

Cross Strait Dynamics: India's Engagement in the Region

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine how cross-strait dynamics shape India's policies toward the broader Northeast and Southeast Asian regions. The goal is to identify key scenarios in which India may find itself as cross-strait tensions evolve.

India has followed the "One China Policy" since December 30, 1949, when it shifted its diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China (ROC) to the People's Republic of China (PRC). However, India's involvement in the region did not end there. India sought to act as a peace mediator during the missile crises of 1954-55 and 1958, though its efforts were sidelined due to broader geopolitical considerations by major powers (Gokhale, 2023, p. 19). One reason for India's attempt to mediate was the leadership of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who led the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Following this period, India's engagement with Taiwan (ROC) remained minimal until both sides mutually re-established economic and cultural ties in 1995 by opening representative offices, which function as de facto embassies. Since then, relations between India and Taiwan have grown significantly in the areas of education, culture, and politics. India's border conflict with the PRC in 1962, and subsequent incidents over the years, did not lead to a shift in its "One China Policy." Historically, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) avoided commenting on cross-strait issues. However, following the Galwan incident with the PRC in 2020, India's stance shifted. In August 2022, the MEA expressed concerns about peace and stability in the region, urging all parties to exercise restraint and avoid unilateral actions. COVID-19 also accelerated India's engagement with Taiwan, particularly through Taiwan's early assistance in providing face masks and other medical supplies during the pandemic.

The research will delve into the past studies of India's engagement in the region, but also will highlight on why Cross-strait is important to India's larger "Act East Policy". Any Cross-strait contingency will affect India's trade with other East Asian countries primarily with South Korea and Japan, both of which are strategic partners. The paper argues that, India's changing stance on Cross-strait relations is a "strategic hedging" against China. As Taiwan faces territorial claims over its territories, India faces the same from PRC on its land borders, which makes India and Taiwan as somewhat natural partners with same set of common aggression faced by them.

Key Words: India, Taiwan, China, Act East, One China

(ديناميكيات عبر المضيق: مشاركة الهند في المنطقة)

الخلاصة:

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى دراسة كيفية تأثير ديناميكيات العلاقات عبر المضيق على سياسات الهند تجاه منطقتي شمال شرق وجنوب شرق آسيا الأوسع. والهدف هو تحديد السيناريوهات الرئيسية التي قد تجد الهند نفسها فيها مع تطور التوترات عبر المضيق.

اتبعت الهند "سياسة الصين الواحدة" منذ ٣٠ ديسمبر ١٩٤٩، عندما نقلت اعترافها الدبلوماسي من جمهورية الصين إلى جمهورية الصين الشعبية. ومع ذلك، لم ينته دور الهند في المنطقة عند هذا الحد. فقد سعت الهند إلى العمل كوسيط سلام خلال أزمات الصواريخ في عامي ١٩٥٤-١٩٥٥ و ١٩٥٨، على الرغم من تهميش جهودها بسبب اعتبارات جيوسياسية أوسع نطاقاً من قبل القوى الكبرى. وكان أحد أسباب محاولة الهند للوساطة هو قيادة رئيس الوزراء جواهر لال نهرو، الذي قاد حركة عدم الانحياز. سيتناول البحث الدراسات السابقة حول مشاركة الهند في المنطقة، كما سيسلط الضوء على أهمية العلاقات عبر المضيق في "سياسة التحرك شرقاً" الأوسع نطاقاً التي تنتهجها الهند. أي طارئ يتعلق بالعلاقات عبر المضيق سيؤثر على تجارة الهند مع دول شرق آسيا الأخرى، وخاصة كوريا الجنوبية واليابان، وكلاهما شريكان استراتيجيان. ويجادل البحث بأن تغيير موقف الهند من العلاقات عبر المضيق يُعد "تحوفاً استراتيجياً" ضد الصين. فبينما تواجه تايوان مطالبات إقليمية على أراضيها، تواجه الهند نفس المطالب من جمهورية الصين الشعبية على حدودها البرية، مما يجعل الهند وتايوان شريكين طبيعيين إلى حد ما، يواجهان نفس مجموعة العدوان المشتركة.

الكلمات المفتاحية:- الهند، تايوان، الصين، قانون الشرق، صين واحدة

دايناميكي گهرووی پرین: به شداریکردنی هیندستان له ناوچه کهدا

بوخته:

نعم توژیڤنهو به نامانجیهی لیکولینهو لهو بکات که چون داینامیکی گهرووکان سیاستهکانی هیندستان بهرامبر به ناوچه فراوانهکانی باکووری روژهلآت و باشووری روژهلآتئ ناسیا له قالب دمدات. نامانج لئی دهستنیشانکردنی سیناریو سهرهکیهکانه که رهنهگه هیندستان خوی تیدا ببینینهو لهگهل پهرهسندنی گرژبیهکانی نیوان گهرووکان.

هیندستان له ٣٠ی کانوونی دووهمی ١٩٤٩هه "سیاسته یهک چین" پهیرهو کردوه، کاتیک دانپندانانی دیپلوماسی خوی له کوماری چینهه گوری بو کوماری چینی گهل (PRC). بهلام تیوهگلانی هیندستان له ناوچه کهدا هر بهوهه کوتایی نههات. هیندستان ههولیدا ومک نیوهنگیری ناشتی له کاتی قهیرانه مووشهکیهکانی سالانی ١٩٥٤-٥٥ و ١٩٥٨دا مامهله بکات، هرچهنده ههولهکانی بههوی رمچاوکردنی جیوپولیتیکی فراوانتر له لایهن زلهیزهکانهه پراویزخران (گوخالی، ٢٠٢٣، ل ١٩). یهکیک له هوکارهکانی ههولی نیوهنگیری هیندستان سهرکردایهتی جهوهه لال نههرو سهروک وهیران بوو که سهرکردایهتی بزوتنهوهی بی لایهنهکان (NAM)ی دهکرد.

وشه ی سهرهکی: هیندستان، تايوان، چین، نهکت روژهلآت، یهک چین

INTRODUCTION

Out of the multiple potential flashpoint regions in the world, the relations between China (People's Republic of China-PRC) and Taiwan (Republic of China-ROC) are one of them. The relations between the two is also known as Cross-strait relations, as both sides lies on the other side of the Taiwan Strait.

Since the 1930s, Mao Zedong-led Maoist forces have been embroiled in a bitter civil war against the Chiang Kai-Shek-led ROC (Nationalist) forces under Kuomintang (KMT) party. The civil war saw the Nationalist defeat in mainland China, leading the Chiang Party to move to Taiwan in 1949. The move to Taiwan was made to set up the KMT base to fight against Mao's forces and hope to get back to the mainland. However, the dream of Chiang Kai-shek was unfulfilled. On the other hand, Mao ultimately attempted to defeat the ROC forces but was again left unsuccessful post their campaigns to take over the outlying islands of Kinmen in 1949. The defeat of Mao's forces led to a significant morale boost for the ROC forces. Since then, neither side of the conflicting parties managed to achieve their dreams, and the status quo has remained. The changing geopolitical scenarios over the decades have led to the involvement of multiple powers in the cross-strait, primarily the United States and Japan, for strategic and historical reasons. With outside actors' involvement, the already complicated situation has embroiled within itself at a much larger scale.

On the sideler of the issues in Cross-strait, since May 2020 Galwan clash, where India lost its 20 soldiers in a fight with the Chinese army, there have been growing voices in India that the Indian government should abandon its "One China" policy. India's "One China" policy recognizes China as the sole representative of Mainland China while declining the existence of Taiwan. The call to recognize Taiwan as an independent nation has only increased in India since the unfortunate Galwan clash.

India's "Act East Policy" and Taiwan's "New Southbound Policy (NSP)" are termed as a perfect fit for each other, where both sides aim to broaden their relations beyond politics in their respective policies. India is the largest country in Taiwan's NSP. Given its technical prowess in the semiconductor industry and other hi-tech technologies, Taiwan has become a crucial factor to consider when considering the global supply chain of electronic goods. India is anticipated as the next manufacturing base for the world and a leading economy in the forthcoming decades. To get investments in crucial technologies, Taiwan can become a crucial factor in India's growth and play a significant role.

It occurred when India and Taiwan faced increased Chinese assertiveness against themselves. The long-standing border dispute between India and China and the complicated cross-strait relations are the most significant factors for the growing ties.

Given this backdrop, the paper aims to understand the following points. First is the historical past of the Cross-strait relations. Second, the research will delve into the past studies of India's engagement in the region, but also will highlight on why Cross-strait is important to India's larger "Act East Policy". Any Cross-strait contingency will affect India's trade with other East Asian countries primarily with South Korea and Japan, both of which are strategic partners. The paper argues that, India's changing stance on Cross-strait relations is a "strategic hedging" against China. As Taiwan faces territorial claims over its territories, India faces the same from PRC on its land borders, which makes India

and Taiwan as somewhat natural partners with same set of common aggression faced by them.

1) State of Cross-Strait Relations¹

1.1 Historical Past: Early days until Japanese Colonisation

One of the earliest records available of a visit by a Chinese to Taiwan was by Wang Ta-yuan's *Tao-i chih-lueh* (1349) (Thompson, 1963). The record mentioned the earliest settlement of mainland Chinese traders and fishermen in the Penghu Islands (one of the largest groups of islands on the western coast of Taiwan). However, there was no official record of settlement or political authority in Taiwan during this time. As the coastal provinces of China, Fujian saw a rise in fishing activities. It led the Han people of Fujian province in China to start interacting with the people in Penghu.

Since the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) took control of the Mainland, the Ming emperor reversed the policies of his predecessors of having a seafaring population and curbed all the freedom to its people to trade via sea. Such policy of "maritime exclusion" and "isolation" was self-curbed. Such a move was made to monopolise the overseas trade. Scholars have interpreted such policy from two perspectives: The security-diplomacy concerns and Ming China's anti-commerce governing style (Siu, 2022, pp. 1-2). The self-imposed curbs by the Ming dynasty collapsed in 1550, after which maritime activity increased in the region. It led to the revival of Chinese fishing activity around Taiwan and the Penghu islands (John E. Wills, 1999, p. 86).

In 1557, Portuguese sailors passing through the Taiwan Strait uttered the word *Ilha Formosa!* (Beautiful Island). The inhabitant of this island was called "*Formosans*" (Beautiful People) (Beng, 2017, p. 8). It was not until 1604 that the Dutch first appeared in the Penghu Islands. Penghu was a strategic base for the Dutch, and not Taiwan mainland, as the former had less risk of being attacked by the Aborigines and creating trouble (John E. Wills, 1999, p. 90). However, it was only when the commercial interest took over and the Taiwan mainland was seen as a source of revenue Dutch attempted to set up their base in Mainland Taiwan, beginning from the southern part of Taiwan. In 1624, the Dutch occupied T'a-yuen in the southwest of Taiwan (modern-day Tainan city-Anping area) (Beng, 2017, p. 9).

During the same period as Dutch, the Spanish traders arrived in mainland Taiwan in 1626 at Keelung (the northeast port city of Taiwan) and Tamsui (the northwest port city of Taiwan) in 1629. Due to the convergence of the strategic aim of controlling the trade with China and Japan, several clashes occurred between the Dutch and the Spanish generals, leading to the Spanish being defeated and complete Dutch control of the island from 1624 until 1661. Under the Dutch, several tax, land, and trade reforms occurred, encouraging migration from Mainland China to Taiwan in the more considerable hope of a "*Taiwan Dream*".

¹ The author has taken the liberty to use some of his own experience of closely watching important events in Taiwan during his stay for over 6 years while travelling extensively particularly in the rural areas.

The Dutch rule over Taiwan ended abruptly when the Ming dynasty loyalist Cheng Cheng-kung¹ led an army against the European colonisers in 1661. It was then for the first time anyone from Mainland took control of Taiwan but only briefly. However, Koxinga's rule over Taiwan was short-lived due to his untimely death in 1662. He was succeeded by his son Cheng Ching. In 1681, Cheng Ching died; his son Cheng Ke-shuang was not a strong ruler, and he surrendered to Qing Emperor General Shih Lang. Both dynastic rulers saw the immigrants to Taiwan as traitors, bandits, or hoodlums. After controlling Taiwan, the Qing emperor followed his predecessor by banning immigration. The Qing ruler proclaimed several strict rules to stop the engagement between the Han and the natives/immigrants of Taiwan. One such was the "Regulations for the Investigation of Movement to Taiwan" (Beng, 2017, pp. 28-29).

Though the restrictions were present under Ming and Qing rule of China, the immigrations never stopped aiming to come to Taiwan. Table 1 (See Appendix 1) depicts the rise of immigration from China's Fujian and Guangdong majorly. In 1895, at the end of the Sino-Japanese War, the Qing Empire ceded Taiwan to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, leading to the third colonisation of the island. Moreover, the new ruler of the island set a two-year period in which all Taiwanese had to become Japanese nationals² (Ibid. P. 30). Japan's rule over Taiwan ended with the former's surrender to the Allies unconditionally in 1945. Taiwan returned to Chin, then under the Chiang Kai-shek-led Nationalist party known as Kuomintang (KMT).

1.2 Post-World War II: Civil War and shifting of ROC Government to Taipei

The Japanese surrender came as a piece of brighter news to the inhabitants of people residing in Taiwan. However, the long colonial legacy became a double-edged sword. Taiwanese had to legitimise their affiliation with China and prove they were not "Japanised" and did not collaborate with the colonial power (Philips, 2007, p. 276).

Since the 1930s, Mao Zedong-led Maoist forces have been embroiled in a bitter civil war against the Chiang Kai-shek-led Nationalist³ forces under the KMT⁴ party. The Chinese civil war saw the Nationalist defeat in mainland China, leading the Chiang Party to move to Taiwan in 1949 with his followers. KMT's move to Taiwan made the island the base to fight against the Communist Mao's forces and hope to return to the Mainland. Along with the tensions in the cross-strait, other geopolitical tensions were occurring in the region. Korean War (1950-1953), Vietnam War (1955-1975), and Cold War (post-World War II) daunted the cross-strait tensions parallelly since 1949. Nevertheless, there were multiple attempts by the newly formed People's Republic of China (PRC) forces led by Mao Zedong to occupy the Republic of China (ROC) controlled offshore islands. In 1948, the

¹ Also known as Koxinga.

² The subjects were aimed to be transformed into *kōminka*- complete Japanaization of the colonial population.

³ The government formed by Nationalists under KMT party was known as Republic of China (ROC).

⁴ Commonly known as "Blue" party.

outlying islands of Kinmen¹ and Matsu faced multiple military takeover attempts. In October 1949, PRC attempted an amphibious assault and takeover of Kinmen Island. The ROC forces repulsed the attack, which led to a significant pause in cross-strait military activities (Yu, 2016, p. 92).

Though there was a pause in significant military actions against each other, small-scale, localised attacks continued. Actions such as commando-type raids, infiltration on each other sides, and loudspeaker propaganda aiming at each other sides regularly occurred, keeping the military on alert. The attack on Kinmen began on 23 August 1958 with concentric and fierce artillery bombings. The artillery barrage was done on alternate days, known as "odd-even day bombings" (M.H.Halperin, 1966, p. 101). The bombings continued until the U.S. recognised China as a country and established diplomatic relations with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ruled China by de-recognising Taiwan under ROC. One can understand the severity of the situation by looking at the total number of missiles fired (See Appendix 2)².

The strait saw several other significant military flare-ups on three-different occasions, starting in 1955, 1958, and 1996. The three military flare-up were termed "First, Second, and Third Missile Crisis". Post-1996, there was a brief pause on more extensive military action against Taiwan by China. However, it re-started on an August 2022 visit by Nancy Pelosi, the U.S. House of Representatives Speaker, bringing the Chinese missiles closer to the Taiwan mainland (Wei, 2022). What raised eyebrows among analysts about that some of the missiles fired landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZs) near Okinawa Island, a significant military base stationed by U.S. forces (Nemoto & Miki, 2022). The missiles fired were touted as the fourth missile crisis" across the cross-strait. This was the first time, the missiles also flew over the Taiwan's Mainland. With missiles falling in Japan's EEZ, it also calls for understanding and studying neighbouring country's policies towards a Cross-strait escalation.

As per the data collected from the Ministry of National Defense, ROC, and other reports, there has been a rising number of Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) incursions by the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF); from August 2015 to December 2017, it was 26, the year 2018 it was 638, for 2019 it was 675, 380 for the year 2020, for 2021 it was 969, and it was 370 until 6 May 2022 (ROCMND, 2022). The visit led to a new trend militarily: the "closure of air and water space" around some areas of Taiwan mainland.

Live fire exercises by China continued again when President Tsai Ing-wen met Nancy Pelosi's successor Kevin McCarthy during her "transit stop" at the U.S. on her way to Taiwan's diplomatic allies in Central America. The set of "blockade" was also again evident once President Tsai returned to Taiwan. The northern Taiwan air route was closed for 27 minutes instead of 3 days earlier, as first announced by the Chinese military (Shan,

¹ Also known as Quemoy.

² RAND Corporation data- Page 310 Total Artillery shells fired per km².

2023). The reduction of the blockade timeline reflects a Track 2 discussion being active between the straits.

The Chinese policy towards Taiwan in the first thirty years was aimed at decoupling Taiwan from the U.S. protection and its allies, and to achieve so, it took a rigid military approach. As mentioned in the previous section on the military adventures by CCP to take over Kinmen and Matsu offshore islands in 1949 and followed by the bombings in 1958. A *Xinhua* editorial of 15 March 1949, titled "*Zhongguo renmin yiding yao jiefang Taiwan*" [the Chinese people certainly will liberate Taiwan], was published reflecting the official stance of the PRC (Wachman, 2008, p. 3). Followed by the first missile crisis in 1955, in 1958, the artillery bombardment of Kinmen continued until China was officially recognised as mainland China's sole representative in December 1978. The bombings occurred on odd calendar days, marking a nickname of "Odd-Even bombings". In 1971, United Nations (U.N.) passed resolution No. 2758, which specifically talked about the status of the PRC over the mainland China expelling ROC. The resolution said:

The General Assembly, Decides to restore all its rights to the PRC and to recognise the representatives of its Government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the U.N. and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the U.N. and in all the organisations related to it (UNGA, 1971).

However, the PRC under CCP claims it also means Taiwan is an unalienable part of China, which is contradictory to the U.N. resolution which does not mention Taiwan's status. Post 1979 until 1995, China went with a softer approach post-recognition by the U.S., emphasising "peaceful unification". Furthermore, post-1995, President Lee Teng Hui's speech at Cornell University began with the "*Carrots and Sticks*" approach. In his speech at Cornell, President Lee mentioned, "two nations" referring to Taiwan and China as two separate countries (Teng-Hui, 1995). Such a statement angered China leading to a missile crisis in the Taiwan Strait.

Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, and since then, the policy of the PRC has been more multi-dimensional. At one point PRC came out with a softer approach, but also did not miss to sanction ("punish" used by PRC) those who did not abide by the PRC version of the "One China" policy. Whereas KMT had an iron-clad rule from 1949 until 1987 in Taiwan. Martial Law was declared in this period, popularly known as the "White Terror". In this period, until President Chiang Chin-kuo (1988) was alive, the idea was to get back to the motherland (China). President Chiang Chin-kuo adopted a "3 No Policy" [No Contact, No Negotiation, and No Compromise] towards China. He expressed anger and declared the "short notice" given by the U.S. regarding its decision to shift ties from ROC to PRC as "inconceivable" (Hsiung, 2000, p. 117).

However, post 1988, under the Presidentship of Lee Teng-hui, the identity formation gradually changed from Chinese to Taiwanese. After Taiwan removed the Martial Law, it established National Unification Council (NUC) in 1990, which set up a set of guidelines on Taiwan's policy towards the Mainland (FCJ, 1990). The NUC was later abandoned by

the successor of Lee Teng-hui in 2000, Chen Shui-bian belonging to Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)¹. For the first time in Taiwanese history that there was a peaceful transition of power from KMT to another party after 55 years of continuous rule over Taiwan. In its initial formation, DPP has always been a pro-independence leaning party which saw its formulation in the 1980s.

Chen Shui-bian, in his inaugural speech as President, pledged the "Four Noes and One Without" (Shui-bian, 2000). In the book he shared his idea of Cross-strait relations, it meant that as long as the PRC had no intention to use military force against Taiwan, he would not declare independence nor change the national symbols of the ROC.

Chen Shui-bian was succeeded by Ma Ying-Jeou in 2008 from KMT. Born in Hong Kong, President Ma's tenure was full of controversies, given his closeness to Beijing. Soon after his tenure began in May 2008, Chen Yunlin (陈云林), the then-chairman of China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), visited Taipei in November 2008. It led to a massive protest known as the "Wild Strawberries Movement". This marked the beginning of the anti-KMT protests in Taiwan. Chen's visit was primarily to facilitate the signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) between Taiwan and China (Cole, 2017, p. 20). The ECFA, which aimed to bring the economics of Taiwan and China closer by reducing tariffs, led to the signing of the Cross-Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA). The Taiwanese youth saw Such closeness as a pro-China move, and the main opposition party DPP took advantage of it by painting KMT as pro-China.

The CSSTA led to the "Sunflower Movement" in Taiwan, where the protestors, mostly the youth, occupied the Legislative Yuan² for 23 days. It led to the withdrawal of CSSTA and became one of the prime actors where the message was sent across the strait to China that the Taiwanese youth do not associate themselves mainly with China. Such agreements also led to KMT's fall in the 2016 national election.

1.3 The Politics of White Paper

The three decades (1949-1979) reflect a mutual will from both Taiwan and the Chinese to get back to each other. Taiwan, under the KMT-led ROC government aimed to get back to motherland (mainland China), whereas the CCP aimed to bring Taiwan and its offshore islands under its territory.

China has also released consecutively three white papers over time. The first white paper was released on 31 August 1993 and titled "PRC White Paper, 'The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China'" (TaiwanAffairsOffice, 1993). It followed the "1992 consensus" and described the cross-strait policy regarding Chinese views. In its first section, the white paper titled "Taiwan: An Inalienable Part of China" where mentions, "*Taiwan has belonged to China since ancient times*" (TaiwanAffairsOffice, 1999, p. 78) The white paper also defended the claims by the PRC on Taiwan and blamed the KMT for its

¹ Commonly known as "Green" Party.

² Taiwan's Legislative body, equivalent to India's Parliament.

mishandling and internationalising domestic issue. The internationalisation has led to the involvement of the U.S. as the net security provider to Taiwan in case there is a change in the status quo of the cross-strait by using force.

As the white paper states, "The Chinese people on both sides of the strait all believe that there is only one China and espouse national reunification" (TaiwanAffairsOffice, 1999, p. 86). the paper also explained the "1992 consensus" regarding China's viewpoint. First, It reiterates that there is one China in the world, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. Second, it defends the co-existence of two types of economic systems: the socialism of China and the capitalism of Taiwan. Third, it promises a higher degree of autonomy, where Taiwan will become a particular representative region with administrative and legislative powers. Moreover fourthly, it stated a provision for peace negotiations.

However, the former Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) chairman of Taiwan, Su Chi, stated that the term "1992 Consensus" was a makeup term in 2000, and it was not until the 2001 legislative election that the then KMT chairman in 2001 Lien Chan began emphasising the term. Beijing repeatedly denounced the term until 2005 when it accepted the "1992 consensus" during Lien's visit to China (Jacobs, 2016). The statement by MAC Chairman needs further analysis as had Beijing does not agree to use the "1992 consensus" terminology, then why was it mentioned in its First white paper in 1993?

The second white paper was released on 21 February 2000 (TaiwanAffairsOffice, 2000). The paper targeted KMT's leader and then President of Taiwan, Lee Teng-hui. President Lee has been known for his reformist ideas within KMT; in a speech at his alma mater at Cornell University, he stated, "state-to-state relations", referring to cross-strait relations. Additionally, in his book published in May 1999, *The Road to Democracy*, he advocated the division of China into seven "fully autonomous" regions. Such reformist ideas were not received well by China (TaiwanAffairsOffice, 2000, pp. 45-46).

In the same white paper, China blamed Japan for its improper colonial rule over Taiwan and the agreements which followed post-Japan's surrender. The paper also blamed how the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed in April 1895, which forced the Qing government in China to allow Japan's role over Taiwan. The official report also mentioned China's President Deng Xiaoping's "One Country, two systems" approach and President Jiang Zemin's eight propositions, bringing their ideas from adhering to China's version of the "One China principle". The paper again referred to the Taiwanese as fellow "compatriots" of China. This paper introduced the policies on how China is going to protect the Taiwanese economic interests and also its citizens who are abroad. It mentioned how the Chinese Government assisted the Taiwanese in evacuating from Kuwait during the Gulf War and provided relief and safe evacuation post-earthquake in Japan.

The third white paper was released on 10 August 2022 (TaiwanAffairsOffice, 2022); China published its third white paper. The latest white paper deleted a pledge in the first and second white papers. The pledge said that China would allow Taiwan to retain its military forces after its unification with Taiwan. Moreover, it said Beijing would refrain from dispatching Chinese military forces to Taiwan (Orita, 2023). The paper came out with new

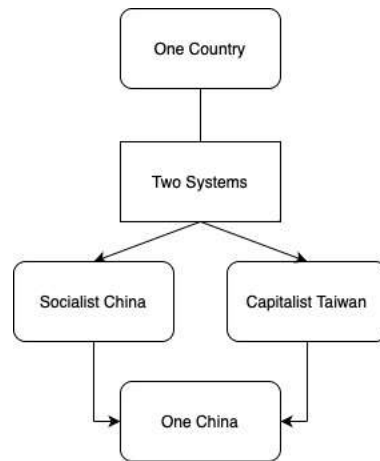
concepts of President Xi Jinping on handling Cross-strait relations. It defended why Taiwan has been removed from the World Health Assembly (WHA), an increase of countries recognising China based on the One-China principle. The paper also revisited the earlier arguments by the CPC Central Committee on the claim that Taiwan is a part of China. Interestingly, the paper also delved into the domestic issues of Taiwan. For example, it mentioned water delivery from Fujian to Kinmen Island, cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic, and supporting Taiwanese compatriots.

The fourth section of the latest white paper was titled "National Reunification in the New Era". The CCP defended and explained the one country and two systems in this section.

One country is the precondition and foundation of Two Systems; Two Systems are subordinate to and derive from One country, and the two are integrated under the one-China principle (TaiwanAffairsOffice, 2022, p. 9).

The above CCP version of the claim can be understood as per Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: One China, Two Systems (PRC Version)



Source: Designed by the author

Beyond the military rhetoric, there have been multiple other variables that play a crucial role in the shaping of cross-strait relations. Trade relations, people's movements, identity shaping, disinformation campaigns, and external factors such as U.S. and Japan's policies have been crucial in shaping and steering cross-strait relations. However, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong's dreams have remained unfulfilled.

In 2016, Taiwan started a refurbished New Southbound Policy (NSP) aiming to increase people-to-people connections with 18 countries.¹ Among the NSP countries, India is the only other country which has a land boundary dispute with China and has the potential to be the world's next production house which is touted as the following world factory. To study and understand what can be India's response to the cross-strait crisis, one needs to understand how the domestic factors of Taiwan and the international actors shape the complex relationship.

¹ These countries are: 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); 8 South Asians; Australia, and New Zealand.

In the next section, the paper will delve into how the domestic perception in Taiwan and China plays a role in shaping the cross-strait relations in terms of political, business, public and security aspects.

2. India's Policy Outlook in CSR

Post India's independence, in November 1948, Indian Ambassador to Nanking (now as Nanjing), reported to New Delhi that Chiang Kai-shek's position as China's President had become "untenable" leading the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to ask the Ministry of External Affairs not to get too involved with the "expiring government in China" (Gokhale, 2023, p. 11). Following which India recognised PRC and transferred its diplomatic ties with ROC on 30 December 1949 (Gokhale, 2023, p. 11). As India's former foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale, rightly showed in his recent work, that India attempted to play as a negotiator and a facilitator for peace talks at regular intervals during the missile crisis in 1954-55, and 1958. But India's attempt to be a mediator felt under cold shoulders due to a larger geopolitical play by the then superpowers (Gokhale, 2023, p. 19).

The bilateral ties between India and Taiwan got a second boost when both sides on consultation with each other decided to open representative offices at each other's country in 1995. In his interview with *Indian Foreign Affairs Journal*, Vinod C. Khanna¹, described on conditions that preceded on setting up an Indian Mission in Taipei. The Indian mission was named as India-Taipei Association (ITA), whereas the Taiwan mission in New Delhi was named as Taipei Economic and Cultural Center (TECC). Over times, the TECC has now a mission in Chennai as well.

Vinod C. Khanna mentioned the major priority for the ITA under him was to, "steer clear of political issues and concentrating on attracting Taiwanese investment, promoting bilateral trade and encouraging tourism to India" (IFAJ, 2010, p. 242). Since then the policy has been maintained consistently. In August 2022, there was a minor change in such policy of India, where without naming Taiwan, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said, that like many other countries, India too is concerned about this development, and urge all parties against unilateral actions and exercise restraint" (HindustanTimes, 2022). The statement reflects the MEA position and it also occurred at a time when India and China are engaged in a long border talks post-Galwan incident in 2020. The statement was seen as a change in India's approach to cross-strait after many decades.

Since Ukraine-Russia war began in February 2022, and questions of India's response to a similar crisis towards cross-strait were also raised especially post-Nancy Pelosi's visit. Responding to such questions, Jabin T. Jacob in his work mentioned that India's ties with Taiwan is not deep or extensive enough yet to get involved in a cross-strait dispute and the ties with PRC shouldn't be mixed with other bilateral relations that India has (Jacob, 2022, p. 152).

¹ Vinod C. Khanna, was the first Director General of the India-Taipei Association, the de facto Indian Mission in Taiwan.

Going beyond the political relations, there are several other parallels that both India and Taiwan are working together. This section, will talk a larger picture of education, health, and trade engagement. And later it will do cover the challenges in India-Taiwan relations. In terms of education, there has been a steady increase of scholarships towards Indian students in Taiwan. As per data collected from TECC, New Delhi, since 2018, Ministry of Education, Taiwan Scholarship has increased the scholarship quotas each year. Table 2 describes the numbers of scholarships towards Taiwan Scholarship has increased over the years. The biggest gain are those who receive Huayu Enrichment Scholarship (primarily to learn Chinese), which has seen a sharp rise from 180 months in 2018 in total to 276 months in 2022.

Table 2: Distribution of Scholarships provided by the Ministry of Education, Taiwan towards Indian Students

Year	Name of the Scholarship	
	<i>Taiwan Scholarship</i>	<i>Huayu Enrichment Scholarship</i>
2018	40	180 months
2019	45	192 months
2020	45	216 months
2021	46	216 months
2022	48	276 months

Source: Ministry of Education, TECC, New Delhi

As per Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MOE), there were 2239 Indian students in universities across Taiwan (MOE, 2022). The major attraction of Taiwanese universities towards Indian students is their low cost and ease of living along with a quality education. Such factors attract Indian students to Taiwan. Taiwan has also encouraged Indian scholars for fellowship under Taiwan Fellowship program as encouraged by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). MOE, Taiwan partnered with the Taiwanese universities to open Taiwan Education Centers in India (TECs) since 2011. As per data provided by the MOE, TECC, New Delhi and TEC Program Office at National Tsing Hua University, as of now there are total of 27 TECs in India providing Mandarin language training and over 11,000 students being trained so far. TECs has been at forefront in promoting Taiwan in India, and a bridge for Indian students to find opportunities in Taiwan.

The TECs is seen as less suspicious than the Confucius Institute of China. India like other countries post review of the Confucius Institute began to close them citing interreference and changing public perception (Rahman & Hasija, 2021). Since there is a huge demand of Mandarin learning in India, TECs have filled some of those gap.

As the cooperation is highlighted majorly of higher education, a recent bottom to top approach has been attempted as well. In April 2022, Taiwan launched the International Education Program 2.0 for Primary and Secondary Schools in India, which aims for partnership among primary and secondary schools in India (MOETaiwan, 2022). Following the program, recently in 2023, a group of Indian school principals visited Taiwan and had interactions with their Taiwanese counterparts. There are about 47 Indian schools who have participated in this program so far, which is second only to South Korea (CNA, 2023).

Another aspect of cooperation that has been possible without the interference of the political reality is the joint projects by Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), India and National Science and Technological Council (NSTC), Taiwan. This has allowed scholars from both India and Taiwan to apply to projects jointly on several thematic areas (ISTI, 2023). When it comes to trade, there is a rising Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) from Taiwan to India. Most of these investments are done primarily by the semiconductor companies of Taiwan who in a global rearrangements of supply chain would like to diversify their productions. Among all these positive non-political associations or methods of cooperation's there are several challenges that laments the bilateral cooperation.

First, is the lack of understanding of each other. There are still limited knowledge of each other culture, languages, and social values. This has led to several misunderstandings and in some cases has led the investments to shy away. For instance, the clashes at the Taiwanese company of Mediatek near Bangalore. The company faced a loss of 3 million USD due to the riots.

Second, is the geographical distance. The lack and limits of resumption of direct flights (which was active until pre-COVID) has led to the already distanced relations to be more behind. Primarily, the Indian diaspora in Taiwan consists of students enrolled in higher studies who do not travel frequently to India and back. The same goes to the Taiwanese citizens in India, where only a handful of them are engaged in business and work in India.

Third, is lack of any physical product in the Indian markets which can be associated closely with Taiwan. For example, the rise of K-pop and K-dramas in India has led to the rise of interests among the Indians towards Korean culture. Similar products are missing from Taiwan which can be closely associated by the Indians.

Fourth, is the bureaucracy. The red-tape on both sides has also a part of blame to be shared. This not only reflects lack of seriousness towards each other, but also shows where each other stands in terms of priorities.

3. Tentative Scenarios for India pre/in Cross-Strait Conflict

Tensions in the cross-strait relations in the future has a higher potential to create a ripple effect in the world. With the world getting technologically dependent with each other, with

the niche of the semiconductor technology coming from Taiwan, it is important for India to be prepared for a possible scenarios that might embroil due to conflict over Taiwan.

First, and the foremost challenge that India might face during a military crisis situation is of taking sides. In 2022 and at the time of writing this project, India was asked by multiple organisations and nations to condemn Russia for its actions against Ukraine. On similar terms, India can find itself in such situation when it comes to a potential cross-strait conflict. Interestingly, India will also face a situation where it will find itself with a task of evacuating thousands of students and others who work and do business in Taiwan.

On similar note, India's approach to a conflict in the cross-strait will be anticipated where in case China forcefully occupy the offshore islands controlled by Taiwan including the Taiping Island¹, Kinmen, Matsu, and Penghu. Second, it will face a challenge to secure its trade to Korean peninsula, Japan and ASEAN nations which passes through Taiwan Strait and in SCS. With the U.S.. commitments to Taiwan in getting involved in any conflict in the Taiwan strait, and Japan possibly getting involved as well, it is going to affect the crucial trade route of India. Ambassador Gokhale's work on the implications of a cross-strait has mentioned the implications on the volume of trade between India and the East Asian region which will suffer due to the conflict.

Third, India might face the ground or aerial incursions similar to Galwan which China might use to create a higher tension between the two nuclear armed neighbours for deception. Such act can either occur before of a concrete military action against Taiwan by China. This will allow China ample time for conduct its initial attack in a blitzkrieg manner.

Fourth, a scenario where the military action against India and a South China Sea military action similar to 1978 against Vietnam might occur simultaneously, this time though against the Philippines. Chinese ambassador to the Philippines recently warned the country of its Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) security in case of a conflict occurs (Lazaro, 2023), and also blocking its Coast Guards ships to resupply the Philippine controlled shoals in the region largely disputed by other claimants. (AssociatedPress, 2023). The recently updated Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in 2023 with the U.S., signed originally in 2014, is also seen suspiciously by China. Therefore, all these factors can make the Philippines another target of deception.

The Fifth and final scenario that this research would like to hypothesise is the influence and interference in India's internal situations. Disturbances in the Northeast, the conflict with Pakistan and as well as fake news can be spread around to create hate and misinformation, leading to riots or sabotage acts against Critical Infrastructures (CIs) such as grid failures, train derailments, or even disruption in cell phone networks can cause severe confusion and delay in the response of government agencies.

6. Future Trajectories

¹ Taiwan and China call it Taiping. In Western name it is Ittu Abba. Also claimed by Vietnam (Ba Binh) and the Philippines (Ligao/Pulo ng Ligaw).

This paper proposes certain actions which Indian policymakers might approach in the future to mitigate the risks that it may face during a conflict in the straits.

First, is to how to counter disinformation. India by engaging with Taiwan can understand on how the latter tackle the disinformation campaigns against its society, such as during elections, and social media.

Second, is to have a “Whole of Societal” approach to counter the disinformation campaigns. The agencies in India need to approach such policy not from top to bottom, but also vice versa. By educating students from schools and colleges, by radio shows, and using of social media. The public should be able to filter the fake news from real, which will save time, energy, and resources for the government. The role of private sectors in disseminating such threats will be crucial as well. Given their vast resources and reach across the country, they can be reached out to promote such campaigns.

Third, is the language training. Taiwan can plug in the gap of the requirement of the Mandarin teachers in India. With geopolitical tensions at its peak with China due to Galwan incident, Taiwan can assist in increasing their TECs in India to train a large pool of language experts. Such talent pool can be crucial not only building bridges between the two sides but also can give them employment in both public and private sectors.

Fourth, proposition is that the need to engage Taiwan non-politically elected leaders via Track 1.5 and 2. This will assist in understanding the future leaders views on Taiwan’s internal political dynamics and also its views on China. By engaging with non-elected leaders, India can swiftly avoid any complications with its relations with China and its “One-China Policy”.

Fifth and the last is to study on how other countries in the region interact and balance their cross-strait policies. Studying the geographical closer countries in Southeast Asia, South Korea, and Japan engagement with Taiwan can provide ideas on multitudes of ideas to India on several unique methods and possibly work together with such countries to avoid any threat to its interests in the region.

4. Conclusion

This paper attempted to put forward an overall picture of cross-strait relations from the past to present, the internal political dynamics of Taiwan, and where India can find itself in a potential conflict. Though not extensive in the history of the cross-strait, the time line of the cross-strait relations will assist the readers in highlighting the major incidents. As India is slowly moving from regional power to middle power, it cannot afford not to understand the cross-strait affairs.

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