights atrocities in Xinjiang,

and its violations of past agreements concerning Hong Kong's freedom and autonomy. In recent years, Chairman Xi Jinping and the CCP learned that they could take major risks and win major prizes at acceptable costs.

At the same time, the Chinese Communist Party's approach has resulted in a near-absence of support for, and public discrediting of, Beijing's "One Country, Two Systems" framework in Taiwan. Beijing's heavy hand toward Hong Kong came directly on the heels of trying to re-sell "One Country, Two Systems" in Taiwan, most notably in Chairman Xi's New Year's speech of 2019.

After the landslide victory of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in January 2020, the Kuomintang (KMT) announced an intent to re-examine its traditional "One China" principle. While attitudes of CCP leaders remain opaque, it is reasonable to assume there is diminished confidence in Beijing that time is on their side and that any opportunities for "re-unification" by peaceful means or subversion have slipped away. Support for unification in Taiwan is virtually gone, and there are few prospects even for a slow, incremental re-Sinification of Taiwan. With a more capable military, this increases the temptation for Chairman Xi to use military force to achieve the regime's revanchist goals.

The security environment is also rapidly changing. Consistent with our 2017 National Security Strategy, the United States is actively moving toward a more competitive posture and re-assessing military requirements for its priority theater. This alters the lens through which U.S. policymakers view Taiwan's security. China has embarked on a long and intense competition for dominance over the Indo-Pacific region. Taiwan—as the Indo-Pacific Fulda Gap—is at the geographic and political heart of this competition. Policymakers should recognize the urgency of this situation and develop appropriate options with a sense of purpose.

If our policy community does not innovate quickly enough, the risks of conflict will rapidly increase. In the absence of countervailing policies by the United States, PRC political, economic, and military pressure against Taiwan is likely to intensify to the point of conflict. Legacy U.S. policy frameworks are too constraining to more proactively shape the political environment, deter use of force, and preserve Taiwan's status (or better) through the midpoint of the century.

Given the stakes and the growing risks, it would be wise to expand the scope of the concrete actions and policies available to Taiwan and the United States. Many of those policies, particularly those in the political-military realm, can be enacted in the near term to respond to the growing challenges posed to regional stability by the Chinese Communist Party.

The Taiwan Strait is the most dangerous and unstable flashpoint for superpower conflict in the world today. It is of vital importance that you direct the United States government to develop and execute a whole-of-government strategy to deter a Chinese Communist Party attack on Taiwan and defeat aggression if deterrence fails. War plans alone are wholly inadequate to the task at hand. All our government departments and agencies have a role to play in bolstering relations with Taiwan and, by extension, long-term strategic stability. Achieving success requires not only your

leadership, but also the understanding of Congress and the American people. In short, this is a political and strategic challenge the likes of which we have never faced before.

While the Pentagon has war plans for the defense of Taiwan, the Department of Defense (DoD) is not adequately resourced and focused on executing these plans. Moreover, even in victory, such a scenario would be disastrous for our nation and the world. A protracted war between the United States and the People's Republic of China would likely result from any attack on Taiwan, *regardless of whether or not we immediately intervene*, and this could run the risk of a PRC nuclear attack on our forces in Asia and even on the U.S. homeland.

Nearly 80,000 Americans are in Taiwan on any given day. If Taiwan falls to CCP subversion or military aggression, large numbers of our citizens will be killed or held hostage. Our alliance system in the Indo-Pacific would come unglued. Our allies could lose all faith in us and our territory might come under direct threat. After it controls Taiwan, we believe the Chinese Communist Party will continue using military force to expand outward. It is vital that we defend Taiwan. It is even more vital that we deter Beijing from attacking Taiwan in the first place.

The Taiwan Relations Act (U.S. Law 96-8) (TRA) states that our national policy is “[t]o provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character; and to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people of Taiwan.” According to this law, the United States is bound by our principles to ensure Taiwan’s democratic government can maintain a credible self-defense. At the same time, we are bound by our national security interests to be fully prepared to come to Taiwan’s defense in the event of a Communist Chinese attack.

Looking ahead, it is imperative that your leadership teams at the National Security Council, State Department, Commerce Department, Treasury Department, Health and Human Services, and other departments and agencies explore innovative approaches for advancing U.S.-Taiwan relations across a broad range of issue areas. Given the high likelihood of a near-term crisis in the Taiwan Strait, it will be particularly important for the Pentagon to improve upon shortcomings in our defense and security relationship with Taiwan. High-impact arms sales should be notified to Congress in a regular and predictable fashion. Yet arms sales alone will not preserve the peace.

The Defense Department should seize upon opportunities to integrate Taiwan’s military into our security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region. Areas for enhanced cooperation could include air and maritime domain awareness, ballistic missile defense, space and cyberspace operations, amphibious assault interdiction operations, and anti-submarine warfare. In addition, joint training and exercise programs are sorely needed. These should be carried out in tandem with ship visits and four-star-level visits.

At the current time, senior military officer visits to Taiwan are rare. They have yet to develop mutual trust with their counterparts. They have not yet been able to study the potential battlespace with their own eyes and form a nuanced view of associated operational matters. In the event of conflict, you will be receiving briefings and counsel from men and women who are experts in

military affairs, but lack on-the-ground experience in Taiwan. It is essential that you direct the Department of Defense to establish a rapid and robust program for senior-level visits and contacts.

Our ability to ensure our interests and deter a Chinese attack on Taiwan is constrained by our lack of presence. At other flashpoints around the world, we deploy troops and Marines to serve as either a garrison force or rotational force, which builds local confidence in our commitments and reinforces adversary perceptions regarding our resolve.

Under your leadership, the Pentagon could develop creative approaches for mitigating this risk. For example, to better facilitate our current efforts and accelerate the transformation of Taiwan's military to an all-volunteer force and augment Taiwan's credible self-defense posture, the Defense Department could deploy Joint Special Operations Command units to Taiwan for long-term liaison, training, and advisory missions. Additionally, the Pentagon could deploy war reserves stocks to Taiwan. Also known as "pre-positioned stocks," these assets are a collection of wartime equipment placed in pre-positioned storage, owned and maintained by the United States to be used by U.S. forces if required. These assets could also be rapidly transferred in the event of war to Taiwan's military. Similar capabilities are currently maintained in Korea, Japan, Kuwait, and other locations around the world and have significant strategic impact.

The risks we and other democracies face from China are very real and they are growing. To ensure long-term peace and prosperity in our priority theater, it is vital that we face the existing deficits and act swiftly to overcome them. Your leadership will be vital. Only the President of the United States has the prestige and influence required to overcome 40 years of policy inertia and prepare our nation for a worst-case perfect storm scenario in the Taiwan Strait. Even better, demonstrating preparedness for the storm may help prevent a worst-case scenario to begin with.

Post-Taiwan Relations Act History

The "One China Policy" in U.S.-Taiwan Relations

The U.S. "One China Policy" acts as a summary term for the collection of documents that define the U.S.-Taiwan-China trilateral relationship, but has no actual concrete definition. Even as the U.S.-Taiwan relationship has shifted substantively over the past few decades, this term has continuously defined the U.S. approach to cross-Strait relations. The U.S. "One China Policy" supports a broader policy approach based on "strategic ambiguity." As the U.S. reconsiders the role of strategic ambiguity in its Taiwan policy, the U.S. "One China Policy" will face a similar re-evaluation.

The U.S. "One China Policy" is distinct from the PRC's "One China Principle" (一个中国政策). The PRC "One China Principle" specifies "there is only one China in the world, Taiwan is a part of China, and the government of the PRC is the sole legal government representing the whole of China."²⁰ The U.S. "One China Policy" has varied its stance on the first of these three points since the August 17th Communiqué in 1979. At that time, the U.S. appeared to fully accept the third point, but left open the question of the second—suggesting that the PRC was the true government

of China, but that Taiwan was not necessarily a part of China; this was acknowledging, rather than accepting, the PRC claim that “there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.”²¹ The language “One China Policy,” rather than “One China Principle” (accepted by the Nixon administration), dates back to the 1980s.²² This “One China Policy” is usually referred to in U.S. government speeches as “our One China Policy,” further distinguishing it from Beijing’s “One China Principle.”

The U.S. “One China Policy” is usually interpreted as referring to the collective series of documents that define the U.S.-Taiwan relationship: the Three Communiqués, the Six Assurances, the non-support of Taiwan’s independence, and the Taiwan Relations Act. In most speeches about the “One China Policy,” U.S. government officials will refer to some subset of these documents - a Beijing audience is reassured by the Three Communiqués and the non-support of Taiwan’s independence, while a Taiwan audience generally prefers the Six Assurances and the TRA. Traditionally, U.S. officials will not only state that the U.S. continues to uphold and support a “One China Policy,” but will name the defining documents of the relationship.²³ While these defining documents remain constants in the “One China Policy,” U.S. policy shifts dramatically within these constraints, staying nominally within the bounds of the “One China Policy.” While the U.S. “One China Policy” supports the current embrace of “strategic ambiguity,” as policy towards Taiwan necessarily shifts, the “One China Policy” must shift as well.

Historical U.S. Policy

The roots of U.S. policy toward Taiwan can be traced back to the concept of “**strategic ambiguity**” that emerged in the 1950s and 1960s during the Cold War, when much of U.S. strategy and foreign policy was dedicated to countering the Soviet Union. For instance, the process of normalizing relations with China was driven by the overarching goal of containing the Soviet bloc; Washington’s relationship with Taiwan changed in large part as a result of the Sino-Soviet split in the 1970s under the Nixon administration.²⁴ To prevent military escalation and conflict in the Taiwan Strait, the U.S. cultivated a policy of “dual deterrence” framed by the underlying objective of maintaining the status quo across the Strait and preserving U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region. By walking the tightrope of simultaneously deterring China from using force while dissuading Taiwan from taking the unilateral steps towards *de jure* independence that would trigger it, the U.S. made its position on the defense of Taiwan purposefully ambiguous.

From the 1950s onwards, each successive U.S. administration has embraced a version of strategic ambiguity whose basic parameters, while unchanged, expanded and contracted across the years as U.S.-Taiwan relations oscillated between periods of high anxiety and ensuing improvement. U.S. policy toward Taiwan also increased in its complexity and nuance over the years with the accumulation of policy statements, formal agreements, and unofficial understandings that further detailed the nature of the U.S. approach. Today, the U.S. government’s Taiwan policy continues to be defined by this legacy framework.

In 1979, the U.S shifted its trajectory to recognize the People’s Republic of China as the legitimate government of China and established full diplomatic relations with the PRC. Beijing set three preconditions for establishing ties with Washington: the severance of the U.S.-ROC Mutual

Defense Treaty, the removal of U.S. troops from Taiwan, and the formal conclusion of diplomatic relationship with Taiwan. Formal ties with the Republic of China were consequently severed, but the U.S. maintained a set of political and security commitments to Taiwan through the enactment of the **Taiwan Relations Act** (TRA) in April 1979.

In the absence of a formal diplomatic relationship, the TRA sets the fundamental legal parameters for U.S. engagement with Taipei. For example, it established the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) as the unofficial U.S. representative office in Taipei to ensure the conduct of day-to-day logistics and consular activities.²⁵ However, the TRA doesn't state the U.S. position regarding the future of Taiwan. It neither supports nor opposes Taiwan's independence, but rather emphasizes the process by which the unsettled issue of Taiwan's political status can be resolved peacefully between Taiwan and China in the future. It specifies only that "any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, is considered a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States."²⁶

U.S. policy toward Taiwan is further shaped by the **Three Joint Communiqués** formulated by the U.S. and the PRC which, in combination with the TRA, serve as the primary documents governing the United States' approach to Taiwan and cross-Strait relations. In the Shanghai Communiqué (1972) brokered by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Premier Zhou Enlai, the U.S. acknowledged—but did not formally endorse—that "all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain that there is but one China and that Taiwan is part of China" and that the U.S. does not challenge that position.²⁷ The Shanghai Communiqué also expressed that it is in the interest of both states to progress toward normalizing relations. It was with the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations of 1979 that the U.S. announced the normalization of relations with the PRC and recognized the PRC government as the sole legitimate government of China, thereby agreeing to another point of Beijing's "One China Principle."²⁸ While the U.S. formally acknowledged that the PRC is the sole government of China, it only acknowledged rather than agreed to the "One China Principle." Thus, the communiqué did not make any statement on Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan.

In the third and final communiqué, also known as the August 17th Communiqué (1982), the U.S. stated that it did not plan to carry out a long-term policy of arms sales to Taiwan. Arms sales would not exceed "either in qualitative or in quantitative terms" those supplied since 1979, and the U.S. government intended to reduce its sales of arms to Taiwan over time.²⁹ Arms sales to Taiwan did decline in the 80s, but the trend reversed in the 90s when the U.S. conducted major weapon platforms deals such as the sale of 150 F-16 fighter aircrafts that were approved by President George H. W. Bush in September 1992.

Soon after the third Communiqué in July 1982, Reagan offered Taiwan a set of assurances to reaffirm U.S. commitment to Taiwan's security, which became a lasting component of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. In the "**Six Assurances**," the Reagan administration sought to clarify the U.S. position vis-à-vis the August 17th Communiqué and indicated that the reduction of arms sales to Taiwan was conditioned upon the PRC's continued commitment to a peaceful resolution of cross-Strait differences.³⁰ The "Six Assurances" also stated that 1) the U.S. had not agreed to set an end date for arms sales; 2) that it had not agreed to hold prior consultations with the PRC regarding

arms sales to Taiwan; 3) that it would not play a mediating role between Taipei and Beijing; 4) that it would not alter the terms of the TRA; 5) nor its position regarding the sovereignty of Taiwan; and, finally, 6) that it would not exert pressure on Taiwan to negotiate with the PRC.³¹ Together, the TRA, the Three Joint Communiqués, the “Six Assurances” serve as the guiding documents for the U.S.-Taiwan relationship.

The tight balancing act maintained by the U.S. began to unravel as a result of the political and economic changes that unfolded internationally and on both sides of the Taiwan Strait in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Economically, Taiwan’s openness to exports increased significantly in the late 1980s, helping to counter the U.S.-Taiwan trade deficit and reduce the disadvantages faced by American exporters. Taiwan had long instituted policies that either specifically responded to American requests or specifically advantaged American companies. The Taiwan government cut tariffs on goods that American exporters wanted to market in Taiwan and added 100 new goods to the tariff exceptions as a gesture of goodwill when U.S. Senators visited the island in 1985. Taiwan also instituted “Buy American” policies between 1978 and 1986.³² In the 1990s, Taiwan sought closer ties with international organizations by re-entering the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), demonstrating a commitment to the international community, and showing willingness to make compromises for recognition.³³ During that time, Taiwan also underwent a process of democratization under President Lee Teng-hui that transformed the authoritarian party-state into a multi-party democracy. Meanwhile, the CCP’s violent repression of protest movements in Tiananmen Square in 1989 removed the imperative in the U.S. to accommodate Beijing’s sensitivities. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, China’s strategic importance in U.S. foreign policy gradually waned.

It was against this backdrop when, in 1994, the Clinton administration initiated a comprehensive review of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. The **Taiwan Policy Review** (TPR) introduced several important policy modifications designed to enhance bilateral ties while still operating within the framework set by the TRA and Three Communiqués. Adjustments included an updated protocol authorizing U.S. cabinet-level officials to visit Taiwan for facilitating political and economic dialogue, as well as the declaration that the U.S. would support Taiwan’s membership in international organizations where statehood is not a precondition for membership. Because it enabled a reassessment of the policies that had governed the U.S. foreign policy approach to Taiwan for the first time since it normalized relations with the PRC in 1979, the TPR expanded the scope of, and significantly improved, U.S.-Taiwan relations. With regard to economic policy, in September 1994, the United States Trade Representative (USTR) signed a bilateral trade agreement with Taiwan called the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). This idea was conceived in 1992 when Ambassador Carla Hills visited Taiwan, and provides the main framework for trade and economic cooperation and negotiations between the two governments.³⁴

By and large, however, adherence to the policy of strategic ambiguity remained unquestioned until the events of 1995-1996 that prompted the **Third Taiwan Strait Crisis**. In 1995, the Clinton administration granted a visa to President Lee Teng-hui to visit the United States when the latter was invited to give a speech at his alma mater, Cornell University. Following Lee’s visit, Beijing staged a series of large-scale live-fire military exercises in the Taiwan Strait from July 1995 to the spring of 1996.³⁵ In the lead-up to Taiwan’s first direct presidential election in 1996, the PLA

further test-fired missiles near the cities of Kaohsiung and Keelung, the island's largest commercial ports. In response to the military exercises, President Clinton dispatched two aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait in March 1996: the USS *Nimitz* and USS *Independence*, the largest naval force to be deployed in the region since the Vietnam War. The Third Taiwan Strait Crisis brought about the militarization of cross-Strait tensions once again. It also marked a critical turning point in the history of U.S.-Taiwan security relations. Whereas in the period between 1979 and 1995-96 security cooperation was limited to symbolic arms sales, the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis prompted a series of U.S. policy adjustments aimed at the diversification of Taiwan's defense planning, which intensified bilateral cooperation moving forward.

1995 also marked the first TIFA meeting, which was held in Washington, D.C. The topics covered in the meeting included customs cooperation, Taiwan's participation in OECD activities, obstacles to Taiwan's accession to the WTO, ATA Carnet Cooperation, and environmental cooperation. In 1996, the two parties signed a Bilateral Carnet Agreement between AIT and the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO).³⁶

After the Third Taiwan Strait crisis, the Clinton administration initially prioritized stabilizing relations with the PRC over those with Taiwan. In a November 1996 meeting in Manila, President Clinton and Chairman Jiang Zemin agreed to exchange state visits in 1997 and 1998. When Jiang paid a visit to the United States in October 1997, Clinton assured him that the United States 1) did not support independence for Taiwan; 2) did not support "one China, one Taiwan," or "two Chinas;" and 3) did not support Taiwan's membership in any international bodies whose members are sovereign states. In June 1998, during his reciprocal state visit, President Clinton again publicly reiterated these assurances in Shanghai.³⁷ Clinton later rebalanced his cross-Strait policy, stating in February 2000 that "issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan."³⁸

At the same time, the Clinton administration opened new channels of security dialogues with Taiwan outside the framework of existing weapons transfers. In December 1997, the first bilateral military dialogue since 1979 was initiated. Known as the Monterey Talks, these talks were aimed at cooperation in the areas of strategy, training, command and control, and logistics.³⁹ This marked a significant expansion from the focus on arms sales that the U.S. had maintained for almost two decades.⁴⁰ The Monterey Talks were held approximately twice a year from 1997 to 2000.⁴¹

The George W. Bush presidency occurred during President Chen Shui-bian's term. Following 55 years of KMT rule, Chen was the first President from the DPP, a party perceived as promoting the formal independence of Taiwan and the dismantling of the ROC. Cross-strait relations were turbulent. Threatened by the possibility that Taiwan would pursue formal independence, the PRC enacted the Anti-Secession Law, which made explicit the conditions under which the PLA would use force against Taiwan.

The Bush administration's policy toward cross-Strait relations was a mix of reassurance to both Taiwan and PRC. In response to whether the U.S. would provide military support to defend Taiwan against the PRC, President Bush claimed in April 2001 that the United States would do "whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself."⁴² After Taiwan passed a Referendum Act perceived as a

step towards formal independence, President Bush continued Clinton's policy of non-support for Taiwan's independence. In December 2003, President Bush reassured Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao that "the comments and actions made by the leader of Taiwan indicate that he may be willing to make decisions unilaterally to change the status quo, which we oppose."⁴³ In June 2005, President Bush stated that U.S. policy would ensure "neither side will unilaterally change the status quo" and that "if China were to invade unilaterally, we would rise up in the spirit of the Taiwan Relations Act. If Taiwan were to declare independence unilaterally, it would be a unilateral decision, that would then change the U.S. equation."⁴⁴

By 2006, the U.S. and Taiwan had established schedules for high-level interactions on the policy and strategic levels. The annually-held Monterey Talks addressed policy, while the Defense Review Talks addressed strategy. On a semi-annual basis, the U.S. hosted defense-level Security Cooperation Talks and operational-level General Officer Steering Group meetings.⁴⁵ TIFA meetings during the Bush administration were held in 2004, 2006, and 2007. The first covered the WTO and related changes in tariff agreements; the second focused on APEC, WTO, and telecommunications issues; and the third centered on the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding and Working Guidelines for the establishment of an Advisory Committee on Agriculture.⁴⁶ TIFA talks were suspended from 2007 until 2013 due to friction over Taiwan's banning of U.S. pork product imports.⁴⁷

President Barack Obama's administration coincided with President Ma Ying-jeou's. Cross-strait relations improved during Ma's term and led to a cooling of U.S.-Taiwan defense cooperation. "For China, the issue of Taiwan is as important as anything on their docket," Obama told a news conference in December 2016. "The idea of one China is at the heart of their conception as a nation and so if you are going to upend this understanding, you have to have thought through what ... the consequences are."⁴⁸ Disagreements between the KMT and DPP about Taiwan's defense strategy and weapons investments led to a reduction in weapons acquisitions from the United States.⁴⁹ Both Obama and Ma's prioritization of a relationship with China meant that the U.S.-Taiwan defense relationship throughout the Ma administration remained weaker than it was before 2008.

Review of Taiwan-focused Policies Under the Trump Administration

Recently, the Trump administration has executed policies designed to strengthen U.S. relations with Taiwan. These include major arms sales, high-level visits and engagements, democracy promotion programs, public statements of support for Taiwan's role in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, and President Trump's signing of the Taiwan Travel Act and the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act.

In 2018, President Trump signed the Taiwan Travel Act into law, which facilitates senior-level visits and engagements for U.S. and Taiwan government officials. This action came in the wake of bipartisan pushback against direct statements from the PRC Embassy in Washington. The PRC's diplomatic mission sent formal complaints to lawmakers and threatened "severe consequences" for U.S.-China relations if Congress passed more legislation that strengthened U.S.-Taiwan relations. In a letter from PRC Ambassador to U.S. Cui Tiankai, the PRC interpreted the Taiwan-related provisions in the 2017 NDAA as "provocations against China's sovereignty,

national unity and security interests,” and claimed that the U.S. had “crossed the ‘red line’ on the stability of the China-U.S. relationship.”⁵⁰ The legislation was included in the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which was signed into law on December 23, 2016. The law called for a “program of exchanges of senior military officers and senior officials between the United States and Taiwan,” and “should include activities and exercises focused on “civil-military relations, including parliamentary relations.”⁵¹ The Taiwan Travel Act resulted in reciprocal, high-level visits not seen since 1979. In November 2019, Deputy Assistant Secretary Heino Klinck became the highest-ranking Pentagon official to visit Taiwan since official U.S.-Taiwan relations ceased.⁵² Earlier in 2019, Taiwan President Tsai made a historic four-day U.S. visit, officially called a “transit,” where she met with senior congressional, executive and local government officials under the new law.⁵³

Amid concerns about the PRC government’s campaign to undermine Taiwan’s global diplomatic ties, President Trump signed the TAIPEI Act into law on March 26, 2020, to officially promote Taiwan’s international diplomatic standing. Between January 2016 and September 2020, seven countries severed diplomatic ties with Taiwan and officially recognized the PRC, reducing the number of Taiwan’s official diplomatic ties from 22 to 15, the lowest number in decades.⁵⁴ The Department of Defense’s 2020 “Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region,” which covered the PRC’s military capabilities and strategy, concluded that Communist China is “thwarting Taiwan’s efforts to participate in international organizations.”⁵⁵ The reelection of President Tsai Ing-wen compelled the CCP to further refine its political targeting strategy against Taiwan. The DoD report also found that the PRC’s new defense white paper “China’s National Defense in the New Era,” “specifically cited the Democratic Progressive Party of President Tsai Ing-wen as a primary source of hostility and a threat to peace,” a first for the official CCP document.⁵⁶

The Trump administration continued and initiated new joint and multilateral initiatives with Taiwan to expand liberal democratic values as part of its “free and open Indo-Pacific” strategy. The U.S., Taiwan, and the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association have continued with several more GCTF workshops. These training opportunities covered issues like global public health, digital technology investment, female empowerment, and humanitarian relief.⁵⁷ The GCTF has become a platform to showcase Taiwan as an example of a robust democracy in the Indo-Pacific. Announced by Vice President Pence at the 2018 APEC CEO Summit, and launched in September 2019, the Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative is a U.S. government-wide project that includes the work of GCTF and Taiwan’s close cooperation with the U.S. government. The initiative includes more than \$600 million on over 200 programs that promote shared values to include human rights, media freedom, democratic reforms, and support for strengthening civil society.⁵⁸ The first of the U.S.-Taiwan Consultations on Democratic Governance in the Indo-Pacific Region, which were also held in September 2019, focused on liberal democratic norms as part of the administration’s “free and open Indo-Pacific” strategy.⁵⁹ By promoting Taiwan as a model of good governance, the consultations address Indo-Pacific governance challenges and raise Taiwan’s international presence.⁶⁰

U.S. support for Taiwan’s response to COVID-19 has been a prominent feature of U.S.-Taiwan relations in 2020. The Trump administration praised Taiwan for its response to the COVID-19

global pandemic and pushed for close cooperation with the Taiwan government as a bilateral and international global health partner. In opening remarks at a virtual GCTF workshop on countering COVID-19 disinformation, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Robert Destro spoke about learning from the “Taiwan Model,” referencing Taiwan’s democratic system as an example for robust responses to the pandemic.⁶¹ A White House fact sheet on withholding U.S. funding for the World Health Organization (WHO) cited a Taiwan Centers for Disease Control email sent to the WHO on December 31st, 2019, after the Taiwanese government received reports about human transmission in Wuhan.⁶² The U.S. and Taiwan also signed unofficial agreements to improve collaboration on COVID-19 research and responses. In March 2020, both countries signed a U.S.-Taiwan joint statement outlining common objectives.⁶³ During an August 2020 visit to Taiwan, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar signed a joint statement with the Taiwan Minister of Health and Welfare, Chen Shih-chung, agreeing to expand upon the more than 20 years of collaboration between their respective departments.⁶⁴

Under the Trump administration, Taiwan’s economic security serves as a critical pillar for expansion of free and fair trade across the Indo-Pacific. U.S.-Taiwan trade relations date back to the 1948 Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation Treaty, which is still in effect as part of TRA. With U.S. backing, Taiwan joined the WTO in 2001.⁶⁵ In 2012, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security added Taiwan to the list of highly developed countries under the Visa Waiver Program.⁶⁶ In 2018, Taiwan was the 11th largest trading partner of the United States, with U.S. exports to Taiwan valued around \$10 billion USD.⁶⁷ Taiwan is now the ninth largest trading partner of the United States.⁶⁸ In 2019, Taiwan was the seventh largest U.S. agriculture export market by value, and it ranks among the top ten markets for U.S. soybeans, corn, fruit, beef, wheat, poultry, and processed foods.⁶⁹ The Trump administration has hinted at expanding the existing U.S.-Taiwan economic relationship. According to the Trump administration’s November 2019 report, “A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision,” the U.S. seeks to enhance economic prosperity in the region by “improving market access and competitiveness” and “promoting free, fair and reciprocal trade.”⁷⁰ Pursuant to these objectives, the executive branch is seeking bilateral trade talks and progress with Taiwan as an attempt to promote improved trade throughout the region. The focus on Taiwan’s economy has also been supported by congressional initiatives. In 2019, 161 Members of Congress petitioned the U.S. Trade Representative to work towards a Free Trade Agreement with Taiwan.⁷¹ Recently, American and Taiwan officials have openly showed their support for engaging in talks on a bilateral free trade agreement. In August 2020, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen announced the lifting of Taiwan’s restrictions on American beef and pork.⁷² The ban on beef and pork products from the U.S. had been an issue of contention for over a decade, and President Tsai’s easing of import regulations lifted the fundamental barrier that had been blocking progress on bilateral free trade talks.⁷³ With this long-standing disagreement resolved, prospects for greater economic and trade ties are more favorable. Resuming regular talks like those from TIFA, which have been suspended since 2016, could be paramount to discussing a free trade agreement as it provides both the structure and platform to engage in preliminary consultations.

The Trump administration also introduced new initiatives for U.S.-Taiwan collaboration on cybersecurity. According to the Taiwan government, approximately 60 percent of the 30 million cyber-attacks in 2019 came from the PRC, and these attacks are increasing exponentially each

year.⁷⁴ The Trump administration’s “United States Strategic Approach to the People’s Republic of China” document calls for “working with allies and like-minded partners to attribute and otherwise deter malicious cyber activities.”⁷⁵ Launched at the 2018 Indo-Pacific Business Forum, the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership spurs investment and public-private partnerships in communications infrastructure development to improve cybersecurity capacity in partner countries.⁷⁶ Taiwan is also at the forefront of the PRC’s cyber-attack strategy and a critical node in cyber across the Indo-Pacific. According to United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) leadership, cybersecurity concerns are prevalent in the region, and the interoperability of allies and partners remains critical. In November 2019, the first joint Cyber Offensive and Defensive Exercises (CODE) between AIT and the Taiwan government’s National Center for Cyber Technology (NCCST) was held, with ten other countries like Japan and Australia joining the exercises.⁷⁷ In August 2020, AIT and TECRO signed a joint declaration on 5G security, calling for transitions from untrusted to trusted hardware and software suppliers.⁷⁸ Launched in July 2019, the Talent Circulation Alliance is a public-private partnership (between AIT and Taiwan) that aims to cultivate technological talent in Taiwan, and expand Taiwan’s international presence as a leader in technological innovation.⁷⁹ The U.S. government continues to explore new initiatives and policies to cooperate with Taiwan on cyber threats and cybersecurity measures.

U.S.-Taiwan Defense Policy

The United States has consistently maintained some form of defense agreement with Taiwan since 1954, but the guiding documents and strategic importance of Taiwan have varied with political conditions. U.S. military support for Taiwan’s defense capabilities began in 1951 with the establishment of the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Taipei, which was originally made up of five American officers and had expanded by 1955 to include 2,347 people.⁸⁰ The mission of MAAGs, which were established in American-allied countries across East Asia and the Pacific, was to teach American training techniques and transfer advanced weaponry.⁸¹ In Taiwan specifically, the MAAG (MAAG Formosa) helped transform Taiwan’s air force, train special warfare divisions for irregular combat, establish a military educational system, and build logistical and administrative capabilities.⁸²

The first crucial document establishing formal defense obligations between the two parties was written in 1954 and signed in 1955. U.S. contingency planning in case of a conflict in the Taiwan Strait was originally based on a Mutual Defense Treaty ratified in 1955 by Taipei and Washington, D.C.⁸³ The U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty granted U.S. land, air, and sea forces permission to act in defense of Taiwan and the Penghu islands. The treaty was specifically drafted as a response to “communist subversive activities,” situating Taiwan in the U.S. “Far East” strategy as a “free” bulwark against communism.⁸⁴ The treaty aimed to reduce conflict in the Taiwan Strait, both by using the threat of U.S. military might to protect Taiwan from PRC attacks, but also by restricting Taiwan’s attacks on the mainland.⁸⁵

In line with the principles laid out in the Mutual Defense Treaty, the U.S. and Taiwan jointly designed a contingency plan called OPLAN *Rochester*. The plan included annual exercises held between the two parties to “demonstrate continuing US commitment.”⁸⁶ A series of joint exercises called *Food Chain* continually tested and updated OPLAN *Rochester*. These exercises were not

public at the time (in contrast to recent exercises acting as public deterrents), included small numbers of U.S. troops working in support of Taiwan's troops, and were generally aimed at testing Taiwan's capabilities, rather than U.S. strengths in the region.⁸⁷

Headquartered in Taipei, U.S. forces in Taiwan were based at the Formosa Liaison Center (Task Force 74), beginning in 1955.⁸⁸ The same individuals headed many of the nominally separate U.S. defense and diplomatic programs, and the chief of MAAG Formosa also led the Formosa Liaison Center.⁸⁹ The U.S. Taiwan Defense Command operated in Taiwan from 1955-1979, but actual troop numbers varied during that time from an estimated minimum, of 4,000-10,000 to a maximum of 19,000 in 1958.⁹⁰

The TRA marked a significant shift away from a formal U.S.-Taiwan defense relationship. Within the scope laid out by the guiding documents, the U.S. has been able to adjust its defense relationship with Taiwan in line with both U.S. administration priorities and the PRC threat to Taiwan. President Ronald Reagan outlined that, at least in terms of arms sales, the U.S. assistance levels would vary based on the "continued commitment of China to the peaceful solution of the Taiwan-PRC differences."⁹¹ Between 1980 and the mid-1990s, the primary senior-level military interactions between the U.S. and Taiwan occurred at the annual Hwa-Mei Arms Sales Talks.⁹² However, in the late 1990s, the U.S. scaled up its strategic relationship with Taiwan, spurred by the 1995-1996 Taiwan Straits crisis.⁹³

After the 1996 crisis, there was increased strategic collaboration between Taiwan and the U.S. beyond simply arms sales. In 1998, a team from the DoD, led by the acting deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy, visited Taiwan to discuss net assessment and strategic planning with Taiwan's military leaders.⁹⁴ In 1999, the U.S. created a new program aimed at understanding Taiwan's defense priorities by sending U.S. operators to Taiwan to talk with Taiwan operators, focused on understanding Taiwan's approach to air defense, anti-submarine capabilities, and counter-landing operations.⁹⁵ These operators developed more than 300 recommendations for Taiwan's officials on ways to improve Taiwan's military capabilities.⁹⁶

In 2001, the U.S. returned to the importance of arms sales in the U.S.-Taiwan relationship and increasing collaboration on that front by announcing that arms deals would no longer be negotiated only during a single annual meeting, but on a rolling basis.⁹⁷ During that same time frame, the U.S. and Taiwan established new mechanisms for defense collaboration, the "Defense Review Talks" (DRT) and "Security Cooperation Talks."⁹⁸ The DRT, taking place in the U.S. every December, focused on interactions at the defense minister level, led by the Ministry of National Defense, and incorporated discussions of both arms sales and strategic cooperation.⁹⁹ The U.S.-Taiwan Business Council (USTBC) also served as a channel for sideline defense talks: in 2001, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Taiwan's Defense Minister Tao Yaoming met at a USTBC conference and discussed defense issues.¹⁰⁰

From 2001–2008, the U.S. increased its military engagement with Taiwan. In 2005, the U.S. sent an active duty military officer to Taiwan for the first time since 1979, with an Army Colonel in civilian clothes stationed at AIT.¹⁰¹ The U.S. sent military observers to Taiwan's annual Han Kuang exercises, and even reportedly participated in Han Kuang 2003.¹⁰² In 2002, a Taiwanese

deputy defense minister was invited to a meeting inside the Pentagon for the first time since 1979, and, in 2003, U.S. observers for the Han Kuang exercises were allowed inside Taiwan's Hengshan Command Center.¹⁰³

The 2008 Taiwan election of Ma Ying-jeou led to a cooling of U.S.-Taiwan defense cooperation. The Han Kuang exercises became biennial, the scenario changed from PLA invasion to domestic disaster, and Ma did not invite U.S. officials to observe—a break from the previous administration. Taiwan did not reintroduce live-fire elements to the exercise until 2013.¹⁰⁴ During the Ma administration, disagreements between the two parties about Taiwan's defense strategy and weapons investments led to a reduction in arms sales.¹⁰⁵ Ma's prioritization of a relationship with the PRC, combined with divergent defense priorities, meant that the U.S.-Taiwan defense relationship remained weaker than it was before 2008 throughout the Ma administration.¹⁰⁶

While the executive-level U.S.-Taiwan relations remained muted through the Obama and Ma administrations, Congress slowly scaled up U.S. support for Taiwan's defense capabilities. In the FY2015 National Defense Authorization Act, the Senate Armed Services Committee approved language for Taiwan that expanded annual assessments from "maritime capabilities" to "self-defense capabilities."¹⁰⁷ In FY2016, the NDAA recommended that the DoD should allow Taiwan to participate in bilateral training exercises and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) exercises, with increased military-to-military exchanges. The House suggested requiring the DoD to invite Taiwan to participate in the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC), but this was not included in the final version.¹⁰⁸ The FY2017 NDAA added language directing the Secretary of Defense to improve U.S.-Taiwan relationships through high-level level visits.¹⁰⁹ The FY2018 NDAA was a source of more language disputes over Taiwan, but ended up strengthening supportive language to the greatest extent thus far by calling for expanded arms sales, exercise participation, and trainings.¹¹⁰ Finally, the FY2019 NDAA expanded to focus more on Taiwan, including language on "assessing force readiness."¹¹¹

During the Trump administration, the executive branch also scaled up its support of Taiwan's security capabilities. In the first year of the Trump administration, the president supported a \$1.4 billion arms sale focused on systems that would increase situational awareness and raise the cost of Taiwan invasions. The new National Security Strategy names Taiwan commitments as key to U.S. security in the Indo-Pacific.

Most significantly, the Trump administration supports Taiwan's Overall Defense Concept (ODC). The ODC seeks to achieve Taiwan's strategic goal of "resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence" in a resource-constrained environment.¹¹² In short, the ODC is a holistically-integrated blueprint for strategically guiding Taiwan's military force development and joint operations, emphasizing Taiwan's innovation and asymmetrical warfare capabilities to deter and, if necessary, defeat a PLA invasion. In May 2020, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia Heino Klinck maintained that the U.S. Department of Defense "continues to believe that the effective, whole-of-government implementation of Taiwan's ODC is critical in ensuring that Taiwan can deter, delay or deny actions by an aggressor."¹¹³ The ODC has also received congressional support. On June 4, 2019, Senators Marco Rubio and Josh Hawley introduced legislation that applauded the ODC's adoption and advocated for Taiwan's "development of a more lethal and resilient

defensive posture in accordance with the new Overall Defense Concept.”¹¹⁴ Your administration has an opportunity to strengthen U.S. defense policy on Taiwan by substantively supporting the implementation and institutionalization of the ODC in both force development as well as systems acquisitions.

Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations underscore the importance of deterring PRC acts of aggression against Taiwan and defeating a PRC attack in the event that our conflict prevention measures should fail. Given Beijing’s stated objectives and recent military provocations, it is imperative that your administration advances the U.S.-Taiwan partnership in line with our countries’ shared principles and interests. Much must be done to prepare for the gathering storm and ensure peace and stability in this vital area.

We offer these recommendations as potential features of your administration’s Taiwan policy:

- I. The United States and its regional partners should work with Taipei in innovative ways to expand Taiwan’s international space in meaningful ways so that Taiwan can prove its value as a good regional and global citizen. Options include:**
 - a. Restart USTR-led Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) council meetings with Taiwan to discuss prospects of a U.S.-Taiwan free trade agreement. By taking the initiative on a trade agreement with Taiwan, the United States will set a precedent for other partners and allies in the region who can then pursue their own agreements with Taiwan accordingly.
 - b. Direct all cabinet officers to ensure their departments and agencies are continually exploring innovative approaches for advancing U.S.-Taiwan relations across a broad range of issue areas. This includes engagement with their counterparts in like-minded countries such as Japan, Australia, and India.
 - c. The U.S. should incorporate Taiwan into humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. One option would be to include Taiwanese medical personnel on U.S. hospital ships touring the Pacific Islands.
- II. The U.S. should adopt and fully resource the Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI).** This would bring more rigor to the budgeting process, as well as signal an enduring commitment to the region well into the future. It would also enable investments in the right capabilities for the PRC challenge.

- III. The U.S. should assist Taiwan in meaningful ways in the implementation of its own Overall Defense Concept (ODC).** Taiwan may be outmanned and outgunned, so to speak, but Taiwan enjoys many advantages for its defense. 80 nautical miles of water and mountainous, inhospitable terrain make for excellent natural defenses before a single weapon is purchased. Beyond that, Taiwan can greatly bolster its deterrent capability by strengthening the reserve force, and investing in coastal defense cruise missiles, both armed and unarmed variants of unmanned aerial vehicles, and short range, mobile air defense systems. The U.S. and Japan can not only provide the systems and technologies, but can also work with Taiwan on training, development of doctrine, and continuity of government in support of the ODC.
- IV. Integrate Taiwan’s military into our security architecture for the Indo-Pacific region, especially in the areas of air and maritime domain awareness, ballistic missile defense, space and cyberspace operations, amphibious assault interdiction operations, and anti-submarine warfare. Next steps may include:**
- a. Make public our bilateral military exercises with Taiwan’s military as a strategic signaling tool to ensure Beijing understands our resolve to honor our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act and President Reagan’s Six Assurances.
 - b. Use secret bilateral military exercises with Taiwan’s military to test and improve upon latent interoperability and to ensure our forces can seamlessly fight together.
 - c. Establish a program for regular and routine ship visits to Taiwan, beginning with submarines and destroyers.
 - d. Establish a robust program of Taiwan visits and contacts for four-star generals and admirals who could be responsible for advising the White House during a crisis or conflict in the Taiwan Strait.
 - e. Establish and build-up a rotational presence of U.S. forces in Taiwan, including special forces units engaged in long-term liaison, training, and advisory missions.
- V. The U.S. should undertake bilateral military planning with regional allies (such as Japan, Australia, and the Republic of Korea) and associated training for a Taiwan Strait contingency.** Bilateral planning will serve to sharpen our alliance capabilities so we are optimally placed for the defense of Taiwan by informing posture, training, current operations and future acquisition. The planning process itself can also enhance deterrence. It would signal to the other side that the alliance takes the threat seriously, studies all the

complexities of a contingency, and is prepared to execute the plan if directed to do so by national command authorities.

- VI. U.S.-Taiwan Joint Working Group.** This bilateral mechanism, including both policy-level and working-level, provides guidance and assistance for Taiwan to fully implement and institutionalize the ODC, particularly in regard to restructuring Taiwan’s force, systems acquisition process, joint doctrine, joint operational planning, and joint training. It can plan for assumptions with or without U.S. support, and for successful PLA beach landings.
- VII. Expedite a review of early-warning systems currently available to support Taiwan’s self-defense in accordance with Taipei’s Overall Defense Concept and the Taiwan Relations Act.** Given the urgency of the threat, your administration should swiftly address shortfalls that undermine interoperability and Taiwan’s ability to mount an effective and credible defense.
- VIII. U.S. and Taiwan should work to establish a real-time information sharing mechanism.** As the PLA increases operations in and around Taiwan, including in the Miyako Strait, all three parties would benefit from a common operating picture as it pertains to territorial intrusions, and near-intrusions. Over time, a common operating picture can enable coordinated responses and defense. Such a mechanism would require the right systems for detection, networked secure communications, and the political will to execute.
- IX. War Reserve Stock Allies (WRSA) on Taiwan.** War stock reserves, also known as “pre-positioned stocks” are a collection of wartime material placed in a pre-positioned storage to be used in the event of war. After attaining interagency approval and consultation with Taiwan, the Department of Defense should seek Congressional appropriation of funding for a WRSA program in Taiwan (WRSA-T), including justification, site plan, and level of funding needed. U.S. INDOPACOM would recommend priorities for munitions, spare parts, and other items to be stored on Taiwan.

Appendices

Appendix I: PLA Incursions

Although incursions by PLA aircraft into Taiwan's airspace are nothing new, they have increased dramatically in scale in 2020. Even given Beijing's campaign to apply pressure to Taiwan during the Tsai administration, PLA violations of Taiwanese airspace have risen to unprecedented heights. Many of the PLA sorties have crossed just past the Taiwan Strait median line, expressing Beijing's refusal to recognize the boundary. This point was driven home by the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman's statement on September 21 that the "so-called" median line is "non-existent."¹¹⁵ Many PLA sorties have also crossed into the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. On October 7, Taiwan's Defense Minister Yen Teh-fa (嚴德發) stated that from the beginning of the year till the present date, PLA aircraft had penetrated Taiwan's ADIZ 1,710 times, and that PLAN vessels had done so 1,029 times. PLA aircraft entered the southwest section of Taiwan's ADIZ 217 times, and crossed the Strait median line 49 times - the highest in 30 years. In response, the Taiwanese Air Force had scrambled fighters 2,972 times.¹¹⁶

Various explanations exist for the sharp upsurge in PLA aggression against Taiwan. China may simply be expressing its displeasure at the Tsai administration moves towards expanded ties with America, and to deter future moves towards what it terms independence. These flights may also be a realistic way to train PLA pilots in the absence of combat experience, and can help the PLA assess Taiwan's air defense capabilities in the event of a shooting war. Specifically, the repeated sorties in the southwest sector of Taiwan's ADIZ may be preparations for an eventual strike on the Pratas Islands. The airborne incursions may also be an attempt to divert public attention in China from the economic difficulties brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic.

The most likely explanation, however, is that the PLA is simply trying to grind down Taiwan's ability and will to resist. Constant flights to counter PLA incursions have proven taxing on the Taiwanese Air Force's fighter fleet, reserves of spare parts, and on its pilots themselves. Several facts suggest this as a main motive on the part of the PLA. Tellingly, more than two thirds of all launches by Taiwanese combat aircraft from the start of the year up until early October had been to repel PLA intruders. Additionally, scrambling fighters to respond to PLA incursions had cost 25.5 billion Taiwanese Dollars, or nearly \$900 million - more than 6% of Taiwan's total defense budget for the year.¹¹⁷ The fact that individual PLA aircraft often intrude into Taiwanese airspace via several flight paths simultaneously may be a deliberate attempt to force Taiwan to scramble as many jets as possible. This high operational tempo could also potentially numb the Taiwanese public and the international community to a strong PLA presence around Taiwan, and thus make it more difficult to foresee an actual Chinese attack. As well, this may function as a psychological warfare strategy to sap Taiwan's will to resist over time.¹¹⁸¹¹⁹

PLA Military Activities Near Taiwan, 2020		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Incident</i>	<i>Details</i>
January 2020	Post-election air exercises	PLA directed military aircraft near Taiwan after Taiwan's presidential and legislative elections. ¹²⁰
February 2020	Air and naval exercises around Taiwan	PLA held a series of large-scale air and naval exercises in waters southeast of Taiwan. ²⁷ PLA aircraft crossed over the median line of the Taiwan Strait. ¹²¹ On February 9, 10 and 28, PLA aircraft conducted drills around the Miyako Strait and Bashi Channel. ¹²²¹²³¹²⁴
March 2020	Maritime clashes	Chinese fishing vessels (possibly maritime militia) clashed with ROC Coast Guard cutters. ¹²⁵
March 16, 2020	Nighttime PLA flight near Taiwan	PLA directed military aircraft over waters near Taiwan during first nighttime training mission in the area. ¹²⁶
March 18, 2020	Naval exercises near Taiwan	PLA sent four military ships through waters east of Taiwan. ¹²⁷
April 10, 2020	Air exercises	Several PLA aircraft conducted drills over Taiwan's southwest territorial seas. ¹²⁸
April 12, 2020	Naval exercises near Taiwan	The aircraft carrier Liaoning and her escort group sailed through the Taiwan Strait and back after patrolling the South China Sea ¹²⁹
May 1, 2020	Electronic jamming	PLA reportedly conducted electronic intrusion to distort radar pictures of a ROCAF F-16 retrofit program test flight. ¹³⁰
May 8, 2020	Air exercises	PLA Y-8 aircraft entered Taiwan's ADIZ before President Tsai's inauguration. ¹³¹
May 14, 2020	Reported amphibious exercises	Reports emerged that the PLA planned to conduct major amphibious exercises in August simulating the seizure of Taiwan's Pratas Island. ¹³²
January-May, 2020	Sand dredging	Chinese vessels (possibly maritime militia) illegally dredged sand near the Penghu Islands 1,576 times. ¹³³

June 4, 2020	Amphibious exercises	Two PLA group armies across from Taiwan conducted amphibious exercises. ¹³⁴
June 18, 2020	Air exercises	One PLA Y-8 aircraft entered Taiwan's southwest airspace. ¹³⁵
June 16, 2020	Air exercises	One J-10 aircraft sortied, briefly entering Taiwan's southwest airspace. ¹³⁶
June 17, 2020	Air exercises	PLA Y-8 and J-10 aircraft entered Taiwan's southwest airspace ¹³⁷
June 18, 2020	Air exercises	PLA J-10 and J-11 aircraft entered Taiwan's southwest airspace ¹³⁸
June 19, 2020	Air exercises	PLA J-10 aircraft briefly entered Taiwan's southwest airspace. ¹³⁹
June 21, 2020	Air exercises	One J-10 and one H-6 aircraft briefly entered Taiwan's southwest airspace. ^{140,141}
July 17, 2020	Airborne reconnaissance	Amidst Taiwan's annual Han Kuang exercise, a PLA electronic warfare aircraft crossed the Strait midline and gathered intelligence on the ongoing exercise. ¹⁴²
August, 2020	Combined exercises	<p>PLA's ETC (Eastern Theater Command) held interservice joint operations from both ends of the straits. These exercises were called "a necessary move responding to the current security situation in the Taiwan Straits and were meant to safeguard national sovereignty."¹⁴³</p> <p>The intruding aircraft on August 10 included J-10s and J-11s.¹⁴⁴</p>
August 16-17th, 2020	Naval exercises	The PLAN conducted live-fire training exercises aimed at "targeting external interference and a small number of 'Taiwan independence' secessionists and their acts". ¹⁴⁵
September 9-10, 2020	Joint air and naval exercises	<p>Two dozen aircraft and seven ships operated between Pratas and Taiwan's southwestern coast from 7am-noon for two consecutive days on September 9-10.¹⁴⁶</p> <p>The intruding aircraft on the morning of September 9 included multiple SU-30 and J-10 types¹⁴⁷, while on the</p>

		morning of August 10 SU-30 and Y-8 aircraft entered Taiwan's southwest ADIZ. ¹⁴⁸
September 16, 2020	Air exercises	Two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁴⁹
September 17, 2020	Air exercises	Two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵⁰
September 18, 2020	Air exercises	Several PLA fighters and bombers entered Taiwan's ADIZ, with some crossing the Strait median line. ¹⁵¹
September 19, 2020	Air Exercises	Several PLA fighters, bombers, and one Y-8 ASW aircraft entered Taiwan's ADIZ, with some crossing the Strait median line. ¹⁵²
September 21, 2020	Air Exercises	Two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵³
September 22, 2020	Air Exercises	Two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵⁴
September 23, 2020	Air Exercises	Two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵⁵
September 24, 2020	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵⁶
September 29, 2020	Air Exercises	Two Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵⁷
October 1, 2002	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵⁸
October 3, 2002	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁵⁹
October 4, 2020	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁶⁰
October 6, 2002	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁶¹
October 7, 2020	Air Exercises	One KJ-500 AEW&C aircraft entered the extreme tip portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁶²
October 8, 2020	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest

		portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁶³
October 9, 2020	Air Exercises	One Y-8 and one Y-9 entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁶⁴
October 10, 2020	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁶⁵
October 11, 2020	Air Exercises	One Y-8 anti-submarine aircraft entered the southwest portion of Taiwan's ADIZ. ¹⁶⁶

Appendix II: U.S. Major Arms Sales to Taiwan

After the U.S. broke off official relations with Taiwan in 1979, the U.S. Congress signed the Taiwan Relations Act into law, providing a legal mandate for the U.S. to “provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character.”¹⁶⁷ Since then, several transitions have characterized the nature of American arms sales to Taiwan. Over the years they have increased in value, technological sophistication, and frequency; especially during the past few years of the Trump administration. Additionally, they have seen a steady increase in heated responses from the Chinese side.

In the immediate years after switching recognition from Taipei to Beijing, the U.S. and China signed the 1982 Communiqué, which set limits on U.S. arms sales to Taiwan. Specifically, it stipulated that arms sales would not qualitatively or quantitatively exceed those in recent years, and that they would end over an unspecified period. The following years saw relatively few arms sales.^{168,169} In order to avoid official Chinese anger, U.S. policymakers often pursued direct commercial sales rather than foreign military sales, as doing so attracted less attention. Until the suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests, official Chinese responses were also subdued by considerable sales of U.S. military technologies to China itself.¹⁷⁰

During the 1990s, the U.S. began to sell more and more big-ticket items. These included missile defense capabilities, Stinger MANPADS, and F-16 fighters - all of which were met with strident statements of disapproval by China, though with few substantial responses.¹⁷¹ During the 2000s and early 2010s, U.S. arms sales continued to increase in cost and degree of technological sophistication, particularly by SAM and air-to-air missiles, ground vehicles, and logistical and training support for U.S.-supplied aircraft. During the Trump administration, arms sales to Taiwan have become even more regular and consist of more advanced equipment, with little effort to downplay such deals to avoid Chinese responses. Of note, the most sales have become more targeted, consisting of an individual weapons system or a set of systems with complementary capabilities, such as M1A2 tanks and Javelin anti-tank mines. Additionally, the last few most recently announced deal includes weapons such as mines, drones and anti-ship missiles. These purchases suggest that Taiwan is seeking to acquire means to asymmetrically deter China, instead of buying more expensive traditional platforms which will inevitably be outnumbered by those fielded by China’s forces.

U.S. Major Arms Sales to Taiwan (2010-2020)^{172,173}		
<i>Time</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Cost (US\$)</i>
December 1979	AGM-65B Maverick air to surface missiles	\$25,000,000
January 3, 1980	BGM-71 TOW missiles MIM-23 Hawk SAM, MIM-72 Chaparral SAM	\$280,000,000

January 12, 1982 ¹⁷⁴	F-5E and F-5F fighters	\$622,000,000 ¹⁷⁵
July 15, 1983 ¹⁷⁶	Air defense missiles, modernization program for Taiwanese tanks	\$530,000,000
June, 1984	C-130H transport aircraft	\$325,000,000
1985 ¹⁷⁷	MIM-72C Chaparral	\$94,000,000
July 26, 1990	Cooperative Logistics Supply Support	\$108,000,000
September 6, 1990	Single C-130H transport aircraft	\$45,000,000
January 7, 1991	MK-46 torpedoes	\$28,000,000
July 24, 1991	SM-1 Standard air defense missiles	\$55,000,000
September 13, 1991	M60A3 Tanks	\$119,000,000
November 18, 1991	Phase III PIP Mod Kits for HAWK air defense systems	\$170,000,000
May 27, 1992	Weapons, ammunition, support for 3 leased ships / Supply support arrangement	\$319,000,000
August 4, 1992	SM-1 Standard air defense missiles	\$126,000,000
September 14, 1992	F-16A/B fighters / Patriot-derived Modified Air Defense System (MADS) fire units	\$7,100,000,000
September 18, 1992	SH-2F LAMPS anti-submarine helicopters	\$161,000,000
June 17, 1993	C-130H transport aircraft	\$620,000,000
June 25, 1993	Supply support arrangement	\$156,000,000
July 29, 1993	Harpoon anti-ship missiles	\$68,000,000

July 30, 1993	Logistics support services for leased T-38 trainers	\$70,000,000
August, 1993	E-2T Hawkeye airborne early warning aircraft	\$700,000,000
September 8, 1993	Logistics support services for MADS (Modified Air Defense System)	\$175,000,000
November 4, 1993	MK-46 Mod 5 torpedoes	\$54,000,000
November 9, 1993	Weapons, ammunition, and support for 3 leased frigates	\$238,000,000
November 23, 1993	MK-41 Mod Vertical Launch Systems for ship-based air defense missiles	\$103,000,000
August 1, 1994	AN/ALQ-184 electronic counter measure (ECM) pods	\$150,000,000
September 12, 1994	MK-45 Mod 2-gun system	\$21,000,000
March 24, 1995	MK-75 shipboard gun systems / Phalanx Close-In Weapon System	\$75,000,000
June 7, 1995	Supply support arrangement	\$192,000,000
May 5, 1996	Improved Mobile Subscriber Equipment communications system / TH-67 training helicopters / AN/AVS-6 night vision goggles	\$241,000,000
May 23, 1996	Stinger missiles / dual-mounted Stinger launcher systems	\$84,000,000
June 24, 1996	M60A3TTS tanks	\$223,000,000
August 23, 1996	Stinger surface-to-air missiles / Avenger vehicle mounted guided missile launchers / HMMWVs (high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle)	\$420,000,000
September 5, 1996	MK-46 MOD 5 anti-submarine torpedoes	\$66,000,000
February 14, 1997	Harpoon anti-ship missiles	\$95,000,000

May 23, 1997	TOW 2A anti-armor guided missiles / TOW launchers / HMMWVs	\$81,000,000
July 24, 1997	AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters	\$479,000,000
September 3, 1997	OH-58D Kiowa Warrior Armed Scout helicopters	\$172,000,000
November 9, 1997	Pilot training and logistics support for F-16 fighters / spare parts for various aircraft	\$420,000,000
January 28, 1998	Knox-class frigates / MK 15 Phalanx Close-In Weapons System	\$300,000,000
June 1, 1998	Pathfinder/Sharpshooter navigation and targeting pods for F-16 fighters	\$160,000,000
August 27, 1998	Harpoon anti-ship missiles, dual-mount Stinger surface-to-air missiles / MK 46 Mod 5(A)S anti-submarine torpedoes	\$350,000,000
October 9, 1998	CH-47SD Chinook helicopters	\$486,000,000
May 26, 1999	AGM-114KS Hellfire II air-to-surface missiles / AN/VRC-92E SINCGARS radio systems / Intelligence Electronic Warfare systems / HMMWVs	\$87,000,000
July 30, 1999	Spare parts for F-5E/F, C-130H, F-16A/B, and IDF aircraft / E-2T Hawkeye 2000E airborne early warning aircraft	\$550,000,000
June 7, 2000	Pathfinder/Sharpshooter navigation and targeting pods for F-16 fighters / AN/ALQ-184 ECM pods for F-16s	\$356,000,000
June 7, 2000	Pathfinder/Sharpshooter navigation and targeting pods for F-16 fighters, AN/ALQ-184 ECM pods for F-16s	\$356,000,000
September 28, 2000	M109A5 howitzers, 152 SINCGARS radio systems / AIM-120C AMRAAMs for F-16 fighters, RGM-84L Harpoon anti-ship missiles / Improved Mobile Subscriber Equipment (IMSE) communication system	\$1,308,000,000

July 18, 2001	Joint Tactical Information Distribution Systems (JTIDS) terminals (a version of Link 16) for data links between aircraft, ships, and ground stations	\$725,000,000
September 5, 2001	AGM-65G Maverick air-to-ground missiles for F-16s	\$18,000,000
October 26, 2001	Javelin anti-tank missile systems and (360) Javelin missiles	\$51,000,000
October 30, 2001	Logistical support/spare parts for F-5E/F, C-130H, F-16A/B, and IDF aircraft	\$288,000,000
June 4, 2002	AN/MPN-14 air traffic control radars	\$108,000,000
September 4, 2002	AAV7A1 amphibious assault vehicles / Maintenance and spare parts for aircraft, radars, AMRAAMS, other systems / AIM-9M-1/2 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles / AGM-114M3 Hellfire II anti-armor missiles to equip AH-1W and OH58D helicopters	\$520,000,000
October 11, 2002	TOW-2B anti-tank missiles	\$18,000,000
November 21, 2002	Kidd-class destroyers	\$875,000,000
September 24, 2003	Multi-functional Information Distribution Systems (MIDS) (for Po Sheng)	\$775,000,000
March 3, 3004	Ultra High Frequency Long Range Early Warning Radars	\$1,776,000,000
October 25, 2005	AIM-9M Sidewinder and AIM-7M Sparrow air-to-air missiles / continued pilot training and logistical support for F-16 fighters at Luke AFB	\$280,000,000
February 28, 2007	AMRAAMs and Maverick air-to-ground missiles for F-16 fighters	\$421,000,000
August 8, 2007	AGM-84L Harpoon Block II anti-ship missiles	\$125,000,000
September 12, 2007	SM-2 Block IIIA Standard air-defense missiles for Kidd-class destroyers / P-3C maritime patrol/ASW aircraft	\$1,960,000,000

November 9, 2007	Patriot configuration 2 ground systems upgrade	\$939,000,000
October 3, 2008	Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 missile defense missiles / UGM-84L sub-launched Harpoon anti-ship missiles / spare parts for F-5E/F C-130H, F-16A/B, IDF aircraft / Javelin anti-armor missiles/ upgrade of E-2T aircraft (Hawkeye 2000 configuration) / AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters / Stinger air-to-air missiles / AGM-114L Longbow Hellfire missiles	\$6,453,000,000
January 29, 2010	Multifunctional Information Distribution Systems (MIDS) / RTM-84L and ATM-84L HARPOON Block II Telemetry Missiles / UH-60M BLACK HAWK Helicopters / PATRIOT Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) Firing Units, Training Unit, and Missiles / Two OSPREY Class Mine Hunting Ships Including Refurbishment and Upgrade	\$6,392,000,000
September 21, 2011	Pilot Training Program / Retrofit of F-16A/B Aircraft / Foreign Military Sales Order II (FMSO II)	\$5,852,000,000
December 16, 2015	Javelin Missile / Assault Amphibious Vehicles (AAVs) / Advanced Tactical Data Link System (TATDLS) and Link-11 Integration / Follow-On Support / Oliver Hazard Perry Class Frigates / MK 15 Phalanx Block 1B Baseline 2 CIWS Guns, Upgrade Kits, Ammunition, and Support / TOW 2B Aero Radio Frequency (RF) Missile (BGM-71F-Series), Support and Training / Block I-92F MANPAD Stinger Missiles and Related Equipment and Support	\$1,718,000,000
June 29, 2017	Surveillance Radar Program (SRP) Operation and Maintenance Support / AGM-88B High-Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles (HARM) / SM-2 Block IIIA Standard Missiles and Components / MK 48 Mod 6AT Heavyweight Torpedo (HWT) / MK 54 Lightweight Torpedo (LWT) Conversion Kits / AGM-154C Joint Standoff	\$1,363,000,000

	Weapon (JSOW) Missiles / AN/SLQ-32(V)3 Upgrade	
September 24, 2018	Foreign Military Sales Order (FMSO) II Case	\$330,000,000
April 15, 2019	CONUS Based F-16 Training	\$500,000,000
July 8, 2019	M1A2T Abrams Tanks and Related Equipment and Support / Stinger Missiles and Related Equipment and Support	\$2,223,560,000
August 20, 2019	F-16C/D Block 70 Aircraft and Related Equipment and Support	\$8,000,000,000
May 20, 2020	MK 48 Mod 6 Advanced Technology (AT) Heavy Weight Torpedo (HWT)	\$180,000,000
July 9, 2020	Repair and Recertification of Patriot Advanced Capability-3 Missiles	\$620,000,000

Appendix III: Major Initiatives in U.S.-Taiwan Relations

Major Initiatives in U.S.-Taiwan Relations		
<i>Date(s)</i>	<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Details</i>
1979	Taiwan Relations Act (TRA)	After the U.S. break of formal ties, this bill allowed U.S. government officials to maintain unofficial but very close ties with Taipei. ¹⁷⁸
1979	Establishment of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and Coordination Council for North American Affairs (CCNAA)	To maintain mutual ties upon passage of the TRA, the U.S. created the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taiwanese government established the Coordination Council for North American Affairs. ¹⁷⁹
1980	U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan Resume	After a one-year suspension, the U.S. announced it would resume arms sales to Taiwan. The sales were the first since the Taiwan Relations Act was passed. ¹⁸⁰
1982	Six Assurances	President Ronald Reagan outlined six pillars of U.S.-Taiwan relations to reassure Taipei that the U.S. would continue to support Taiwan even after cutting formal diplomatic ties. ¹⁸¹
1994	U.S. Taiwan Policy Review	In the first major interagency review of U.S. policy towards Taiwan since 1979, President Bill Clinton stated support for Taiwan's membership in international organizations. ¹⁸²
1994	CCNAA's Washington, DC office name changed to the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office	The Clinton administration announced that the CCNAA offices could be renamed to include the name "Taipei." ¹⁸³

1996	Third Taiwan Strait Crisis	President Bill Clinton ordered two U.S. aircraft carrier battle groups into the region to de-escalate and resolve the 1995-1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. ¹⁸⁴
1997	"Monterey Talks"	Since 1997, U.S. and Taiwan officials have held a series of annual, high-level meetings on national security and Taiwan defense issues. ¹⁸⁵
2001	U.S. Endorsement of Taiwan membership into the World Trade Organization (WTO)	After nine years of negotiations, Taiwan formally entered the WTO with major U.S. support under the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations. ¹⁸⁶
2001	End of annual U.S.-Taiwan arms sales talks	On April 24, 2001, President George W. Bush held the final annual U.S.-Taiwan arms sales talks, which culminated a series of talks since the U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty ended in 1979. ¹⁸⁷
2014	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy Visit to Taiwan	The first cabinet-level official to visit Taiwan since 2000, Administrator McCarthy met with Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou and discussed environmental cooperation between the U.S. and Asia-Pacific partners. ¹⁸⁸
2016	Six Assurances Concurrent Resolution	This legislative measure affirmed that the Taiwan Relations Act and the 'Six Assurances' are cornerstones of U.S.-Taiwan relations and policy. ¹⁸⁹
2016	Trump-Tsai Phone Call	President Tsai Ing-wen spoke with President-elect Trump by phone, marking the first time a U.S. President or President-elect has directly spoken with the Taiwanese President. ¹⁹⁰
2018	Taiwan Travel Act	

		This bill allowed high-level U.S. officials (including those from the Department of State, Department of Defense, and other executive branch agencies) to freely travel and conduct business. ¹⁹¹
2019	CCNAA name changed to the Taiwan Council for U.S. Affairs (TCUSA)	On the 40th anniversary of the TRA and AIT, President Tsai announced a name change to reflect U.S.-Taiwan ties. This is the first time one organization's name has included both terms "Taiwan" and "U.S." ¹⁹²
2019	President Tsai's 4-day U.S. Stopover	En route to visit Caribbean diplomatic allies, President Tsai Ing-wen visited New York and Denver and met with a bipartisan congressional delegation, the Governor of Colorado, and other state and local government officials. ¹⁹³
2019	Deputy Asst. Secretary Klinck Visit to Taiwan	Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia Heino Klinck visited Taiwan to meet with Taiwan National Security Council and Ministry of Defence officials. ¹⁹⁴
2020	Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act	This bill stated that the U.S. should advocate, as appropriate, for Taiwan membership or observer status in relevant international organizations and U.S.-China bilateral engagements. ¹⁹⁵
2020	U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Azar Visit to Taiwan	Secretary Azar became the highest-ranking U.S. government official to visit Taiwan since 1979 and signed a health cooperation memorandum of understanding with the Taiwanese government. ¹⁹⁶
2020	U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Kelly Craft Meeting with Director of the TECRO New York Office James KJ Lee	In the first meeting between a U.S. Ambassador to the UN and a high-level Taiwan official since 1971, Ambassador Craft had lunch at a New York restaurant with Director Lee. ¹⁹⁷
2020		

	Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy and the Environment Keith Krach Visit to Taiwan	A U.S. delegation led by Undersecretary Krach visited Taiwan to attend the memorial service for former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui and honor his legacy. ¹⁹⁸
2020	Passage of Two KMT-DPP Joint Resolutions on Working Towards Formal U.S.-Taiwan Relations	Taiwan's Legislative Yuan unanimously passed a resolution that urges cooperation with the U.S. on Taiwan's self-defense from China's threats and another resolution pushing towards a restoration of formal U.S.-Taiwan relations. ¹⁹⁹

ENDNOTES

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