**The China and Taiwan standoff**

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Earlier this month China celebrated its National Day with a ceremony marked with parades, patriotic chants, a flag-raising ceremony, stretches of anthuriums and sunflower displays, and a new record of plane incursions into Taiwan’s airspace. While the latter might seem reasonably odd for a national day celebration, President Xi definitely achieved a two-fold objective through the aerial showdown; a boost in national sovereignty back home and successful deterrence to the Taiwanese autonomy.

The reunification of Taiwan with mainland China has been at the heart of President Xi’s policy from the start. He said in the National Day address that ‘reunification must be fulfilled’ and that ‘Resolving the Taiwan question and realising China’s complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment of the Communist Party of China.’ He also reaffirmed China’s commitment to the One-China Principle and the 1992 consensus, while emphasising China’s intention of ‘peaceful national reunification. So why does China want to reclaim Taiwan? What is the 1992 consensus? How has Taiwan responded to the recent Chinese aggression and more importantly, is the Chinese invasion of Taiwan imminent?

[Intizar murder case: ATC gives death sentence to 2 cops for planned killing](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/intizar-murder-case-atc-gives-death-sentence-to-2-cops-for-planned-killing)

Taiwan, officially known as ‘Republic of China’ and China, officially known as ‘People’s Republic of China’ was historically a single entity (present-day mainland China), until 1949 when the Chinese Communist Party gained momentum and made a successful attempt of overthrowing the nationalist government, which then fled to Taiwan. Hence Taiwan was made into the ‘Republic of China’ with Taipei as the new capital, whereas mainland China emerged on the world map as the communist ‘People’s Republic of China’, with Beijing as its capital. In 1971, the ROC ceded its UN seat to the PRC and for most of the contemporary world, PRC officially wields the title of ‘China.’ However some countries, including the US, still maintain unofficial ties with the ROC. Taiwan in addition to having a permanent population, also has a defined territory, a well-functioning democracy, and its currency thereby making the country a de facto independent state. But China disputes considering Taiwan an autonomous country based on historical as well as territorial grounds and claims it to be a breakaway province of China.

[Govt will fulfil commitments made with TLP: Sheikh Rasheed](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/govt-will-fulfil-commitments-made-with-tlp-sheikh-rasheed)

For the People’s Republic of China, there is only one China and Taiwan is a part of it. Interestingly, Taiwan too doesn’t dispute the monolithicity of China but both countries clash on the question as to who is the legitimate authority, therefore leading to a stalemate every time an attempt for a truce is made.

Despite the soaring tensions between both countries, Taiwan’s response has been rather tough, as the President, Tsai Ing-wen vowed that Taiwan will not surrender to Chinese aggression and that it will preserve democracy. She reiterated that Taiwan had no intentions to respond rashly but it would strengthen security to make sure that Taiwan is not forced to tread on the path laid by China which she rendered neither free nor democratic.

The most important question that has been storming the mainstream media is whether the invasion of Taiwan by China is imminent. While it is true that China often flexes its military muscle for deterrence, this time China’s military encroachment on Taiwan is more provocative than deterring. Regarding the issue, John Christopher Aquilino, US Navy admiral has warned that the threat of an invasion by China is more imminent than ever. This can be further backed by the fact that China has a staggering defence budget of $237 billion against Taiwan’s thin $10 billion.

[T20 World Cup: Afghanistan defeats Scotland by 130 runs](https://nation.com.pk/25-Oct-2021/t20-world-cup-afghanistan-defeats-scotland-by-130-runs)

The only barrier that stands in the way of an invasion is the potential response. Even though the Chinese military might attain a superior military standing locally, it cannot be certain of the extent of escalation that the US would be willing to make to assist Taiwan. But this possibility of a wholesome military and financial assistance by the US to Taiwan fades away in the face of the surreal plight of the US economy following the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2 decade-long war with Afghanistan.

Reunification of Taiwan with mainland China remains the number 1 priority of China’s foreign policy. Taiwan considers itself an independent country and refuses to bow to China’s pressure. Meanwhile the new Australia, UK and US alliance (AUKUS) has recently been signed to counter China’s influence in the Indo-Pacific, seems to further prompt China to bolster its military presence in the region. All these developments hint at a possible future conflict between China and Taiwan. If so, the question remains; after the Afghan debacle, are we ready for yet another war?