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TAIWAN STRAITS CRISES LESSONS LEARNT



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We endeavour to sound **ALERTS** and create **AWARENESS** about the myriad dimensions and manifestations of **DEFENCE** and **SECURITY** in India and around the world.



The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya

DSA IS AS MUCH YOURS, AS IT IS OURS!



Three former armed forces chiefs, who served concurrently, recently visited Taiwan as participants in a Ministry of Foreign Affairs-sponsored dialogue, the Ketagalan Forum. Anywhere in the world, when a Foreign Affairs or Defence Ministry sponsors a dialogue, participants are invited after being cleared at the highest levels of governance. The Taiwanese authorities would no doubt have extensively debated the choice of Indian service chiefs as participants. Had there been any utility in an Indian invite, then such invitations would have arrived long ago. But these are changed times, and New Delhi is also in Beijing's crosshairs as is Taipei.

In a list of top global news stories, the Taiwan Straits crisis would consistently figure as a headline maker. Ladakh only makes it when there are clashes and / or deaths of soldiers. But for such episodes, the world has largely ignored India's high-altitude crisis. Leaving a simple lesson to be digested,

however bitter, New Delhi will be on its own if push comes to shove. There may be some intelligence cooperation from friendly, western countries but that is about all to expect. But if the balloon goes up across the straits, the world will be there in more ways than one.

Which is why India's three former service chiefs were invited to share their views, opinions, and analyses on the ongoing situation. Since all got retired recently, their views are as current as can be in an international forum. In a closed-door meeting with the Institute of National Defence and Security Research which is run by the Ministry of Defence in Taipei, the former chiefs would undoubtedly have shared their operational analysis of the strait's scenario, as they see it. Coming from a highly professional service background, their views matter and would certainly contribute to preserving the peace there.

It is not certain, however, how long this peace will last. Beijing has invested far more and for far longer in ensuring that Taiwan does not

officially declare independence. The fact that by all accounts it is, an independently functioning political entity doesn't seem to irk Beijing as much as a declaration of intent. So, it has very clearly made its intention known about using force to prevent such a scenario. But as one of the Indian participants at the Forum said, "China will only attack Taiwan once it is certain of victory." For its investments in prestige are high.

Despite decades of preparation, including stealing classified weapons designs from various foreign countries, China is clearly not ready as yet to launch an attack across the straits. There are various other countries that are interested parties in this crisis, and India may be included in the gathering if it was consistent with its own China confrontation policy. There isn't much India can currently do in the Taiwan crisis, other than analyse the patterns of Beijing's decision-making. Some facets are fascinating, especially raising temperatures and retreating. The bluff game is a risky policy for one trigger is all it takes.

Manvendra Singh

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THE CONTESTED WATERS OF THE TAIWAN STRAIT

Taiwan, among the world's smallest states, occupies a unique position that commands unwavering attention from developed nations and earns the highest level of respect globally. Situated in the heart of East Asia, Taiwan is separated from continental Asia by the Taiwan Strait, a substantial waterway spanning 180 kilometers in width. Within the vast expanse of the South China Sea, this strait acts as a vital linkage to the northern reaches of the East China Sea. Remarkably, at its narrowest point, the Taiwan Strait contracts to a mere 130 kilometers, underscoring its profound geopolitical significance. The island nation's dynamic presence in this strategic crossroads has made it an indispensable player in regional and global affairs, contributing to the enduring respect it commands on the world stage.

The Taiwan Strait's physical dimensions underline its pivotal role in maritime navigation. As a conduit connecting two significant bodies of water, its strategic importance for regional and international trade cannot be overstated. Being important

strategically China has a big interest always and has been bullying Taiwan always. The Taiwan Strait is more than just a geographical feature; it's a focal point of international contention. The People's Republic of China asserts comprehensive control over the Taiwan Strait, categorizing it as "internal territorial waters." This classification negates the conventional notion of it being international waters and requires foreign vessels to secure Chinese authorization for traversing the strait. The Taiwan Strait is not merely a geographical feature but a symbol of the broader struggle for sovereignty, security, and regional stability in East Asia".

China's claim to complete sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction over the Taiwan Strait is rooted in its larger political stance on Taiwan. This viewpoint casts the strait as an extension of Chinese territory, granting Beijing the authority to regulate its usage. However, this posture encounters staunch resistance from several international actors. Prominent among them are the United States, Australia, France, and the island of Taiwan



itself. These nations, along with Taiwan, strongly oppose China's unilateral imposition of navigational constraints, arguing for the strait's status as an international passage. China's revisionist approach extends beyond the Taiwan Strait and encompasses its broader territorial claims in the South China Sea. Beijing's assertiveness in the region includes the construction of artificial islands, military installations, and the establishment of an expansive nine-dash line to assert sovereignty over a large portion of the South China Sea. These actions have escalated tensions with neighbouring countries like Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, as well as drawn international criticism. China's stance on territorial and maritime claims reflects its larger ambition to reshape the geopolitical landscape in its favour, challenging established international norms and agreements. This revisionist behaviour raises concerns not only about regional stability but also about the broader implications for global security and the rules-based international order.

Given the Taiwan Strait's pivotal location in East Asian trade routes, any disruption or constraint on its usage would have ripple effects across the global economy. The unimpeded passage of vessels through this strait is vital for maintaining the fluidity of international commerce. The political disagreements surrounding the Taiwan Strait have wider ramifications for regional stability. The tensions arising from differing interpretations of its status could escalate into larger conflicts, impacting not only the countries directly involved but also their allies and neighbours.

In essence, the Taiwan Strait embodies the convergence of geography and politics, carrying implications that extend beyond its physical dimensions. As China's claims of sovereignty clash with international demands for open navigation, the strait remains a symbol of the delicate balance between national interests and global cooperation. Its fate will continue to shape the dynamics of regional and international relations for the foreseeable future. The resolution of the Taiwan Strait issue will



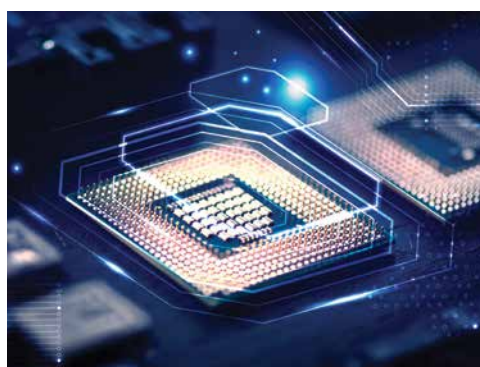
ultimately test the resilience of the existing international order and define the contours of East Asian security in the 21st century.

This dedicated edition is a testament to Taiwan's growing influence and importance in global affairs. Our subject experts have provided valuable insights into the significance of Taiwan's role in shaping the world's political, economic, and security landscape. As we continue to witness Taiwan's rise on the world stage, it's evident that its contributions will only become more integral to the broader discourse of global affairs."

Jai Hind!

Pawan Agrawal
Chief Executive Officer





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