**Allies and foes**

**NTERNATIONAL POLITICS, The world is not prepared for another international crisis**

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January 11, 2023

On 25th July, the US President asked Congress to approve a massive 52 billion dollar bill to start making semiconductors in the US. Biden asked that the CHIPS Act may be approved immediately before the industry’s heavyweights take their money and invest elsewhere. The money will be paid over five years. Biden was very frank in telling the congress that instead of China, India, Japan, South Korea, or the EU, America should lead the world market by making semiconductors. The world’s most advanced semiconductors (at 10 nanometres), used in advanced weapons and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are made in Taiwan and it’s the biggest producer of semiconductors. 60 percent of its production goes to China and the rest is sent across the globe. Taiwan was part of China since AD 239 and had been a Dutch as well as a Japanese colony. The real breakaway process started in 1949 when a Chinese Kiang Kai-Shek fled with his Kuomintang (KMT) government. from China after a failed civil war, came to Taiwan and started ruling here. His son Chiang Ching-Kou, being in minority and under pressure, started the process of democracy, but the real “father of democracy” as he is known is Lee Tang-Hui, who made constitutional changes and introduced full democracy in 1980. However, in the year 2000, the first nonKMT government. came to power. China and Taiwan relations have seen their fair share of ups and down. Although, 1979, Taiwan Act was aimed at the de-recognition of Taiwan with the passage of time the US has been altering its policy. In 2016, current Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen (DPP party) spoke with President Donald Trump for the first time, defying the ban of 1979. The Chinese formally lodged a protest with the US advised them to avoid severe damage to US-China relations. The Biden administration, however still calls its relations with Taiwan “rock solid” In October, Biden while visiting a university in Chicago, was asked by a student. “What will you do to keep up with them (China) militarily and can you vow to protect Taiwan?” Biden replied, “yes and yes. We are”. Biden also told CNN’s Anderson Cooper, “Yes we have the commitment to do that”. Administration officials downplayed the interview. The US policy, whether it will defend the island or not has always been vague, and is often called “Strategic Ambiguity”. The dichotomy is the divide between Taiwanese citizens as well. The KMT-affiliated citizens support the idea of close ties with mainland China, whereas DPP supporters are in favour of sovereignty. Another problem is 20 billion dollars’ worth of Taiwanese investment in mainland China and more than 10,000 Taiwanese citizens, who are living in China. According to World Economic Research, London, the size of Taiwan’s economy at the end of 2021 is 1.7 Trillion dollars. According to Taipei Times, the Taiwan forex reserves stand at 543 billion dollars. This economic growth, while a threat to China as an economic giant, at the same time, makes it a lucrative target for China. Another reason to worry for Taiwan is the distance of their red coast is only 112 km from the narrowest point. The distance of its semiconductor factory is only 12 km from the red coast. However, some analysts still insist that China will not attack before 2025. The US and its allies worry that if China occupies Taiwan, it will also control shipping lanes, which are on the edge of Taiwan. Thus, the Chinese would be able to take control of the South China Sea, which affects the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Spratly Island, and even influences Japan, though Japan is 1125 km away. China is also building runways on manmade islands, close to the Spratly islands. When completed, it would be just 25 km from Thitu/Pagasa islands, which are currently occupied by the Philippines. It is assumed that who so ever has control of the South China Sea will have access to fish, oil, and gas in the area. There is no doubt that China in the past five years has increased its presence in the South China sea by building islands and increasing its military drills, including a display of anti-ship missiles, radar, and helicopter infrastructure. The US has also been responding with increasing military drills in the area by sailing its ships. The US is calling it freedom of navigation and is showing more solidarity with Taiwan than ever. This has heightened the tensions between the two countries. To add fuel to the fire, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who has always been an advocate of Taiwan’s sovereignty, planned a visit to Taiwan. The US military was not in favour of any such adventure, though it’s not their official stance. At the moment seeing the highest inflation, fluctuation in the world oil market, the war in Ukraine, another wave of Corona, and the fast-spreading monkeypox disease, the situation is becoming very fragile. It is imperative for the US to rethink its strategy of intimidation and provocation before any unfortunate incident takes place. The Biden administration may not be doing very well due to the above-mentioned issues and a looming recession of the US economy, especially when seen in the context of mid-term elections for the democrats. In the recent past, the handling of the Aksai Chin crisis in the Ladakh region China was swift to react, 20 Indian soldiers were killed with clubs covered with razorsharp barbed wire, thus showing clearly the Chinese response, when it comes to territorial integrity. The Biden administration is probably cognisant of the fact that it would be a mistake to take China head-on. However, the world is not prepared for another international crisis due to the callous handling of the Taiwan situation