

The Taiwan Issue: Exploring the Possible Standoff between QUAD and China

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Abstract— This paper aims to explore the stance of the present governments in each member nation that is part of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) if China invades Taiwan in the near future. However, the author wishes to state that Chinese invasion of Taiwan would not be a direct military assault but a carefully calculated machination in which the island-nation would be subdued into submission without firing a single bullet. Nevertheless, securing Taiwan's independence would be the first formidable challenge the nations of QUAD would face since the sole mission of this union is to contain Chinese influence and expansion into the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific regions. Therefore, the research question outlying this paper is if QUAD will intervene to save Taiwan from an imminent Chinese invasion? To answer this question, this research identifies two objectives. The first is to gather information on the nature of the diplomatic relationship maintained by QUAD member states with China. The second objective on the other hand, is to explore academic and defence related material available on strategies that QUAD may apply to prevent Chinese consolidation of Taiwan. When exploring the resources available on this scenario, it appears that there are a number of factors to consider by each member state before they all agree on defending Taiwan from China. Similar for China, it is a question of whether the Communist Party of China believes that its military is capable to confront the united forces of four economic powerhouses. Nevertheless, despite the reservations of Japan, India and Australia, The United States would be compelled to come for Taiwan's aid if USA wishes to maintain its superiority in Asia Pacific, even if it fails to prevent China ultimately consolidating Taiwan into PRC. The methodology applied on this paper was based purely on qualitative research and on secondary sources.

Keywords— *USA, China, Japan, India, Australia, Taiwan, QUAD*

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Brief on the History between China and Taiwan

The Republic of China (or commonly referred to as Taiwan or ROC) is a controversial island nation that is located in the East China Sea and separated from Mainland China by the Taiwan Strait. Despite meeting the requirements for state-hood as stipulated in the Montevideo Convention of 1933, Taiwan is not recognized by the United Nations as a sovereign nation-state. The UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 of 1971 recognized the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the only internationally accepted representative of China in the international organization. This resulted in Taiwan having to relinquish its UN membership along with its permanent seat in the UN Security Council to PRC (Restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations, 1971).

Nevertheless, Taiwan currently maintains diplomatic relations with 15 countries and non-diplomatic representation with over 50 nations (Clarke, 2019, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China, 2021). The latter include trade, cultural exchanges and scientific collaborations. Despite being considered unofficial state level relations, diplomatic protocols are practiced to a certain extent with these nations. Moreover, Taiwan is a member in several international organizations such as the World Trade Organization, International Olympic Committee and in the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2020; IOC, 2021; WTO, 2019). However, over 100 nations strongly adhere to UN Resolution of 2758 hence neither maintain diplomatic nor non-diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Sri Lanka is one such nation-state (Rajasingham, 2020).

The People's Republic of China (or commonly referred to as China or PRC) has always protested against Taiwan's independent status since the Communist Party of China took control of the Chinese government after the Chinese Communist Revolution of 1945-1949 (which is also referred to as the Second

Phase of the Chinese Civil War). Prior to annexing Taiwan into the Japanese Empire (after the Japanese Invasion of Taiwan in 1895), Taiwan was considered either a sovereign territory or a vassal state by successive dynasties in Imperial China. During the Qing Dynasty (which was the last dynasty of Imperial China), Taiwan was sovereign territory of the Empire (Copper, 2014).

When Taiwan was under Japanese rule, drastic political changes were taking place in Mainland China. In 1911, the Qing Dynasty was overthrown by the Chinese Revolution, which ended over 5,000 years of imperial rule in China. From there on, China would be referred to as, Republic of China. Sun Yat-Sen would be the republic's first President. However, this period was marked by political turmoil and is commonly referred to as the Republic Era of China. During this period, China would experience a fusion of democracy, authoritarianism, and a brief restoration of the Qing Dynasty. Nevertheless, when Japan invaded China during the Second Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1949 (which was part of the Pacific theatre of WWII), the President of China was Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who represented the Kuomintang political party. Since his government was a significant contributor in WWII, the Republic of China was awarded a permanent seat at the UN Security Council in 1945.

After the defeat of President Kai-shek's Kuomintang majority Government at the Second Phase of the Chinese Civil War of 1945-1949, key Government officials of the Republic of China swiftly migrated to the island of Taiwan in 1949 during the latter stages of the war (Cheung, 2016). This was done to avoid persecution from Chairman Mao's Communist regime. However, during this time Taiwan was still considered part of Japanese territory since the Shimonoseki Treaty of 1895 (Haipeng and Guoqiang, 2016). Nevertheless, at the San Francisco Treaty of 1951, Japan ceded Taiwan to China (Zha, 2001). It was at this particular juncture where the territory of Taiwan and the representatives of Mainland China becomes a substantial global issue. Does the two landmasses belong to the exiled government of the Republic of China? Alternatively, does Taiwan belong to the new Communist Regime of the People's Republic of China?

The People's Republic of China argues that Taiwan is a part of its territory. This is because, as mentioned previously, when Japan invaded the island in 1895, Taiwan was sovereign territory of the Qing Empire.

Therefore, when the island was ceded to China in 1951, it should be rightfully under the sovereignty of PRC according to the theory of Succession of States. Furthermore, the Communist Party Government exerted its governance over all of mainland China and its population. It was on these grounds that PRC was granted UN membership in 1971 by an overwhelming majority. On the other hand, Republic of China argues that its Government has existed in Taiwan since 1949, long after the establishment of PRC. Furthermore, Taiwan argues that by complying with the requirements of the Montevideo Convention of 1933 for nation-statehood, engaging in international trade and maintaining de facto diplomatic ties with over 50 countries, does make Taiwan a country independent from PRC.

B. Previous Attempts made by China to Invade Taiwan

There have been three previous attempts where China has attempted to conquer the de facto island-nation of Taiwan. The First Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1954-1955 resulted in the PRC seizing the islands of Hainan, Yijianshan and Dachen from Taiwan and incorporated them into its sovereign territory. This crisis led to the signing of the Sino-American Mutual Defence Treaty in 1955 between the Eisenhower Administration of the United States and Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang Government of Taiwan. The treaty specifies that Washington will come to Taipei's aid if only PRC attacks the Island of Taiwan and the Penghu archipelago (Pescadores Islands).

At the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958, the Eisenhower Administration was loyal to the Treaty. This is because PRC attacked the islands of Kinmen and Matsu that were Taiwanese territories not covered under its obligations. Nevertheless, Washington deployed a reinforced US Navy Seventh Fleet to aid Taipei in protecting the supply lines to these islands thus placing the crisis on a track towards a stalemate. Since PRC was unable to conquer those two island chains, the crisis ended in status quo ante bellum. Kinmen and Matsu islands remain under the territorial integrity of Taiwan to this day. It can be argued that this crisis was part of Mao Zedong's strategy to evaluate the level of US commitment to the treaty. There was a significant hiatus (37 years) between the Second and Third Strait Crisis of 1995-1996. By this time China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) had evolved significantly since the 1950s. The reason for PRC aggression was the growing pro-independence sentiment in Taiwan spearheaded by the de facto

President at the time, Lee Teng-hui. Despite ending in a stalemate, the showcase of PRC's military strength and Beijing's confidence to do so made policymakers in Washington realise that a new defence alliance against China is paramount to securing American interest in Asia-Pacific.

C. Brief on Quad

As for the United States, Taiwan as an independent democratic country, opposing China's Communist government, benefits in maintaining American interests in the East China Sea. It also helps to contain China's territorial expansion into Asia Pacific. Currently, China's growing influence around the world has threatened the very foundation of Post-World War II American world order and as a maritime super-power. Therefore, maintaining American influence in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific has become an increasing priority in American foreign policy over the past years. As a viable strategy, the Bush Administration began engaging with regional powers that were threatened by China's influence in their respective domains. Hence, in 2007, the Quadrilateral Security Dialog (commonly referred to as Quad) was established (and was reinvigorated in 2017 during the Trump Administration). This was a defence alliance between the democratic countries, the United States of America, Japan, Republic of India and the Commonwealth of Australia (Smith, 2021). The underlying purpose of this alliance is to contain China's territorial expansion and influence in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific Regions. (Gale and Shearer, 2018).

The 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami brought together these four democratic nations to provide much needed humanitarian assistance to countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka etc. (Gale and Shearer, 2018, pp.2). The magnanimity of providing over 30 ships and 5,000 troops towards international humanitarian aid by Prime-Minister Manmohan Singh's administration, astounded the world of India's military resources and competence. Nevertheless, the United States was aware of India's maritime capabilities since both countries have engaged in the Malabar joint naval exercise since 1992. Therefore, the Bush Administration at the time recognized that India was now an emerging power and that the country has the potential of becoming a strategic ally to maintain American interest in South Asia (Rai, 2018, pp.138). As a result of developing closer ties between these

four countries, in 2007, the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe initiated the idea for a dialogue involving diplomatic and military engagements. In support of this, the Vice President of USA; Dick Cheney, Prime Minister of India; Manmohan Singh and the Prime Minister of Australia; John Howard, joined hands to make his vision become a reality (Speers, 2021; Rai, 2018, pp.139). Therefore, in 2007 both Japan and Australia (along with Singapore) participated in the Malabar naval exercise. The latter marked the first Quadrilateral maritime exercise conducted by member states and the first Malabar naval exercise to have conducted outside the Indian Ocean. The location that year was the surrounding waters of Japan's Okinawa Island. It was at this juncture that Beijing officially informed the member states of its dissatisfaction with Quad (Rai, 2018, pp.139; India Today, 2017).

China's dissatisfaction with Quad, resulted in the newly elected Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd to withdraw his country's engagement from this defence alliance (Gale and Shearer, 2018, pp.2). Since China was a major trading partner for Australia, naturally, the Rudd Administration viewed that antagonizing China on USA's behalf would result in damaging the existing cordial Sino-Australian relationship (Envall, 2019, pp.4). However, disclosures of Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) infiltration and interference in domestic politics resulted in the Australian public to favour a government that opposes China's expansionist ambitions. Hence, in 2010, Julia Gillard was elected Prime Minister of Australia on the assurance of curtailing CCP influencing Australian policy decisions (Gale and Shearer, 2018, pp.2). Her administration resumed Australia's involvement in Quad and agreed to establish a US Marine base in northern Australia with the Obama administration (Rai, 2018, pp.139).

The four leaders of Quad member countries met on the sidelines of the 2017 ASEAN Summit (held in Manila), to recalibrate Quad's mission. At this meeting, all four nation-states generally agreed to curtail China's influence in the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific regions (Roche, 2017). However, there were areas in which all four powers did not unanimously agree up on. According to a study conducted by the American think tank, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the official readout from India did not refer to freedom of navigation and overflight, respect for international law and maritime security. Japan on the other hand reserved any mention of connectivity of supply chains between

member states. The United States and Australia were the only countries that mentioned the term Quadrilateral in their official readouts. Despite these minor variations, it can be argued that the threat perception of China varies between these four countries (Gale and Shearer, 2018, pp.2). Nevertheless, in 2020, Australia engaged in the Malabar naval exercise after a thirteen-year hiatus since 2007. During this period, Japan was made a permanent participant of the naval exercise in 2015 (The Economic Times, 2020).

Chinese policy makers have publicly taunted Quad since 2017. For example, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi stated that the coalition was like “foam in the ocean, destined to dissipate soon” (Rai, 2018, pp.138). With recent Chinese policies of tightening its grip over the Autonomous Uyghur-Xinjiang Province and on the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, the Communist Party of China has openly stated its intentions of incorporating Taiwan under the sovereignty of PRC (BBC, 2019; Erin, 2021; Ward, 2021). This is now a growing concern for the people of Taiwan who have enjoyed democracy and freedom of speech for most of their lives. As for the United States and for regional powers, Taiwan uniting with PRC would solidify China’s expansionist ambitions. Thus, protecting Taiwan’s de facto sovereignty has become priority for Quad and the first challenge that would either congeal or fragment this defence alliance. This is because similar to the United States, Japan, India and Australia remain ambiguous on the idea of an independent Taiwan.

D. Research Question & Objectives

The aim of this research is to analyse if Quad members will confront China if the latter invades Taiwan. Therefore, the research problem is as follows.

Will Quad intervene militarily to save Taiwan from an imminent Chinese invasion?

Hence, to answer this question this paper will focus on the following two research objectives. The first is to gather information on the nature of the diplomatic relationship maintained by individual Quad member states with China. The second objective is to explore academic and defence related material available on the policies individual Quad member-states might pursue in the event of a Chinese (PRC) attempt to consolidate Taiwan (ROC) into its sovereign territory.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research is qualitative in nature. Hence, this study will contain one type of methodology and it will be content analysis. Krippendorff (2013) explains that content analysis is indigenous to communication research and is potentially one of the vital research techniques in social sciences. He further states that content analysis is widely used in intelligent gathering and political studies. This is because a government’s knowledge about political developments in foreign nation-states depend on information received in the form of diplomatic correspondence, foreign broadcasts, academic articles, journalistic articles and speeches made by the political leadership of that sovereign state (Krippendorff, 2013). Hence, content analysis was suitable because the above-mentioned sources were used to gather information for this research.

Content analysis falls under unobtrusive research which means research that does not involve data collection from different people. Hence content analysis is the study of recorded human communications (Pashakhanlou, 2017, pp.447-465). This means data is gathered from secondary sources such as journal articles, books, newspapers, government reports and publications etc. Further Pashakhanlou (2017, pp.447-465) states that in content analysis there are two types of content that can be analysed, and they are manifest content and latent content. He explains that ‘manifest content’ is observable content, and these are content that can be looked at or listened to. The second is latent content which is the underlying meaning of the content itself (Pashakhanlou, 2017, pp.447-465). In this study, both manifest and latent content was analysed.

Discourse analysis is another methodology applied by the researcher to conduct this study. Discourse analysis means the analysing of language used in secondary sources such as journal articles, books, newspapers, news readings etc. Since this research is based on content analysis and discourse analysis; desk research was used as a methodology and technique. As described by the name, desk research is the research technique which is mainly acquired by sitting at a desk. The data for conducting a desk research can be generated through the World Wide Web or commonly known as the internet.

III. DISCUSSION

A. Recent Developments in Cross Strait Relations

At the recently concluded 100th Anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party (1st July 2021), President Xi Jinping officially communicated his Government's intention of consolidating Taiwan into the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China (Nikkei Asia, 2021; Xinhua, 2021, pp.11). This rang alarm bells in Taipei and Washington since both governments are now extremely concerned of a forthcoming Chinese invasion of Taiwan in the near future. Ian Easton (2021a; 2021b), who is a Research Fellow at the American think-tank, Project 2049 Institute, says an amphibious Chinese invasion of Taiwan cannot be directly compared to the D-Day landing of 1944 on the beaches of Normandy of France by the allied forces against Nazi German occupation. Given the size and technology adopted by China's PLAN and the latter's close proximity to Taiwan, he further elaborates that the scale of such an invasion can even be multiple times larger and more devastating than that of the D-Day landings.

Since President Tsai Ing-wen took office in 2016, there has been growing nationalism in Taiwan and public outcry for independence (Chung, 2018; Global Times, 2021; Rich and Einhorn, 2021). The latter would mean Taiwan's recognition as a sovereign nation-state within the international system. For Beijing, as explicitly mentioned by China's Taiwan Affairs Office, Ma Xiaoguang, this is unacceptable and PRC will do whatever it takes to prevent Taipei from taking such action (The Times of India, 2020). Therefore, to counter PRC's threat, Taipei has recently maintained very close ties with Washington (Tan, 2020). It can be argued that the Ing-wen Administration is trying to extend Washington's obligations to the treaty by not only supporting Taiwan as a bystander but to get actively involved and deploy troops to fight against an invasion force.

Moreover, it can be argued that Beijing's acceleration of withdrawing the "one country, two systems" policy for Hong Kong have led to Taiwanese not trusting President Xi Jinping's Administration to honour the 1992 Consensus (signed between the administrations of President Yang Shangkun of China and de facto President Lee Ten-hui of Taiwan) where the same policy was applied to ROC.

According to an article published in 2021 by Lee Hsi-min (Former Chief of the General Staff of Taiwanese Armed Forces) and Eric Lee (Research Associate at Project 2049 Institute), for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), unifying Taiwan into PRC's territory is the final piece in making China great again. They

further state that a successful consolidation of Taiwan into PRC's sovereign territory would solidify President Xi Jinping's victory at the upcoming 20th Party Congress in 2022 where he has bid to run for President for the 3rd term. However, analysts deny that Xi Jinping's administration would not invade Taiwan immediately since it would bring the nation into severe financial constrains as Beijing will be hosting the Winter Olympics in 2022 (Feng, 2021). Nevertheless, Jacob Stokes (2021), a Research Fellow at the American think-tank, Centre for New American Security explains that any attempts by President Tsai Ing-wen's Government to declare independence of Taiwan would instantaneously provoke Beijing to deploy an invasion force on the island. Kyle Mizokami (2021) argues that, failing to react immediately against the declaration of independence would undermine the credibility of CCP. He further states that the Government of China does not have an urgent need to invade Taiwan but an attempt of declaring independence would force Xi Jinping's Administration to authorize an amphibious invasion.

If an invasion is to take place, the date and China's capability to execute it remains a question at large. According to the United States Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs, Gen. Mark A. Milley, an invasion is probable by 2027 because by then China's PLAN would have developed into a fully modernized and technologically advanced war machine (Mizokami, 2021). However, Stokes (2021) argues that his research reveals 2035 would be more realistic. In terms of capability, China has the capacity to deploy large amounts of troops and supplies through its numerically massive and structurally enormous merchant fleet (Wood and Ferguson, 2001, pp.61). Moreover Chinese anti artillery would have two factors to their favour. They include enormous volumes of it and concentration of fire- power (Wood and Ferguson, 2001, pp.4). In addition, the number of Chinese troops deployed will be an overwhelming force to counter (Wood and Ferguson, 2001, pp.12). With these factors taken into consideration, China's military capability is multiple times powerful than that of Taiwan.

A study conducted in 2001 by Piers M. Wood and Charles D. Ferguson explain a three-phased Chinese invasion of Taiwan. The first would be to seize Quemoy (Kimmen) and other islands close to Mainland China. The second would be capturing the Peng Hu islands and the third phase would involve finally attacking the coast of Taiwan.

Stokes (2021) argues that PRC might face dire economic consequences in its ambition of consolidating Taiwan militarily. He further states that economic growth and stability are the foundational pillars of CCP rule in PRC. Hence, if China's economy slides back into recession due to a war with USA over Taiwan, it would significantly risk CCP's grip of power over the PRC. In addition, Andrei Lungu (2021), who is the President of The Romanian Institute for the Study of Asia-Pacific, states that if China were defeated by the United States, it would sound echoes of China's Century of Humiliation that might also contribute to shattering the invincibility of CCP. However, he further states that Beijing still holds on to the belief that a peaceful reunification is possible. Nevertheless, as mentioned before Taipei's steady drift towards Washington thus gaining confidence in declaring independence might force Beijing to deploy an amphibious assault on Taiwan. PLAN's continuous and steady modernization followed by the assumption of Washington's decline (due to immediate US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan), might further give Beijing the confidence in carrying out an invasion (Lungu, 2021).

B. Japan: Political opportunity and a threat to sovereignty

From the four Quad member-states, Japan is the country that will be most affected if China successfully invades Taiwan. This is due to the close proximity of Japan's territorial islands with Taiwan. Unlike for Japan, India and Australia are the two member-states that will not be directly affected if Taiwan falls under the jurisdiction of China.

The divide between the East China Sea and the Philippine Sea is made up of a chain of islands extending from the Southern Japanese island of Kyushu to the northern part of Taiwan. The closest Japanese island to Taiwan is Yonaguni that is 110km away (Jennings, 2021). Experts such as Bruce Kilgner (a Senior Research Fellow at the American think tank, Heritage Foundation) and Sidharth Kaushal (a Research Fellow of the British think tank, Royal United Services Institute) state that if Taiwan falls into the hands of PRC, Beijing may claim Yonaguni and several other Japanese islands as sovereign territory of China by extending the boundary of its Exclusive Economic Zone. Currently Beijing and Tokyo are in dispute over the ownership of the uninhabited group of islands in the East China Sea. According the Chinese, these islands are referred to as Diaoyu while the Japanese refer them to as

Senkaku. Japan fears that China would solidify its ownership after a successful invasion since these islands are located closer to Taiwan and Mainland China than to any Japanese island. Seizing of these islands would break PRC's containment in the East China Sea and open doors into the Philippine Sea and the American sovereign territorial island of Guam.

Nevertheless, Japan is channelling this threat to amend or relax conditions imposed on its Post WWII Constitution. This particularly applies to Article 9 of Chapter II: Renunciation of War (The Constitution of Japan, 1946; cited in Prime Minister of Japan and his Cabinet, 2019). This Article explicitly denounces Japan's use of war as a means of settling international disputes or maintaining a military that is fit for war. Therefore, Tokyo is dependent on Washington for defence of its sovereignty from external forces. If the United States expect Japan to engage militarily, then this constitutional constrain require amendments. Therefore, Premier Yoshida Suge's Administration is relying on China's imminent invasion on Taiwan to justify the necessity for Japan to engage militarily to secure its sovereignty as a nation-state.

Furthermore, there has been a resurgence of nationalism in Japan since the late 1990s (Dickson, 2010; Estévez-Abe, 2014). Therefore, policymakers in Japan exploit this sentiment to gain election victories. 28th November is the scheduled Election Day for the Japanese House of Representatives. It can be argued that if the Liberal Democratic Party (Jiyū-Minshutō) wishes to remain in power, making sense of a security threat on Japan due to a Chinese invasion of Taiwan would help in securing a significant voter base by stirring up nationalist sentiment.

However, war would take a severe toll on the Japanese economy since China is both a significant import and export destination. In 2019, Japanese exports to China amounted to US\$ 134 billion (19% of its total exports that year) and imports from China was valued at US\$ 170 billion which was 23% of its total imports for that year (IMF, 2021). On the contrary, for China, the share of Japanese imports and exports as a percentage was 8% and 6% respectively (IMF, 2021). In addition to bilateral trade, both countries are members of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) that is the largest regional trade bloc to have existed in the history of multilateralism. Engaging in a military conflict will destroy the opportunity for both countries to reap significant future benefits from this economic partnership.

C. India: Balance between non alignment and strategic alignment

For India, Taiwan is beyond its sphere of influence since the island is not located in the Indian Ocean Region.

India holds a unique position within Quad. This is due to several factors. The first is that India is the only country that shares a land-border with China. It is also the only developing country in Quad whereas the other three member-states are developed. Furthermore, India has always embraced a non-aligned foreign policy since its independence in 1947 as opposed to the more obvious American Camp favouring foreign policies of Japan and Australia. Moreover, it is important to highlight the fact that in 1971, India voted in favour of The UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 and recognized PRC as the only internationally accepted representative of the Chinese people at the UN. In contrast, USA, Japan and Australia voted against it. India's non-aligned foreign policy further complicated its membership in Quad because in 2017 the country was admitted to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). This was the same year Quad was reinvigorated. SCO is a political, economic and defence alliance where China and Russia are its most influential member-states. It is therefore possible to argue that India might compromise its commitment to Quad on the Taiwan issue. Nevertheless, India faces tensed border issues with China on the three fronts; Aksai Chin, Doklam Plateau and Arunachal Pradesh (Dutta, 2020; Marcus, 2018; The Tribune, 2021). Teaming up with Quad to counter China's invasion might heighten the tensions between Beijing and New Delhi thus complicating India's membership in SCO. India's External Affairs Minister, Subramanyam Jaishankar, expressed this sentiment at the Global Dialog Series event in London where he stated that Beijing could not expect New Delhi to maintain cordial relations on other domains while being intimidating and hostile at the disputed territories (Prakash, 2021).

India has economic benefits tied to Quad. The United States wishes India to compete with China in producing American developed Covid-19 vaccines at a mass scale to counter China's Vaccine Diplomacy (Zeeshan, 2021). This is because unlike Japan and Australia, manufacturing in India results in major economies of scale. Furthermore, India maintains cordial bilateral relations with USA, Japan and Australia. These collaborations include modernizing Indian agriculture, developing defence technology,

building clean energy solutions and improving the quality of India's education sector (Zeeshan, 2021).

The founding fathers of the Republic of India have physically interacted with Chiang Kai-shek even before independence. Both parties maintained cordial relations but never solidified. This is because soon after the Communist takeover of Beijing, India recognized PRC to be the legitimate representative of China. Unimpressed by authoritarian and pro-western policies, Prime Minister Nehru distanced India's diplomatic ties with Taiwan and was reluctant to recognize it as a nation-state (Sen, 2020). As time passed relations soured over Taiwan openly stating that it does not recognize India's claim to the disputed fronts in the Sino-Indian border (Panda, 2019). This further alienated Taipei from New Delhi. Despite establishing de facto missions in both capitals in 1995, India's relations with Taiwan gained traction only after Prime Minister Narendra Modi came into power. Due to recent tensions at the border, the Modi Administration has subtly demonstrated support for Taiwan thereby vexing Beijing in the process.

Regardless of India's rejuvenated de facto diplomatic engagements with Taiwan, New Delhi is the second largest shareholder of the Chinese Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB, 2017). Through this lending institution, India has financed many of its infrastructure projects and has borrowed close to US\$ 3 billion over the course of its membership since 2016 (AIIB, 2019). In 2017, India was the largest beneficiary from this lending institute (RWR Advisory Group, 2018; The India Times, 2018). In 2019, Indian exports to China amounted to US\$ 17 billion (5% of its total exports that year) and imports from China was valued at US\$ 68 billion which was 14% of its total imports for that year (IMF, 2021). On the contrary, for China, the share of Indian imports and exports as a percentage was 1% and 3% respectively (IMF, 2021).

New Delhi requires deeper thought on the Taiwan Issue by weighing its options before it declares war with China over Taiwan. This might be the reason why India's former National Security Advisor, Shivashankar Memon stated that India will support Quad members on the Taiwan issue but not engage militarily. The reason to support Quad will of course be New Delhi's strategy to contain Chinese influence into South Asia.

D. Australia: Dilemma between defence and economic partnerships

Taiwan is beyond Australia's immediate Southeast Asian neighbourhood.

In addition to Quad, Australia also holds membership in the collective security agreement, Australia, New Zealand, United States Security Treaty, commonly referred to as ANZUS which was signed in 1951 (NZ History, 2021). Although the treaty is not binding as NATO, Canberra does oblige to it whenever USA has gone into war with another country. Examples include the Korea War of 1950-1953 and Vietnam War of 1955-1975. Australia also maintained the largest number of troops by a non-NATO member-state in Afghanistan up until Washington decided to withdraw its troops. Moreover, Australia participated in the Iraq War of 2003 (NATO, 2021). According to a commentary published by the Australian think-tank, Lowly Institute, Washington might expect Canberra to aid militarily on the Taiwan issue. Failing to do so will lead to cracks in diplomatic relations between the two Anglosphere nations (Taylor, 2021).

Nevertheless, China is an important trade partner for Australia. In 2019, Australian exports to China amounted to US\$ 104 billion (38% of its total exports that year) and imports from China was valued at US\$ 58 billion which was 26% of its total imports for that year (IMF, 2021). Export items include barley, wine, coal and lobster and the trade data indicate that Australia is comparatively more dependent on bilateral trade with China than the other three Quad member-states. On the contrary, for China, the share of Indian imports and exports as a percentage was 6% and 2% respectively (IMF, 2021). Hence, China has the upper hand of this bilateral relationship. Therefore Beijing was able to target these items with a series of trade actions against Prime Minister Morrison's request to call for an investigation into the origins of the Covid-19 pandemic (Hurst, 2021). On the other hand, similar to the United States and Japan, Australia is home to people of Taiwanese descent and the latter advocate for Canberra engaging militarily to prevent a Chinese invasion of Taiwan (Taylor, 2021).

Taylor (2021) mentions that the Australian public might not agree to fund a military campaign in Taiwan because that would mean a significant hike in taxation in order to expand the current military budget. This is because a poll conducted by Lowly Institute in 2021 brought forward the following results. Out of all the respondents, 14% strongly disagree to a military engagement while the vast

majority representing 49% somewhat disagreed to Australia going to war over the Taiwan Issue. However, 28% somewhat agreed that Australia should abide with the ANZUS treaty while a minority of 6% strongly agreed to military confrontation.

As of date, Canberra has not been specific on its policy over the Taiwan Issue. The government might be facing a dilemma trying the balance between the consequences of its economic benefits with China and defence alliance with USA by agreeing or refusing to engage militarily. According to Tony Walker (2021), a Vice Chancellor's Fellow at La Trobe University, it is unlikely that China would invade Taiwan in the near future. He further states that Australia should approach both China and Taiwan to broker an amicable settlement rather than standing behind the shadow of ambiguity over an imminent invasion. By doing so Australia can save its economy from a recession and alleviate the loss of thousands of lives. This would address the crux of the issue rather than war, which is palliative. Furthermore, Australia too is a member of RCEP. Therefore, if a military conflict breakout, Canberra might not reap the benefits from the opportunities offered by the largest trading bloc in multilateral history.

E. USA: Endeavouring to maintain superiority despite changing global power dynamics

The United States of America, as a super-power has always been the champion and defender of democracy and free markets. Therefore, whenever these political and economic ideals are threatened, the United States intervenes either directly or indirectly. Nevertheless, one can argue that securing American interest is what really drives Washington to intervene rather than securing democratic values. Examples include aiding the 1953 Iranian coup d'état to oust the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh government, supporting the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the 1970s, and recognizing the Duvalier regime in Haiti as an ally during the Cold War to name a few. With the recent scurried US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, experts doubt if Washington is after all a reliable partner when it comes to security and defence.

According to an academic commentary by Patrick Porter and Michel Mazarr (2021), American public do not support for another US engagement in a distant war. It can be argued that for the American public, engaging militarily to fight-off a Chinese invasion would not be seen a strategic justification to abandon US commitments in Afghanistan. However,

the authors also state that failing to engage militarily would mean a deterioration of American superiority in the eyes of the international community. Currently, this is the dilemma faced by Washington. Moreover, as mentioned before, securing American interest is usually at the heart of Washington's decision-making process. Taiwan is home to Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company Limited (better known as TSMC), which alone produces over 50% of the world's sophisticated computer chips. American tech companies such as AMD, Apple, ARM, Broadcom and Marvell are some clients to name a few. Taiwan falling under the control of PRC would mean Beijing having a monopoly over the semiconductor industry. This might threaten USA's multi-billion dollar tech industry since China would control the global microchip monopoly (East Asia Forum, 2021; Graham Jr. and Budjeryn, 2021).

Furthermore, Washington has maintained an ambiguous policy on PRC and ROC. It took another eight years for Washington to recognize PRC as a nation-state and the legitimate government that represented the people of China in global affairs after the passing of UN Resolution 2758. It was in 1979, through the Second Joint Communiqué of the United States of America and People's Republic of China that relations between these two nation-states normalized (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, 2021). This was a diplomatic achievement by US President Jimmy Carter and the Paramount Leader of China, Deng Xiaoping. Despite this historic achievement, it appears that Article #7 in this communiqué was deliberately left ambiguous and open for interpretation by Washington. Article #7 states that, The Government of the United States of America acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China. The ambiguity here is the word "acknowledge". The latter is not the same as "accept". Therefore, this article would mean that USA does not accept that Taiwan falls under sovereignty of PRC but understands that Taiwan also reserves the right not to consider itself part of PRC. This has added to the confusion of whether USA recognizes Taiwan as a country or not. On the other hand, Taipei is a significant buyer of US weapons and military equipment. In 2019 alone, Taiwan has purchased over US\$ 10 billion worth of American military equipment (TECRO, 2019a; TECRO 2019b; TECRO, 2019c; TECRO, 2019d). Therefore, by maintaining such ambiguity on the side of US policy has helped secure a market by creating suspicion

between China and Taiwan. Some experts argue that this policy of ambiguity has prevented Beijing and Taipei from initiating hostile acts on each other's territories.

In terms of bilateral trade, American exports to China amounted to US\$ 107 billion in 2019 (6% of its total exports that year) and imports from China was valued at US\$ 452 billion which was 18% of its total imports for that same year (IMF, 2021). On the other hand, for China, the share of American imports and exports as a percentage was 17% and 6% respectively (IMF, 2021). It can be argued that trade policies introduced during President Trump's tenure brought about an equal dependency in trade between these two countries.

IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, all four members would not engage militarily to prevent Taiwan being invaded by China in the near future. Japan and the United States will actively engage militarily to defend Taiwan but India and Australia would not. For Japan, a successful Chinese invasion of Taiwan would threaten its sovereignty due to the possibility of losing its hold on Yonaguni Island and claim to Senkaku Islands. Tokyo's alacrity to intervene militarily would provide an opportunity to amend Article #9 of its 1947 Constitution. India on the other hand would not engage militarily due to Taiwan being beyond its sphere of influence. Nevertheless, New Delhi will assist Quad as a logistics hub and even create skirmishes at the Sino-Indian border as part of a deception strategy to distract Beijing from being solely focused on the Taiwanese invasion. Similarly, Australia too would avoid a military confrontation with China and only aid Quad as a logistics hub. This is because Australia benefits immensely from bilateral trade with China. However, Canberra's decision to cancel its French submarine orders as part of its entry into a new security agreement, AUKUS, thus creating a diplomatic rift with Paris, can be argued as a strategy taken to maintain its relations with Washington, and to assure its commitment to the longstanding defence partnership between the two Anglosphere nations. For the United States however, a military engagement will be mandatory if this country wishes to project and maintain its superiority in the region and super-power status in the world. Beyond this Washington wishes to prevent Beijing from gaining a monopoly in the semiconductor industry and to secure Taipei as a loyal

and lucrative client for US manufactured sophisticated military equipment.

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