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How Close Is China
to
Annexe Taiwan

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Abstract

China's likelihood of annexing Taiwan before 2030 is growing, driven by intensified military activities, economic slowdown, mounting domestic pressures, Xi Jinping's rising authoritarianism, and shifting global power dynamics. Weakening Western unity, declining global dependence on Taiwan, and increasing US-China tensions—exacerbated by Trump's return—create a narrowing window for decisive Chinese action. Xi's paranoia, hyper-nationalism, and strategic recalibrations with regional powers further fuel the urgency. China's perception of isolation and humiliation, coupled with its fear of losing economic leverage, raises the risk of a forceful move. Given these unfolding dynamics, India must proactively prepare a coordinated national response to safeguard its interests.

Keywords: Annexation of Taiwan, China-Taiwan war by 2030, Taiwan war, Taiwan capture

China's ambition to annex Taiwan has been a focal point of geopolitical tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, rooted in decades of historical and political complexities. The divide dates back to 1949, when the Chinese Civil War ended with the Communist Party taking control of mainland China, while the defeated Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan. Since then, Beijing has considered Taiwan a breakaway province, despite the island functioning as a self-governed democracy with its own government, military and economy. Over the years, China has increased military manoeuvres, diplomatic pressure and economic coercion to assert its claim over Taiwan. Meanwhile, Taiwan, backed by growing international support, remains steadfast in its resistance. The question of how close China is to achieving this goal hinges on multiple factors, including military readiness, US intervention, China's economic and social conditions, Taiwan's defence capabilities and the broader global response. This article explores the current state of cross-strait relations and the likelihood of China taking decisive action to annex Taiwan, offering a critical lens on how mounting pressures could soon push Beijing towards a point of no return.

Current situation

Tensions between China and Taiwan have escalated in recent years, driven by intensified military posturing, assertive political rhetoric and shifting global alliances. Heightened security manoeuvres and strategic realignments by regional and international players further amplify volatility in the region. This volatile environment underscores the growing risk of conflict and instability in the Taiwan Strait.

Intensified Military Activities

China has significantly intensified its military activities near Taiwan over the past year, often timing its actions to major political events on the island. In May 2024, following the election of Taiwanese President William Lai Ching-te, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted "Joint Sword-2024A", a large-scale joint operation involving land, sea, air and rocket forces around Taiwan and its outlying islands. This was followed in October 2024 by "Joint Sword-2024B", simulating a blockade of Taiwan with operations spread across the Taiwan Strait and areas to the north, south and east of the island. In December 2024, coinciding with President Lai's first overseas trip, the PLA launched further drills, highlighting a growing trend of responding to Taiwan's political developments with military demonstrations.

The pattern continued into 2025. In February, China conducted live-fire drills near Taiwan, widely perceived as direct threats to the island and its partners. Most recently, in April 2025, the PLA carried out another series of joint exercises in waters surrounding Taiwan, framing them as a "severe warning" against Taiwanese independence movements. Additionally, December 2024 saw the PLA's largest naval deployment since the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, simulating a maritime blockade and interdiction of foreign ships attempting to aid Taiwan. These operations collectively demonstrate a steady and deliberate escalation in China's military manoeuvres, projecting growing power into the First Island Chain and signalling an increasingly assertive stance towards Taiwan. The intensification of military drills reflects China's evolving strategy to isolate and pressure Taiwan through sustained shows of force.

Statements by Chinese and Taiwanese Officials

Chinese officials have reaffirmed their pledge to unify with Taiwan. Premier Li Qiang reinforced the importance of achieving this objective without external influence, demonstrating a

clear position on the matter. Furthermore, China's Defence Ministry issued a stern caution to Taiwan, stating, "we will get to you, sooner or later", as a response to Taiwan's military preparedness exercises. Meanwhile, Taiwan's stance emphasises the need for its citizens to decide the island's future, while opposing China's assertions and highlighting the significance of self-protection and national independence, as stated by Taiwan's leadership. The swearing-in of President Lai Ching-Te, in May 2024, served as a strong indication of continuation of this policy. This stance led to China conducting military drills and reinstating tariffs on specific Taiwanese products. In response to perceived threats and spying incidents, President Lai officially labelled China a "foreign hostile force" and announced increased national security measures (The Guardian, 2025). The hardened rhetoric from both sides signals deepening entrenchment and diminishing prospects for peaceful resolution.

US Involvement in Taiwan

US engagement with Taiwan has intensified, marked by increased military cooperation and high-profile visits. US naval activity in the Taiwan Strait has become more frequent, reinforcing deterrence against China. Washington has also bolstered Taiwan's defence capabilities through diplomatic engagements and military commitments. These visits signal sustained US backing for Taiwan despite escalating tensions with China. Key recent developments include:

- **August 2024.** A congressional delegation led by Representative Marilyn Strickland met with President Lai Ching-te to enhance cooperation.
- **May 2024.** Representative Michael McCaul's delegation attended Lai's inauguration, reaffirming US military support.
- **February 2024.** Representative Mike Gallagher's visit focused on mutual security interests.

With Donald Trump back in the White House, his previous hardline stance on China—marked by economic confrontation, national security concerns, and efforts to curb Beijing's global influence—is set to intensify. His administration has already imposed an additional 245% tariff on Chinese goods, signalling a renewed era of economic pressure. Notably, while Trump has actively engaged with other global leaders, he has shown little enthusiasm for direct communication with Xi Jinping, underscoring persistent friction in US-China relations. In fact, the

tit-for-tat escalation of tariffs has exposed an ongoing ego battle between Xi and Trump, driven by a mutual desire to project bravado and assert dominance on the world stage. Ongoing US support for Taiwan and the sharp escalation of economic hostilities are further deepening tensions and complicating the prospects for diplomatic resolution.

Regional Economic Shifts

Rising geopolitical tensions, particularly concerning Taiwan, have prompted several companies to reassess their operations in Hong Kong. In the shipping industry, firms are discreetly relocating operations and re-flagging vessels to avoid potential risks associated with US-China tensions, with many shifting registrations to jurisdictions like Singapore and the Marshall Islands (Saul, 2025). The consulting sector has also been impacted, with McKinsey & Company restructuring its China operations, cutting 500 jobs and focusing on advising multinational companies and Chinese firms expanding overseas. In the consumer goods sector, British American Tobacco moved its Asia headquarters from Hong Kong to Singapore in 2022, citing international mobility and efficiency as key factors (Kubota, 2024). Financial institutions have also made significant adjustments, with National Australia Bank closing its Hong Kong office and consolidating operations in China, Singapore and Japan, while Westpac Banking Corporation, Commerzbank, and the Royal Bank of Canada have also moved regional hubs and operations to Singapore (Yu, 2023). These strategic shifts underscore growing concerns over potential economic and political instability in Hong Kong, as companies proactively mitigate risks tied to the evolving geopolitical landscape. The corporate exodus from Hong Kong highlights mounting fears over the region's political future and growing uncertainty tied to China's strategic ambitions.

Shifting Power Dynamics in the Indo-Pacific

China seeks to be a global power, even surpassing the USA, by 2049 (100th year of the communist revolution). As part of this grand plan, it has already established itself as the primary regional power in South East Asia, asserting considerable influence in the Indo-Pacific as well. Latest military rankings from the Lowy Institute and Global Firepower Index highlight China's rapid rise in military and diplomatic influence, narrowing the gap with the United States in Asia. While China has strengthened its economic ties and modernised the PLA, it still lacks a global military base network, and its navy is not yet a true blue-water force. The Taiwan Strait remains a

key flashpoint, where China's military is strongest (Graceffo, 2024). An analysis of the current military balance yields following inferences:

- China has overtaken Japan in diplomatic influence and economic relationships but still lags the US in overall military power, technology and alliances.
- Russia, despite being ranked second globally, is losing influence in Asia due to the war in Ukraine, which has weakened its military and economic presence.
- India has surpassed Japan as the third-most powerful country in Asia, with strengths in manpower and future resources, though its ability to project power beyond its borders remains limited.
- Japan, while behind India in military strength, maintains a strong diplomatic presence and defence partnerships with the US, Australia and regional allies.

The US still leads in military capability, boasting superior naval assets (11 aircraft carriers vs. China's 3), more nuclear submarines and greater technological superiority. The US also benefits from alliances like NATO, AUKUS and the QUAD whereas China's only formal defence ally is North Korea. However, China and Russia's growing military cooperation is reshaping regional dynamics. While they lack full interoperability, China is supporting Russia's defence industry and Russia's arms sales have enhanced China's missile and naval capabilities. The ongoing shifts in power dynamics reflect China's ambitions but also expose strategic limitations that constrain its immediate global reach.

Future scenario

From the aforesaid analysis, it emerges that the Indo-Pacific is increasingly becoming a multipolar battlefield where China is catching up militarily but remains behind in strategic alliances and global force projection. The United States retains a dominant edge, but ongoing global commitments, including Ukraine and the Middle East, pose challenges. Meanwhile, India's rise signals a growing role in regional security, while Japan strengthens its strategic partnerships to counterbalance China's influence. The Indo-Pacific is poised to become the focal point of global power competition, with multiple players reshaping the regional order.

Likely Conflict Scenarios and Outcomes

By analysing current military strengths and projected developments, we can outline the following potential conflict scenarios in the near future:

Scenario	China's Advantage	US & Allies' Counterbalance
Taiwan Conflict (2025–2030)	China holds local military superiority, leveraging proximity and growing capabilities.	The US and Japan could mount a counteroffensive, utilising advanced force projection and regional alliances.
South China Sea Control	China maintains dominance through fortified island bases and naval expansion.	The US and its allies continue to challenge China's claims, ensuring freedom of navigation.
Full Indo-Pacific War (2030+)	China's military power expands significantly, aiming for regional dominance.	The US retains a global strategic advantage with superior force projection, alliances and economic influence.

These scenarios highlight the evolving balance of power, where China's regional strength continues to grow but faces persistent strategic resistance from the US and its allies. The next decade will be crucial in shaping the Indo-Pacific security landscape. The coming years will likely witness heightened tensions and strategic recalibrations as China and US vie for supremacy in the Indo-Pacific.

Factors Hastening Conflict Timelines

While it may appear that the worst-case scenario of a full-scale Indo-Pacific conflict, due to annexation of Taiwan, is likely to happen post2030, some recent geopolitical events may shift the timeline closer. These are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

Weakening Economy and Trump Tariffs

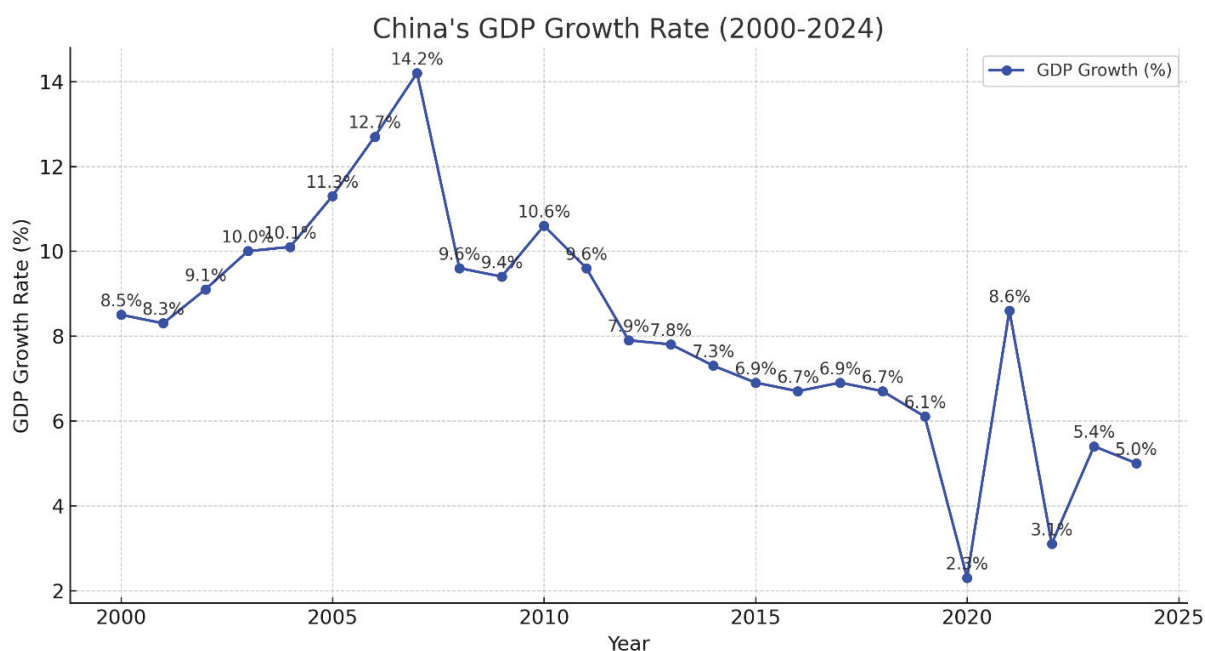
China's GDP growth is projected to slow from 4.8% in 2024 to 4.3% in 2025, and further to 3.5% by 2028, according to the World Bank and IMF. US tariffs have accelerated the downturn, with Citibank revising its 2025 forecast to 4.2% and Goldman Sachs to 4.5%, sharply down from the 5% growth seen in 2024. The slowdown is driven by a collapsing property market, weak

consumer confidence and an aging population. Trump's new tariffs have further crippled China's export sector, compounding structural weaknesses. Despite fiscal stimulus, low productivity and systemic inefficiencies continue to drag on recovery. The economic strain on China increases the likelihood of aggressive moves to divert domestic discontent.

US government's recent imposition of substantial port fees on Chinese-built and operated vessels is poised to deliver a significant economic blow to China's maritime sector. Under the proposed policy, Chinese-built ships could face fees up to \$1.5 million per US port call, while Chinese-operated vessels may incur charges up to \$1 million per entry. These fees represent a dramatic increase from the current average of \$20,000 to \$50,000 per port call. Such elevated costs are expected to disrupt Chinese shipping operations, especially for major state-owned carriers like COSCO, forcing them to absorb or pass on higher costs, and potentially reroute vessels to avoid US ports.

This move could undercut China's export competitiveness and weaken its logistics dominance at a critical time of economic slowdown. The port fee hike deepens China's perception of strategic exclusion and economic encirclement, reinforcing its sense of isolation and potentially accelerating its push strategic assertiveness.

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), a research and analysis division of The Economist Group, outlines two risk scenarios a 20-point tariff hike could cut China's GDP by 0.6 percentage points between 2025 and 2027, while a harsher 60% tariff could slash it by 2.5 points. Stripping China of preferential trade status would further escalate tensions and worsen the economic fallout. The situation has already deteriorated, with Trump imposing an additional 125% in tariffs, setting China on course for a severe economic slowdown. Chinese GDP growth, once soaring at 14.2% in 2007, had already fallen to 5% by 2024 (as depicted in graph below) — and is now projected to decline even more sharply. Mounting economic pressures may push China towards more assertive actions to regain strategic leverage.



China's Weakening Social Contract

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has long maintained stability through an implicit deal: economic prosperity in exchange for restricted personal and political freedoms. For decades, soaring GDP growth—often above 10%—sustained this pact. However, with growth now hovering around the psychologically critical 5% mark and projected to drop as low as 3.8%, this foundation is eroding. As economic discontent rises, the CCP faces mounting pressure to reinforce its legitimacy, potentially through heightened nationalism or external conflicts. This weakening of the economic foundation threatens the CCP's long-standing social contract and could drive aggressive external posturing.

China faces mounting economic headwinds, including a collapsing property market, soaring youth unemployment, and declining consumer confidence. Job scarcity and unaffordable housing have fuelled widespread disillusionment, reflected in social trends like “Bailan” (“letting things rot”) and “Tangping” (“lying flat”), where many disengage from traditional career and societal expectations. The deepening social malaise signals a potential rise in unrest that could destabilise China's internal cohesion.

Meanwhile, Xi Jinping has prioritised Party control over economic reform, tightening state intervention in private enterprises and suppressing dissent. As the CCP shifts its focus from economic growth to nationalism and security to maintain legitimacy, the sustainability of its social contract comes into question. The mass protests against COVID-19 restrictions, along with recent unrest over failing banks and real estate firms, underscore deepening frustration. If economic hardships persist, China could face growing societal unrest, further challenging the CCP's grip on power. The pivot from economic growth to nationalist rhetoric reveals CCP's precarious balancing act between control and public dissatisfaction.

Xi's Paranoia

Xi Jinping's growing paranoia is evident in political purges, increased surveillance, and an intensified focus on national security. He has removed high-ranking officials in the military and government, signalling distrust even within his inner circle. The disappearances of key ministers highlight internal instability. China's sophisticated surveillance state, with AI-driven monitoring and censorship, reflects Xi's fear of losing control. Crackdowns on dissent, strict ideological enforcement, and restrictions on foreign influence demonstrate his obsession with security. Additionally, his economic policies prioritize self-reliance, limiting western influence but also stifling growth. The suppression of private enterprises, tech giants, and NGOs further signals insecurity, as independent power centres are viewed as threats. Xi's relentless drive for control reveals deep fears of internal collapse even at the cost of economic vitality.

Xi's increasing authoritarianism suggests he sees enemies everywhere—both domestically and abroad. His leadership is now cantered on control and security rather than reform, raising concerns about China's long-term stability and global relations. The prioritization of absolute security over reform heightens the risk of a brittle, volatile China in the future.

The 2018 constitutional amendment, which abolished the 'two-term limit' and effectively allowed Xi Jinping to remain President for life, is a direct reflection of his growing paranoia and relentless pursuit of absolute control. This unprecedented move signalled a break from Deng Xiaoping's reforms, which aimed to prevent the rise of another authoritarian strongman. However, this power grab has also fuelled internal discontent within the Communist Party, as it disrupted the long-established leadership transition system. In response, Xi has intensified political purges to root out potential challengers, further consolidating his rule. Yet, these purges have only deepened

resentment and mistrust within the CCP, creating a vicious cycle—greater repression leads to more dissent, which in turn prompts even harsher crackdowns. Xi's accumulation of power is eroding the very institutional stability that once underpinned the Communist Party's strength.

As Xi continues to tighten his grip on power, China risks political stagnation, growing internal instability, and a leadership structure that revolves around personal loyalty rather than competence; fears internal discontent even more than external threats—a concern evident in his classified January 2023 speech to the Communist Party's Central Committee, where he warned, "A fortress is most easily breached from within". His advancing age (71) adds extra urgency to his ambitions, further motivating him to cement his legacy—perhaps even surpassing Mao—by fulfilling China's long-held dream of annexing Taiwan. Xi's internal fears and advancing age are accelerating China towards a potentially reckless showdown over Taiwan.

Hyper-Nationalism as a Hedge

History is rife with authoritarian leaders who have weaponised external conflicts to stoke hyper-nationalism and entrench their rule. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly turned to military aggression—from the annexation of Crimea to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine—to rally domestic support and reinforce his image as Russia's indispensable leader. Likewise, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has strategically leveraged conflicts with Palestine and regional adversaries to maintain political dominance, often positioning himself as the only leader capable of ensuring national security. History shows that embattled leaders often gamble on external conflicts to cling to power—a path Xi seems increasingly likely to tread.

By framing external threats as existential crises, such leaders divert attention from internal dissent, consolidate power, and justify prolonged rule under the banner of national survival. Xi Jinping may be following this well-worn playbook, seeing the annexation of Taiwan not just as a historic mission, but as a critical hedge against waning control at home. Taiwan's annexation may serve as Xi's ultimate rallying cry to unite a fracturing domestic audience.

The Shifting Global Order

The world is steadily transitioning from a unipolar system dominated by US to a multipolar landscape where alternative power centres are emerging. Alliances such as BRICS, SCO and the QUAD present strong counterbalances to traditional Western-led structures like NATO, gradually

eroding US influence in global affairs. This shift is further exacerbated by internal fractures within the West—such as tensions between US President Donald Trump and traditional allies like Canada, EU, and Mexico— which have weakened Washington’s ability to project unified leadership. A fractured West and a rising multipolar world embolden China’s ambitions to rewrite the global order.

Amid these changing dynamics, China may feel increasingly emboldened to challenge the US particularly in the Taiwan Strait. Strengthened ties with Russia, Iran and North Korea provide Beijing with potential military and diplomatic backing, increasing its confidence in confronting American intervention. With a divided West and rising alternative alliances, China could perceive an opportune moment to assert its ambitions, believing that the US lacks both— cohesion and political will to stop it. China’s strategic calculus increasingly views the present as a rare window of opportunity against weakened Western unity.

The World's Dependence on China: A Closing Window of Opportunity

China’s dominance in global supply chains—spanning electronics, pharmaceuticals and rare earth minerals—grants it immense leverage over world economies. Despite diversification efforts, western nations remain heavily reliant on Chinese manufacturing— a vulnerability exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Global dependence on Chinese supply chains remains crucial, but rapidly diminishing, source of Beijing’s geopolitical leverage.

Beyond trade, Beijing’s economic clout deters strong pushback from nations, wary of retaliation through sanctions or supply chain disruptions. However, the rise of nationalist governments in the EU and Trump’s push to reshore manufacturing to the US threaten to reduce this dependency, gradually eroding China’s strategic advantage. Recognising this shrinking window, Beijing may see Taiwan’s annexation as an objective to pursue before its economic leverage diminishes. China’s urgency to act stems from the fear that its golden era of economic influence is slipping away.

China’s Reconciliation Efforts with India, Strategic Calculations

Recent statements by China’s Foreign Minister—Wang Yi, a series of border dispute management agreements and intensified diplomatic outreach—such as the 20th round of Corps Commander-level talks at Moldo, the disengagement of troops at Gogra-Hot Springs, and the

reopening of military hotlines—signal Beijing's intent to stabilise ties with India. High-profile meetings, including Wang Yi's 2022 visit to New Delhi and multiple sidelines discussions between Wang and Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summits, further illustrate China's efforts. China has also backed initiatives to revive the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED) and suggested cooperation in multilateral platforms like BRICS and the SCO, emphasising “common interests” over border tensions.

However, this apparent rapprochement appears less about genuine diplomacy and more about strategic positioning. By easing tensions along its western border, China may be seeking to secure its flank and avoid a two-front conflict in the event of a Taiwan crisis—especially as India's strategic partnership with the US and its engagement in forums like the Quad deepen. Keeping India neutral—or at least non-hostile—would allow Beijing to concentrate its military and diplomatic resources on countering US and allied pressure in the Indo-Pacific. China's outreach to India thus seems to be a carefully calibrated effort to minimise vulnerabilities ahead of a potential confrontation over Taiwan.

Moreover, Beijing may also seek to tie down India by fermenting trouble along its western front through Pakistan. In its current weakened state—economically strained and militarily demoralised after incidents like the Baloch train hijacking and rising resentment within the army, as highlighted by a recent letter from junior officers—Pakistan's leadership is looking to regain lost ground. A limited conflict with India could serve this purpose, potentially attracting financial support from Arab and Islamic nations while bolstering the domestic standing of Pakistan's senior military leadership and its Army. Thus, China may concurrently pursue indirect strategies to complicate India's security environment.

Xi's Regional Push for Taiwan Conflict Support

In April 2025, Chinese President Xi Jinping embarked on a rare and high-profile diplomatic tour of Southeast Asia, visiting Vietnam (April 14–15), Malaysia (April 15–17), and Cambodia (April 17–18). These visits—his first to Cambodia since 2016 and to Malaysia since 2013—came in close succession, underscoring their strategic significance. In Vietnam, 45 agreements were signed covering supply chains, artificial intelligence, joint maritime patrols and railway development. In Malaysia, over 30 agreements focused on the digital economy, AI and

infrastructure. In Cambodia, 37 agreements were concluded, including deals in finance, health, infrastructure and military cooperation.

These closely timed visits and broad-ranging agreements suggest a deliberate effort by China to shore up regional alliances and secure diplomatic backing in the event of escalating tensions over Taiwan. By revitalising ties with key ASEAN nations after years, China maybe preparing the geopolitical ground to reduce resistance and build support should a conflict arise.

Declining Global Dependence on Taiwan: A Strategic Opening for China

Efforts by the US and other nations to reduce reliance on Taiwan for semiconductors are gradually diminishing Taiwan's strategic importance. President Trump and other global leaders have pushed for semiconductor self-sufficiency, with TSMC announcing major investments in US manufacturing. Meanwhile, China, India and other nations are also investing heavily in advanced chip production to lessen their dependence. The shrinking strategic indispensability of Taiwan subtly weakens the global resolve to intervene against Chinese aggression.

As these efforts gain momentum, Taiwan's significance in global supply chains will decline, potentially weakening international resolve to defend it against Chinese aggression. With western military and financial resources already stretched thin due to ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, the Middle East and the Red Sea, the prospect of another military commitment in Taiwan would be deeply scrutinised. This shifting landscape may present Beijing with what it sees as the most opportune moment for annexation.

President Donald Trump has not explicitly stated that the United States would confront China militarily if it moved against Taiwan. In a July 2024 interview with Bloomberg Businessweek, Trump suggested that Taiwan should compensate the US for its defence assistance, comparing the arrangement to an insurance policy. He remarked, "Taiwan should pay us for defence. You know, we're no different than an insurance company. Taiwan doesn't give us anything". These comments indicate that Trump views US military support for Taiwan as contingent upon financial contributions from Taipei, rather than as an unconditional commitment.

For China, the convergence of declining Taiwanese importance and global fatigue marks an enticing moment to strike.

Increased Sense of Isolation and Humiliation

Sweeping tariffs imposed by the Trump administration — including the latest 125% hike — have sharply intensified China's sense of isolation and humiliation. While Trump granted a 90-day negotiation window to nearly every other country, China was uniquely targeted with an immediate additional 25% tariff hike, reinforcing Beijing's perception of strategic exclusion. Once an unstoppable economic powerhouse, China's growth has plunged from 14.2% in 2007 to just 5% in 2024, with forecasts signalling further decline. Stripped of preferential trade status and increasingly sidelined in global trade networks, Beijing sees these actions not merely as economic penalties but as direct affronts to its national pride and global stature. Tariff escalations have deepened China's grievance narrative, fuelling nationalist ambitions and strategic recalibrations.

Adding to its unease, Trump's diplomatic outreach to Russia and Iran — aimed at resolving the Ukraine conflict and reviving the nuclear pact — threatens to weaken China's critical alliances, compounding its isolation. In response to mounting economic pressures and diminishing international support, China may feel increasingly compelled to reassert strength — most dangerously through a forceful move to annex Taiwan. Such an action would aim both to distract from domestic vulnerabilities and to rebuild strategic alliances, pulling Russia and Iran back firmly into its orbit. China's sense of encirclement and erosion of alliances could drive it towards desperate, high-stake actions in the Taiwan Strait.

“Global Guardian” Model

Having analysed key factors that could drive China to annex Taiwan before 2030, it is useful to examine a predictive model proposed by the US based security consultancy firm “Global Guardian”. While this model considers slightly different and lesser set of factors compared to our earlier analysis, it aligns with the projection that the highest probability of a Chinese invasion falls between 2024 and 2028. (Global Guardian, 2025)

In a recent “Global Guardian” webinar, on the Taiwan question, Senior Intelligence Analyst Zev Faintuch outlined critical “trigger points” that serve as the foundation for this model, shaping potential conflict scenarios between China and Taiwan. These triggers provide valuable insights into the timeline and conditions under which Beijing may attempt military action.

- **2025.** The year 2025 is marked by strategic significance as Taiwan's military predicts that China could be prepared to execute an invasion by then.
- **2027.** The centennial of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 2027 is a symbolic milestone. The PLA's commemoration of a hundred years could potentially coincide with strategic moves or displays of military strength, shaping perceptions both domestically and internationally and influencing China's approach to regional affairs.
- **2030.** It is projected that the US will progress towards semiconductor sovereignty, reducing reliance on Taiwan for critical technology components, the dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region may shift. This shift could impact the strategic importance of Taiwan in the eyes of both US and China. The graphical representation is given below.
- Additionally, US Government transition in 2024-25 and drag on Chinese economy due to demographic burden, post 2030, form the outside factors influencing China's decision to invade Taiwan.



This model predicts the highest probability of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan occurring between 2024 and 2028, reinforcing our earlier analysis that such an event is likely to take place before

2030. The convergence of military advancements, geopolitical shifts and strategic calculations suggests that this timeframe presents the most opportune window for Beijing to act.

Conclusion

China's path to annexing Taiwan remains uncertain, shaped by a complex interplay of military capabilities, geopolitical alliances, global image, economic stability, Xi's enigma and domestic pressures. While Beijing continues to expand and modernise its military, significant hurdles persist, including the potential for US intervention, Taiwan's evolving defence strategies and the broader global response. Additionally, economic challenges and internal political dynamics could either drive China towards a more aggressive stance or force it to exercise caution.

However, recent developments suggest that conditions for a forceful move against Taiwan before 2030 may be more favourable than ever. Shifts in global attention, strategic miscalculations by adversaries and Taiwan's political transitions could create an opening that Beijing perceives as an ideal moment for decisive action. The coming years will be pivotal in determining whether deterrence and diplomacy can uphold the fragile status quo or if China will seize the opportunity to achieve its long-standing objective.

Given these unfolding dynamics, it is in India's strategic interest to anticipate this potential conflict and proactively prepare a well-coordinated national response to address the worst-case scenario in coordination with like-minded neighbours and allies.

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