

SECURING THE STRAIT-ENGAGING TAIWAN IN THE UK'S INDO-PACIFIC TILT

BY DARREN G. SPINCK



DEMOCRACY | FREEDOM | HUMAN RIGHTS



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Whilst carrying out the research, a closed-door roundtable was held on June 13, 2022, during which American, British, and Taiwanese policy experts shared their views on geopolitical flashpoints causing the Taiwan Strait's destabilisation and participants suggested policy recommendations on how the United Kingdom can lead efforts to maintain regional peace and security.

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About The Henry Jackson Society

The Henry Jackson Society is a think-tank and policy-shaping force that fights for the principles and alliances which keep societies free, working across borders and party lines to combat extremism, advance democracy and real human rights, and make a stand in an increasingly uncertain world.



About The Asia Studies Centre

The Asia Studies Centre is a research centre within the Henry Jackson Society that aims to educate the public about the structural shifts, regional complexities and historic tensions that exist alongside the economic and social growth that constitutes the “rise of Asia”. It also advocates a British role in the broader Indo-Pacific region, commensurate with Britain’s role as a custodian of the rules-based international system.

Report Overview

Recent geopolitical events have triggered a renewed urgency for the United Kingdom, London's transatlantic allies, and UK Indo-Pacific partners to develop policies aimed at helping maintain the *status quo* in China-Taiwan cross-Strait relations and ensuring uninterrupted sea and air trade routes throughout the region.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has forced Western military planners to rethink how Taiwan can best defend itself. COVID-19's impact on global supply chains has led to a re-evaluation of trade policy and discussions on how Western democracies can better secure trade routes for strategic goods such as semiconductors. Chinese President Xi Jinping's restrictive "Zero-COVID" policies and attempts to further Beijing's hegemonic ambitions throughout the Indo-Pacific have led to a reconsideration of China as a reliable trade partner. The Biden administration's apparent "strategic clarity" on Taiwan's defence has renewed debate on how to arm Taiwan after a coordinated sanctions policy failed to deter Russia from continuing its attack on Ukraine.

The Henry Jackson Society's report, *Securing the Strait: Engaging Taiwan in the United Kingdom's Indo-Pacific Tilt*, offers British as well as US and European policymakers suggestions on formulating policies to face these mounting challenges. This report will:

- Explain how the Global Britain integrated review can lead to helping Taiwan defend itself against forced reunification from the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) People's Liberation Army (PLA);
- Illustrate how maintaining the *status quo*, deterring China's forced reunification attempts through targeted coalition-building, arming Taiwan, and supporting Taipei's participation in key global governance institutions are in the UK's national interest;
- Analyse key lessons learned from the ongoing war in Ukraine;
- State the potential risks of strategic clarity;
- Detail the importance of forming targeted partnerships to mitigate risks related to the PRC's economic and military policies, while avoiding challenges associated with large collective defence guarantees throughout the Indo-Pacific;
- Provide an overview of security dilemmas associated with a policy pivot from ambiguity to strategic clarity;
- Propose policies aimed at positioning the Australia-United Kingdom-United States Partnership (AUKUS) trilateral defence pact as the cornerstone of an anti-hegemonic coalition to prevent China's dominance of the Indo-Pacific and Beijing's ability to project power throughout the region's island chains;
- Discuss Taiwan's need for deterrent weapons and options for arming the Taiwanese;
- Outline UK trade priorities with Taiwan and throughout the Indo-Pacific region, aimed at job creation in the United Kingdom and the growth of the UK's economy through competition, innovation, and fair markets; and
- Recommend advance policies to help secure the Taiwan Strait and elsewhere throughout the Indo-Pacific region when UK national interests are at stake.

PART ONE

1. Introduction

1.1 US Pivot to Strategic Clarity

Strategic ambiguity on defending the Taiwan Strait has seemingly ended. US President Joe Biden has thrice publicly remarked that the United States is obligated to defend Taiwan.¹ Each time President Biden has alluded to defending Taiwan from a Chinese invasion, the US State Department or senior White House aides have retracted or corrected his statement.² Biden himself attempted to walk back his latest remarks on the US military defending Taiwan from PRC attack, saying Washington policy on securing the Taiwan Strait remains unchanged. However, as American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Senior Fellow Hal Brands surmised, “once is a gaffe, three times is a policy”. Beijing likely agrees.³

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) almost certainly views President Biden’s Freudian slips as acknowledgement of an actual shift in US policy. As America’s November 2022 mid-term election draws nearer, and, with it, control of the US Senate and House of Representatives, Beijing likely anticipates Washington further hardening its position on defending Taiwan. Following the White House and US allies failing to deter Russia from its continued invasion of Ukraine, despite sanctions aimed at crippling the Russian economy into compliance, and the catastrophic US withdrawal from Afghanistan, hawkish American pronouncements on defending Taiwan can be expected. Without a clear US strategy in place to deny Beijing its ability to forcibly reunify with Taiwan, however, empty bluster from the White House alone will not secure the Taiwan Strait.

Following US President Joe Biden’s statements seemingly ending US strategic ambiguity policy, the German Marshall Fund’s Bonnie Glaser wrote, “consider the possibility that ending strategic ambiguity will provoke the attack we seek to deter, especially since the US lacks sufficient military capability to prevent China from invading Taiwan and Taiwan can’t defend the island itself”.⁴ With the Biden administration diversifying Pentagon resources for non-defence spending and the Group of Seven (G7) announcing an “unprecedented”, “long-term security commitment to Ukraine”, it is questionable if the United States alone is capable of leading efforts to maintain the cross-Strait *status quo*.^{5, 6} Securing the Taiwan Strait must include not only the United States, Taiwan’s primary security guarantor, but the United Kingdom and other Indo-Pacific partners with shared interests in countering China’s hegemonic political, economic, and military ambitions.

As the former Trump administration Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for Strategy and Force Development, Elbridge A. Colby, writes in *The Strategy of Denial*, “the goal of an anti-

¹ Peter Baker, “Biden Veers off Script on Taiwan: It’s Not the First Time”, *The New York Times*, May 23, 2022, sec. US, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/23/us/politics/biden-taiwan-comments.html>.

² Stephen Wertheim, “The Troubling Repercussions of Biden’s Taiwan Gaffes”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 24, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/05/24/troubling-repercussions-of-biden-s-taiwan-gaffes-pub-87196>.

³ Hal Brands, “Biden’s Taiwan ‘Gaffe’ is a Smart Strategy to Deter China”, *Bloomberg.com*, May 23, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2022-05-23/biden-s-taiwan-gaffe-is-a-smart-strategy-to-deter-a-chinese-invasion?sref=p8neHWIG>.

⁴ Bonnie Glaser, “Ending Strategic Ambiguity Will Provoke the Attack We Seek to Deter”, *Twitter*, May 23, 2022, https://twitter.com/BonnieGlaser/status/1528691912739373058?s=20&t=_y6te-sIOBGcBDTYi3Fh8A.

⁵ Elaine McCusker and Emily Coletta, “Is the United States Military Ready to Defend Taiwan?”, in *Defending Taiwan*, ed. Kori Schake and Allison Schwartz (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 2022), <https://www.defendingtaiwan.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/BK-Defending-Taiwan-online-final.pdf>.

⁶ The White House, “FACT SHEET: The United States and G7 to Take Further Action to Support Ukraine and Hold the Russian Federation Accountable”, *Briefing Room* (Washington, June 27, 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/27/fact-sheet-the-united-states-and-g7-to-take-further-action-to-support-ukraine-and-hold-the-russian-federation-accountable/#:~:text=Leaders%20will%20also%20make%20an,as%20long%20as%20it%20takes>.

hegemonic coalition ... is to prevent an aspiring hegemon like China from dominating a region like Asia by convincing important states that it would prevail in a systemic regional war".⁷

1.2 Economic Policy as a Deterrent

Hard-line Beijing rhetoric and aggression toward Taiwan will also likely become more frequent as China faces economic turmoil and domestic political manoeuvring prior to the CCP's 20th National Congress. Reports of splintering amongst the CCP's elite as concerns mount over the impact of Chinese President Xi Jinping's "Zero-COVID" policy on China's economy should not be disregarded. However, there are no indications of wide-spread political upheaval in the PRC's future, despite restrictive pandemic restrictions leading to some protests in Shanghai and Beijing.⁸ Xi has silenced inter-party dissent by effectively side-lining Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang and supporters of pro-reform "Likonomics" since the premier's 2018 re-election.⁹ The CCP is now singularly focused on stability and the continuity of Xi's power.¹⁰ As the National Congress approaches and Beijing's relationship with the West sours, Xi allies within the party's Central Organisation Department have begun preparing countermeasures to mitigate the impact of potential future Western sanctions related to Taiwan.¹¹

The CCP has barred families of senior party officials from holding assets abroad and restricted their opening accounts with international financial services institutions.¹² Xi's "sanctions-proofing" policies and inward-looking Dual Circulation economic model curtail the West's options for leveraging economic ties with the PRC as a deterrent for preventing Taiwan's invasion. Days after President Biden's latest "strategic confusion" on US-Taiwan policy, the PLA announced military drills and combat readiness patrols, "as a solemn warning to the recent collusion between the United States and Taiwan".¹³ The PRC is clearly preparing for the economic blowback from the West should the PLA force reunification. It is imperative, therefore, that the United Kingdom and its allies are prepared to accelerate the West's policies aimed at denying the Chinese military's ability to invade Taiwan, including enhancing allied force posture, arming Taiwan for its defence, and targeted coalition-building.

1.3 US-UK Efforts to Secure the Strait

With tensions in the Taiwan Strait worsening and the White House clarifying its intentions to defend Taiwan against any forced reunification by the PLA, top White House National Security Council (NSC) staff have opened discussions with the United Kingdom and other European allies on contingency planning for a possible invasion of Taiwan. Talks have focused on "how the UK could do more diplomatically with Taipei to discussions about boosting deterrence in Asia ... and what role the UK could play if the US ended up in a war with China over Taiwan".¹⁴

⁷ Elbridge A. Colby, *The Strategy of Denial: American Defense in an Age of Great Power Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021), 19.

⁸ Ken Moritsugu and David Rising, "Students Protest, Discontent Grows over China's COVID Policy", *AP News*, May 17, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-shanghai-china-cbcac582b7d8a92af0ce76e14847b1af>.

⁹ BBC Monitoring, "Li Keqiang: China's Marginalised Premier", *BBC News*, September 28, 2020, sec. China, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-19870221>.

¹⁰ Yun Sun, "After Biden's Pivot to Asia, China Feels the Chill", *Politico*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-china-watcher>.

¹¹ Edward White, "China's Chaotic Regulatory Crackdown Reflects Splits among Policymakers", *The Financial Times*, May 19, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/3a21d88c-1d63-497e-ad10-aa7a5b14052f>.

¹² Chun Han Wong, "China Insists Party Elites Shed Overseas Assets, Eyeing Western Sanctions on Russia", *Wall Street Journal*, May 19, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-insists-party-elites-shed-overseas-assets-eyeing-western-sanctions-on-russia-11652956787>.

¹³ Paul Mozur and John Liu, "China Is Organizing Military Drills near Taiwan in a Warning to the U.S.", *The New York Times*, May 25, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/25/world/asia/china-taiwan-military-drills.html>.

¹⁴ Demetri Sevastopulo and Kathrin Hille, "US Holds High-Level Talks with UK over China Threat to Taiwan", *The Financial Times*, April 30, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/b0991186-d511-45c2-b5f0-9bd5b8ceee40>.

The UK government is certainly mindful of the need to coordinate policy with the UK's closest allies, particularly the United States, which has thus far played the most significant role in helping maintain the Taiwan Strait's security. However, 10 Downing Street must also shape British foreign policy in the UK's national interests.

While Britain's foreign policy agenda *vis-à-vis* the Indo-Pacific and as related to helping secure the Taiwan Strait differs little from the rhetoric in US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's speech on May 26, 2022, "The Administration's Approach to the People's Republic of China," with its focus on "invest/align/compete", the United Kingdom's economic interests are specific to the prosperity of its people and firms, and job creation at home.¹⁵ As the United Kingdom recovers from the COVID-19 economic slowdown, UK policymakers should not be led astray by the Biden administration, which on China oftentimes seems to want its cake and eat it, too. Corporate America's unquenchable thirst for China's inexpensive labour is pulling US policy in one direction, while China hawks seek decoupling key strategic sectors with the PRC. Some officials in the Biden administration are also prioritising progressive climate policies over efforts to hold China accountable on human rights issues. The White House Climate Czar John Kerry, for example, argues US environmental priorities require cooperation with China and supersede enforcement of legislation aimed at curtailing documented reports of forced labour in Xinjiang.¹⁶

The United Kingdom must ensure it is not caught unprepared by sudden Washington policy pivots. The Project 2049 Institute Senior Fellow Ian Easton expressed concern following Blinken's speech, writing, "I'm confused by the China policy speech [Secretary Blinken] gave today. He accurately described a hostile, genocidal regime responsible for stealing millions of jobs and threatening the entire liberal world order. Then said we should trade and cooperate more with them."¹⁷

Widespread decoupling of the West's economic ties with China is unlikely if global supply chains remain susceptible to inflationary shocks. Trade policy aimed at "friend-shoring" targeted industries, however, may serve as a short-term solution to the polar extremes of globalisation and reshoring. The British government hinted at UK support for the concept of "friend-shoring" during Foreign Minister Liz Truss' April 27, 2022 speech, when she stated her world vision: "where freedom and democracy are strengthened through a network of economic and security partnerships".¹⁸ However, London should remain vigilant when considering the Biden administration's muscular foreign policy pronouncements, as America remains China's largest trading partner despite years of declining US-Sino relations.¹⁹ Beijing has demonstrated its propensity for punishing smaller trading partners who run ahead of established US policies. China retaliated against Lithuania's export sector after Vilnius boldly changed the name of its liaison office in Taipei to "Taiwan Representative Office," something larger European countries have not yet done.^{20, 21} Following the Biden administration in lockstep and advancing policies

¹⁵ Anthony J. Blinken, "The Administration's Approach to the People's Republic of China", *United States Department of State*, May 26, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/the-administrations-approach-to-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>.

¹⁶ Josh Rogin, "Biden is under Pressure to Go Soft on China's Genocide", *The Washington Post*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/06/23/biden-uyghur-forced-labor-law-implementation-china-genocide/>.

¹⁷ Ian Easton, *The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia* (Manchester: Eastbridge Books, 2019).

¹⁸ Elizabeth Truss, "The Return of Geopolitics: Foreign Secretary's Mansion House Speech", Gov.uk, Lord Mayor's 2022 Easter Banquet, April 27, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/foreign-secretarys-mansion-house-speech-at-the-lord-mayors-easter-banquet-the-return-of-geopolitics>.

¹⁹ World Integrated Trade Solution, "Trade Summary for China 2019", *WITS - UNSD Comtrade* [United Nations Statistical Division, UNSD], January 3, 2020, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountrySnapshot/en/CHN>.

²⁰ Andrew Higgins, "In an Uneven Fight with China, a Tiny Country's Brand becomes Toxic", *The New York Times*, February 21, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/21/world/europe/china-lithuania-taiwan-trade.html>.

²¹ The Washington Post Editorial Board, "Lithuania Stood with Taiwan against China: Europe and the U.S. Should Stand with Lithuania", *The Washington Post*, January 29, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/01/29/lithuania-stood-with-taiwan-against-china-europe-us-should-stand-with-lithuania/>.

which other coalition members may not support could come at the expense of the national interests of the United Kingdom, particularly if corporate America eventually influences an economic rapprochement between Washington and Beijing.

The White House seems prepared to start rolling back Trump-era tariffs on China, in a misguided attempt to manage rising inflation in the United States.²² While considering this economic olive branch to Beijing, the Biden administration has thus far not provided the Indo-Pacific region significant “carrots” on trade and investment to form a significant anti-hegemonic coalition throughout the Indo-Pacific to deter Beijing’s ambitions.²³ Edward Luce notes, “the asymmetry of Biden’s China policy increases the danger of what everyone fears – a conflict of China. A superpower that is happy to discuss military aid and weapons, but reluctant to talk of trade and investment, is telling both partners and forces that it speaks just one language.”²⁴

The United States, as Taiwan’s primary security guarantor through Washington’s sales of defensive arms to Taiwan, understandably focuses its Taiwan and overall Indo-Pacific framework through the prism of defence policy. The United Kingdom can support US efforts at “peace through strength” in the Taiwan Strait, while still exploring diplomatic measures and other soft-power policies aimed at diffusing tensions and helping maintain the *status quo* in cross-Strait relations. Paul Haenle, a former NSC China director, indicated Washington’s over-reliance on extending military strength in the Indo-Pacific, while minimising the strength of region-wide economic ties has allowed China to expand its influence and hegemonic ambitions throughout the region.²⁵

1.4 Defending Taiwan and the Island Chain Strategy

With recent Washington–Taipei dialogue focused on the US dictating to Taiwan that it must purchase asymmetric weaponry for the island’s defence, versus the Taiwanese’s preference for a “low quantity of high-quality platforms”, such as F-16s and M1A2T Abrams tanks, it seems the Biden administration may view forced reunification as a *fait accompli*. Dan Blumenthal from the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) believes overly focusing on asymmetric capabilities does not address the daily grey-zone threats that Taiwan faces.^{26, 27} With an emphasis on arming Taiwan with asymmetric weapons such as Javelin anti-tank missiles and mines, US officials are planning to defend the island against what Easton refers to as the “Z-Day” invasion scenario, instead of planning weapons sales more suited for deterring/denying PLA forces and forcing Beijing military planners to reconsider the cost-benefit of such an invasion.²⁸ The CCP will continue to view reunification with Taiwan as inevitable unless Taiwan is armed with the weapons it needs for its defence. Providing for Taiwan’s defence and forming an anti-hegemonic coalition prepared to adequately increase its force posture in the Indo-Pacific are required to deter the PLA from launching an invasion with likely catastrophic repercussions.

²² Amby Scott. Paul, “Cutting Tariffs on China Won’t Stop Inflation”, *Washington Examiner*, June 22, 2022, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/restoring-america/faith-freedom-self-reliance/cutting-tariffs-on-china-wont-stop-inflation>.

²³ Jenny Leonard, “Biden Says He and China’s Xi to Talk ‘Soon,’ Weighing Tariffs”, *Bloomberg*, June 18, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-18/biden-says-he-and-china-s-xi-to-talk-soon-weighing-tariffs#xj4y7vzkg>.

²⁴ Edward Luce, “Biden’s China Strategy Cannot Work with Weapons Alone”, *The Financial Times*, May 17, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/fb15dfd1-b1cf-44d1-9584-d48d6c2095c5>.

²⁵ Demetri Sevastopulo, “America’s Lopsided China Strategy: Military Aid but Not Enough Trade”, *The Financial Times*, April 26, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/82c13d3b-5b05-4fd4-91be-373ba075db4f>.

²⁶ Lee Hsi-min and Eric Lee, “Taiwan’s Overall Defense Concept, Explained”, *The Diplomat*, November 3, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/11/taiwans-overall-defense-concept-explained/>.

²⁷ Dan Blumenthal, “The Ukraine Crisis: Implications for U.S. Policy in the Indo-Pacific”, *American Enterprise Institute (AEI)*, May 19, 2022, <https://www.aei.org/research-products/testimony/the-ukraine-crisis-implications-for-u-s-policy-in-the-indo-pacific-building-a-coalition-to-deter-war/>.

²⁸ Ian Easton, *The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan’s Defence and American Strategy in Asia* (Manchester: Eastbridge Books, 2019).

During a recent wargaming exercise which included the participation of Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC) member and US Congressman Mike Gallagher (R-WI), the PLA's "anti-access/anti denial" war strategy in the Taiwan Strait was found to detonate a high-altitude nuclear weapon near Hawaii to "signify its resolve" and "prevent or end US involvement in a conflict with Taiwan".²⁹ Two participants in the wargame simulation later warned that as "Beijing views Taiwan as a breakaway republic ... [CCP] leaders may not be able to accept failure without seriously harming the regime's legitimacy."

Biden abandoning strategic ambiguity or embracing proposals in the US Congress to pre-approve an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) gives Beijing a strategic advantage. The CCP would know, even before the PLA fires a single shot, that the United States would join the fray. By extension, so would Washington's NATO collective defence allies, including the United Kingdom, if the PLA attacked US forces defending Taiwan. Admiral (Ret.) Harry B. Harris, Jr., a former commander of the US Pacific Command, however, believes that strategic clarity is an effective deterrent, as China has clearly maintained its preparations for an invasion of Taiwan following successive US presidential administrations and over four decades of US ambiguity.³⁰ However, Rorry Daniels, managing director of the Asia Society Policy Institute, disagrees with the need for a public Washington policy pivot, noting a pre-authorised AUMF would be seen as a provocative move by the PRC and likely engender a counter-response from Beijing, such as increased military pressure on Taiwan.³¹

Despite President Biden's pronouncements, Taiwan is not prepared for an attack and the gaffes from Washington could worsen an already tense security dilemma from which Beijing may determine it is in its best interest to strike now. China has recently launched its third aircraft carrier, bolstering the world's largest navy, and the PLA has trained with military strikes on replicas of US Navy ships and port infrastructure.³² While China has modernised its military to repel a US attack and deny US forces access to the Taiwan Strait during any PLA attack on the island, the current American defence and foreign strategy in the region is in question.

Washington's regional strategy was outlined in the 2018 US Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific, which prioritised deterrence by aiming to deny PLA air and sea dominance in the first island chain and defending countries inside this chain, including Taiwan, as well as the Philippines, and Indonesia.³³ The island-chain strategy is a security concept first developed by former US Secretary of State John Dulles to "illustrate a defensive or offensive perimeter by linking islands and other larger land masses together".³⁴ The PLA hopes to deny access for the defence of Taiwan within the first island chain, "contest control" in the second island chain which includes Japan, the Marianas, and Micronesia, and "operate as a blue water navy" in the third island chain which is Hawaii and other US territories.³⁵ A June 2022 RAND Corporation study on determining the military capabilities to counter both China and Russia found US/UK allied and joint and combined forces should improve upon the existing Indo-Pacific defence

²⁹ Stacie Pettyjohn, Becca Wasser, and Chris Dougherty, *Dangerous Straits: Wargaming a Future Conflict over Taiwan* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, June 15, 2022), pp.1 and 8, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/dangerous-straits-wargaming-a-future-conflict-over-taiwans>.

³⁰ Edward Wong and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Speeds up Reshaping of Taiwan's Defences to Deter China", *The New York Times*, May 25, 2022, sec. US, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/24/us/politics/china-taiwan-military.html>.

³¹ Rorry Daniels, Henry Jackson Society Roundtable discussion on "Securing the Strait: Engaging Taiwan in the United Kingdom's Indo-Pacific Tilt", Managing Director Asia Society Policy Institute, June 13, 2022.

³² Seth Cropsey, "China is Telegraphing Its Military Intent: Time to Listen", *Barron's*, May 21, 2022, <https://www.barrons.com/articles/china-is-telegraphing-its-military-intent-time-to-listen-51653082723>.

³³ United States, "U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific" (Washington, DC: Trump White House Archives, January 5, 2021).

³⁴ Wilson Vorndick, "China's Reach has Grown; So Should the Island Chains", *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, October 22, 2018, <https://amti.csis.org/chinas-reach-grown-island-chains/>.

³⁵ Ibid.

posture by pre-positioning unmanned aerial vehicles and precision-guided munitions in Japan and US territories, procure and deploy aircraft support assets to the Western Pacific, and arm Taiwan with anti-ship and anti-armour weapons.³⁶

Seth Cropsey, a former US undersecretary of the Navy, warns that the PLA's navy and missile arsenal can attack targets within the first island chain and "provide cover for warships moving into the West Philippine Sea".³⁷ In an apparent attempt to disrupt US coalition-building efforts in the region while Washington is focused on the defence of Ukraine, Beijing has proposed a security and trade arrangement with ten Pacific nations throughout the island chains.³⁸ British economic interests and the safety of its citizens in the Indo-Pacific would face great risk should the PRC-led Global Security Initiative be finalised, which could then allow Beijing to leverage supply-chain disruptions with threats of naval blockades within the various island chains.

Because of the large territory encompassing the Indo-Pacific region, some experts like Colby contend that America does not have a military capable of commitments to both Europe and Asia.³⁹ The UK Foreign Minister Truss disputes this notion, stating the United Kingdom must "reject the false choice between Euro-Atlantic security and Indo-Pacific security".⁴⁰ However, as Ukraine continues to receive billions in funding from the West to repel Russia's invasion and defend its territory, and governments spend additional resources for initiatives to counter China with soft-power policies, difficult choices will be necessary to ensure an Indo-Pacific defensive strategy is adequately funded.

1.5 Maintaining the Cross-Strait Status Quo

The United Kingdom has a unique opportunity to help strengthen Taiwan's defences and the UK/allied defence posture in the Indo Pacific, as well as lead a diplomatic effort to help ensure peace in the Taiwan Strait through soft-power initiatives. In "Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development, and Foreign Policy", the Prime Minister's Cabinet Office outlines its proposed "Indo-Pacific tilt," stating: "we will be the European partner with the broadest and most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific – committed for the long term, with closer and deeper partnerships, bilaterally and unilaterally".⁴¹

The British government should therefore aim to maintain strategic ambiguity in the Indo-Pacific and ensure peace in the Taiwan Strait endures. Peace and prosperity in the Taiwan Strait and, by extension, throughout the Indo-Pacific region, are in the interests of the British people and the United Kingdom's transatlantic partners. As Sun Tzu stated: "the greatest victory is that which requires no battle".⁴²

³⁶ David A. Ochmanek, *Determining the Military Capabilities Most Needed to Counter China and Russia: A Strategy-Driven Approach* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022), 12, <https://doi.org/10.7249/pea1984-1>.

³⁷ Seth Cropsey, "Opinion: Russia's Military Troubles in Ukraine Could be America's in the Pacific", *Wall Street Journal*, April 6, 2022, sec. Opinion, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/americas-military-problems-look-like-russias-logistics-china-taiwan-philippine-island-chain-shipping-11649258646>.

³⁸ "China Wants 10 Small Pacific Nations to Sign on to 'Game-Changing' Security Agreement", *CNBC*, May 25, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/26/china-wants-10-pacific-nations-to-endorse-sweeping-agreement.html>.

³⁹ Elbridge Colby, "Americans and Our Allies Need to Grapple with the Reality", *Twitter*, January 20, 2020, <https://twitter.com/ElbridgeColby/status/1484156214141407232?s=20&t=yWknd7YexTQ4rAZrrhrJw>.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Truss, "The Return of Geopolitics: Foreign Secretary's Mansion House Speech", 2022.

⁴¹ Her Majesty's Cabinet Office (HMCO), "Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy", Gov.uk, (UK: Crown Copyright, March 2021), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy>.

⁴² Sun Tzu, "The Art of War", in *Strategic Studies*, ed. Thomas Mahnken and Joseph Maiolo (London: Routledge, 2008), 63-91.

2. Global Britain in a Competitive Age

2.1 The UK's Indo-Pacific Tilt

As detailed in Global Britain's framework on the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt, London can help ensure peace throughout the Indo-Pacific via increased trade, secure supply chains, free and open shipping routes, ending dependence on PRC supply chains for rare earths, increasing training with Five Power Defence Agreements (FDPA) allies (Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Singapore), enhancing cyber security interoperability with regional partners, and strategic use of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to engage private enterprise for financing Indo-Pacific infrastructure projects.

The United Kingdom, through its "Special Relationship" with the United States, should seize the opportunity to help mediate tensions in the region through shuttle diplomacy; encourage Beijing to resume high-level official contacts with Taipei, which the Chinese government suspended in 2016, soon after the election of Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen; and ensure the existing cross-Strait *status quo* does not unravel into an armed conflict. Any calamitous invasion of Taiwan would draw in the United States, Japan, South Korea, and others within the region.⁴³ London and Tokyo, which signed a defence and security pact in May 2022, should therefore expand their joint training exercises to include other countries sharing a national interest in Taiwan's defence and the cross-Strait *status quo*.⁴⁴

Former US Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs Susan Thornton noted in a December 2021 report that a National Committee on American Foreign Policy Track II discussion participant still contends, "the core of the cross-Strait *status quo* – Beijing's adherence to peaceful reunification, Taiwan's commitment to no *de jure* declarations on independence, and the US One-China policy – is holding".⁴⁵ Only Beijing will determine for how long, unless the PRC is denied any opportunity to force reunification. Any assumption, however, that the United Kingdom can also tolerate Beijing's actions toward Taipei through the PLA's "grey zone" aggression (cyber intrusions, military flights into Taiwan's airspace, etc.) would diminish the seriousness of the current situation. Aiming to maintain peaceful cross-Strait relations should be the cornerstone of the UK's Integrated Review, which the UK's China Research Group notes, has aligned with the US/EU "compete/collaborate/confront" framework.⁴⁶ Maintaining the *status quo* entails more than preventing forced reunification though. CCP influence over Taiwan's domestic political affairs resulting from increased "grey zone" pressure would just as likely imperil regional trade routes and allow the PLA to more easily project force beyond Taiwan's position in the first island chain.

The United Kingdom and its allies must deny Beijing the ability to invade Taiwan through the modernisation of Western militaries, which requires increased spending as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). Otherwise, the West will not have the modern weapons or trained militaries needed to counterbalance the PLA's technological advances or manpower

⁴³ Javier C Hernández, "China Suspends Diplomatic Contact with Taiwan", *The New York Times*, June 25, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/26/world/asia/china-suspends-diplomatic-contact-with-taiwan.html>.

⁴⁴ Boris Johnson, "UK and Japan Set to Rapidly Accelerate Defence and Security Ties with Landmark Agreement", Gov.uk, May 5, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-japan-set-to-rapidly-accelerate-defence-and-security-ties-with-landmark-agreement>.

⁴⁵ Susan Thornton, "Whither the *Status Quo*? A Cross-Taiwan Strait Trilateral Dialogue", National Committee on American Foreign Policy, December 2021, https://www.ncafp.org/2016/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NCAFP-Cross-Strait-Trilat-Report_2021_Final.pdf.

⁴⁶ Julia Pamilih and Chris Cash, "The UK and China: Next Steps", China Research Group, September 26, 2021, p.9, <https://chinaresearchgroup.org/research/uk-next-steps>.

advantage. The Taiwanese must also be provided with the arms they view as necessary to deny the CCP its hegemonic ambitions and deter an attack from ever occurring. Contingency planning with the UK's Australia-United Kingdom-United States Partnership (AUKUS) ally Australia, as well as Japan and other large Indo-Pacific partners, is necessary to ensure interoperability of militaries and operational planning.

2.2 Beijing is Not a "Responsible Stakeholder"

Beijing should be viewed as a strategic competitor in the Indo-Pacific region, not the "responsible stakeholder" that US officials had once hoped. While the United Kingdom should not view the PRC as an "acute and direct threat", as the UK designated Russia in the Global Britain integrated review, the PLA poses an existential security threat to the Taiwanese and, by extension, puts UK national interests at risk. British policymakers developing strategies to counter China's aggression must also realise that attacks on Taiwan's "grey zone" constitute a growing menace to regional stability and global economic security as well.

Beijing has not acted in good faith throughout the Ukraine crisis, with President Xi endorsing the "legitimacy" of Russia's invasion and Beijing drawing parallels between NATO activities in Europe and Western security interests in the Indo-Pacific.^{47, 48} Perhaps most troubling, is that the core of Western security theory in the Indo-Pacific – the island chain strategy – has been upended by Beijing's defence security pact with the Solomon Islands and attempts by the PRC to negotiate economic/defence agreements with smaller governments throughout the Indo-Pacific island chains. Politico reported that the pact between China and the Solomon Islands "constitutes a rebuke of US diplomatic disengagement with Oceania".⁴⁹ These developments further diminish the PRC's reliability as a long-term economic partner for the United Kingdom and London's Western partners and lessen the likelihood that peace in the Taiwan Strait can be maintained through diplomacy and trade ties with China alone.

As Beijing and the West near the end of once pragmatic, economic-driven ties, political solutions to diffuse the tensions between Beijing and Taiwan are diminishing. Decades of normalised trade relations with Beijing did not provide the CCP with sufficient enticements to embrace the West's economic and security norms. London has a narrowing timeframe to exert its influence and attempt to mediate discussions between PRC and Taiwanese officials. As long as China remains Taiwan's largest trading partner, economic co-dependence between the mainland and the island could lead to progress. However, this will become less likely should China's economy stagnate and the CCP increasingly resort to nationalism to justify its policies before the CCP National Congress.

⁴⁷ John Feng, "China's Xi Jinping Endorses 'Legitimacy' of Russia's War in Ukraine—Kremlin", *Newsweek*, June 16, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/china-russia-xi-jinping-vladimir-putin-call-ukraine-war-kremlin-1716368>.

⁴⁸ Bonny Lin, "The Ukraine Crisis: Implications for U.S. Policy in the Indo-Pacific", Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Congressional Testimony, May 19, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/ukraine-crisis-implications-us-policy-indo-pacific-0>.

⁴⁹ Phelim Kine, "Xi Bests Biden in Pacific Island Diplomatic Duel", *Politico*, April 21, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/politico-china-watcher/2022/04/21/xi-bests-biden-in-pacific-island-diplomatic-duel-00026792>.

3. The Cross-Strait *Status Quo*

3.1 The UK's "One China" Policy

A carefully crafted *status quo* between the transatlantic partners and China has existed in the Taiwan Strait since the United Kingdom first adopted a *de facto* "One-China" policy in 1972, with the US government following suit in 1979 and America subsequently becoming Taiwan's primary security guarantor through arms sales outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). This often uneasy peace exists only if Beijing does not veer from a path of seeking peaceful reunification, Taipei does not support unilateral independence, and the UK and US governments maintain their respective strategically ambiguous "One China" policies. The United Kingdom's official position is outlined in a memorandum submitted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, "under the terms of the 1972 agreement with China, HMG acknowledged the position of the government of the PRC that Taiwan was a province of the PRC and recognized the PRC government as the sole legal government of China".⁵⁰

However, while this diplomacy-driven "One China" policy only permits the United Kingdom and the United States to maintain diplomatic relations with Beijing, it does not prohibit either London or Washington from maintaining economic, cultural, or even cooperative military ties with Taiwan. The ambiguity in the transatlantic partner's respective policies is their acknowledgement of the PRC's position that Taiwan is a province of the PRC versus a sovereign, independent country. The UK's position on Taiwan is best typified by Lord Tariq Ahmad, stating:

the United Kingdom's long-standing policy on Taiwan has not changed. We have no diplomatic relations with Taiwan, but a strong unofficial relationship based on dynamic commercial, educational, and cultural ties. We regularly lobby in favour of Taiwan's participation in international organisations where statehood is not a prerequisite, and we make clear our concerns about any activity that risks destabilizing the cross-strait *status quo*. We have no plans to recognize Taiwan as a state.⁵¹

3.2 Securing the Taiwan Strait and Global Supply Chains

With increased globalisation, the United Kingdom, United States, and the rest of the world have become increasingly dependent on trade throughout the Indo-Pacific. The level of UK and Taiwan trade in goods and services totalled GBP8.3 billion in 2021, an increase of 17.9 per cent from 2020. The economic co-dependence between Taiwan and Western trading partners is best illustrated by the Taiwanese dominance of the semiconductor industry. Taiwan manufactured 65 per cent of the world's semiconductors in 2021, placing the island as the key global supply-chain hub for a product which, as the "brain" of modern computing, is used for telecommunications, military hardware, healthcare systems, transportation, financial services, and other key industries.⁵² Disrupting the cross-Strait *status quo* through the actions of any single party would lead to dramatic supply-chain disruptions for semiconductors, as well as the Chinese-sourced components the integrated circuits are made from, such as silicon, germanium, and gallium arsenide. In 2021, China mined 6 million metric tons of silicon, 72 per

⁵⁰ HM Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Memorandum Submitted by Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Taiwan)", House of Commons, October 30, 2000, <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmfa/uc574iv/574m15.htm>.

⁵¹ Lord Tariq Ahmed, "Volume 804: Taiwan", Lords Chamber Debate, July 14, 2020, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2020-07-14/debates/33975CE2-BCAD-49BF-8F19-EFA195717BA1/Taiwan>.

⁵² Simon Kuo, "Progress in Importation of US Equipment Dispels Doubts on SMIC's Capacity Expansion for Mature Nodes for Now", *Press Center - TrendForce*, March 5, 2021, <https://www.trendforce.com/presscenter/news/20210305-10693.html>.

cent of the global output.⁵³ Beijing has apparently recognised the importance of leveraging semiconductor global supply flows against the West, with the chief economist of China's Centre for International Economic Exchanges urging the CCP to "seize" Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC), the world's largest chip manufacturer.

Trade within the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a trade pact which both the United Kingdom and Taiwan aspire to join, totals 13 per cent of global GDP. As Dr Michael Reilly, former Director of the British Trade and Cultural Office in Taipei notes, the United Kingdom should support Taiwan's aspirations for joining the Indo-Pacific trade pact once London's accession process is complete.⁵⁴ Dr Reilly believes Taiwan's membership in the CPTPP would be considered a "prize" to Taipei, but support for the island's application would require the support of not only the United Kingdom, but another large CPTPP member such as Japan. Taipei's membership in CPTPP might limit the PRC's aggression in the Taiwan Strait, with Beijing's own CPTPP membership application serving as potential leverage.⁵⁵ PLA naval blockades during any invasion of Taiwan would disrupt sea and air trade routes of CPTPP members, including Brunei, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam, and almost certainly Australia and New Zealand as well.

3.3 Taiwan and Global Governance Institutions

The Project 2049 Institute's Ian Easton believes Washington and its allies, including London, could minimise the potential for cross-Strait conflict by treating both countries as equal governments, and formally, but gradually, move to recognise Taiwan's independence and establish separate diplomatic relations with Taipei.⁵⁶ Easton acknowledges that only Washington, with the support of London and other large Indo-Pacific powers, has the political will and regional influence to establish such a roadmap, from which Taiwan pivots away from its existing nebulous status.⁵⁷ The risk of such a move, which would allow Taipei an increasingly formal role in the international community, is that it could increase the influence of Taiwanese independence movements and public support for formal independence. While this would be considered a so-called "red line" for Beijing, Easton believes the international community's continued political isolation of Taiwan is likely to prove even more destabilising. Easton believes Taipei should be allowed observer status in all international global governance bodies, and Taiwan's government should ultimately be recognised as a full member of the institutions.⁵⁸

The United Kingdom could provide further short-term support for Taiwan's status as a democracy by ratifying the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States of 1933.⁵⁹ According to this treaty, Taiwan already possesses the necessary qualifications for a state, which includes a permanent population, defined territory, government, and capacity to enter relations with other states.

As formalising Taipei's status in global governance institutions could be viewed as another "red line" by Beijing, or serve as the trigger point for Taipei declaring *de jure* independence, careful diplomacy is required to maintain the *status quo* and to discourage CCP hardliners

⁵³ M Garside, "Major Countries in Silicon Production 2019", *Statista*, March 11, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/268108/world-silicon-production-by-country/>.

⁵⁴ Dr Michael Reilly, telephone conversation with author, "Conversation with Director of the British Trade and Cultural Office in Taipei from 2005-2009", May 30, 2022.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ian Easton, telephone conversation with author, "Conversation with Senior Fellow at Project 2049 Institute", May 26, 2022.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ USA and Cuba, "Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States" (1933).

from supporting forcible reunification with Taiwan. China's 2005 Anti-Secession Law is explicit that a change in the *status quo* would lead to a forceful CCP response – “in the event that the ‘Taiwan independence’ secessionist forces should act ... to cause the fact of Taiwan’s secession from China ... or that possibilities for a peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted, [China] shall employ non-peaceful means and other necessary measures to protect China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity”.⁶⁰

3.4 Maintaining the Status Quo Requires Global Leadership

A US-led unipolar world has allowed the careful balance and uneasy peace in cross-Strait relations. But decades of war in the Middle East, the Covid pandemic, and economic turmoil have caused a retreat in US leadership from the global stage. The disorganised and hasty US withdrawal from Afghanistan may have served as the impetus for Moscow to test Washington’s moxie in Ukraine. With Washington now focused on arming Ukraine and, ostensibly to strengthen US counterterrorism partners in the region, sending troops back into Somalia with no clearly defined exit plan, Washington will certainly require support from the United Kingdom and other large coalition partners to counter the PRC threat.⁶¹

The tensions between the PRC and Taiwan intensified greatly in 2019 and has not subsided since, after Xi stated: “unification between the two sides of the strait is the great trend of history”.⁶² Xi added, Taiwan “must and will be” reunited with China.⁶³ In response, Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen declared that Taipei does not recognise the 1992 Consensus, which solidified “One China” policy between Beijing and Taipei during the Kuomintang (KMT) rule, and stated: “Taiwan will not accept ‘one country, two systems.’”⁶⁴

The breakdown of the 1992 Consensus has worsened cross-Strait tensions and increased the likelihood of military conflict, while the West has become increasingly economically dependent on China, specifically, and the Indo-Pacific region, more broadly. With mounting forced reunification threats from Beijing, it is not possible for the United Kingdom and its allies to allow these tensions to resolve without mediating the crisis and mitigating the risks. A proactive approach is needed, combining diplomacy and soft-power policies aimed toward both Beijing and Taipei, along with an increased regional military presence and providing the arms Taiwan needs to deter China from ever initiating military conflict.

3.5 Balancing “Peace through Strength” with Pragmatic Restraint

Well-meaning US Members of Congress have introduced a slew of bills in support of Taiwan, but could further inflame cross-Strait tensions if some proposed legislation becomes US law. UK Members of Parliament must avoid the temptation to propose any legislation which could needlessly endanger the cross-Strait *status quo* without enacting policies which will meaningfully improve regional security. The Taiwan Invasion Prevention Act, for example, nobly seeks to “reinforce the US-Taiwan relationship and strengthen Taiwan’s ability to resist Communist China’s aggressive policies and military actions”.⁶⁵ In the bill, however, there is

⁶⁰ People’s Republic of China, “Anti-Secession Law, 2005”, www.mfa.gov.cn § (2005), <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/ceus/eng/zt/999999999/t187406.htm>.

⁶¹ Alexander Ward and Quint Forgey, “Biden Escalates the Forever War in Somalia”, *Politico*, May 16, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/national-security-daily/2022/05/16/biden-escalates-the-forever-war-in-somalia-00032767>.

⁶² Chris Buckley and Chris Horton, “Xi Jinping Warns Taiwan That Unification Is the Goal and Force Is an Option”, *The New York Times*, January 2, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/01/world/asia/xi-jinping-taiwan-china.html>.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ “Taiwan’s President Rejects ‘One Country, Two Systems’ Deal with China”, *France 24*, May 20, 2020, <https://amp.france24.com/en/20200520-taiwan-s-president-tsai-rejects-one-country-two-systems-deal-with-china>.

⁶⁵ Richard Scott, “Taiwan Invasion Prevention Act,” Pub. L. No. 332 (2021), <https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/s332/BILLS-117s332is.pdf>.

an explicit call for officially ending US policy on strategic ambiguity, seeking a limited pre-authorisation of military force for securing and protecting Taiwan against armed force. The bill also calls for Taiwan to dedicate additional resources for acquiring asymmetric defensive weapons, without considering the availability of such weapons while Washington arms Ukraine with similar weapons, nor addressing Taiwan's request for weapons of a deterrent nature to help prevent China from launching an attack.

In the United Kingdom, authorisation for the deployment of British armed forces is a prerogative power within the Prime Minister's Cabinet, with consultations from the National Security Council and Chief of the Defence Staff.⁶⁶ Unlike the role the US Congress has for authorising war and appropriating funds for military action, the British Parliament has no legal obligation for approving UK military action. However, the House of Commons does have a role in debating such actions. Without an established Parliamentary consultation process, it would be ill-advised for the House of Commons to begin to debate on establishing strategic clarity in an attempt to align policy with Washington.

British policymakers should also consider the possibility that President Biden may have precipitated the Russian invasion by providing strategic clarity in December 2021 on not sending US troops to Ukraine. Nine days after Biden ended Washington's strategic ambiguity on the US not providing military support to deter against a Russian invasion, Moscow offered the US an unrealistic treaty, which the Kremlin could not have expected Washington to accept, demanding a retreat of NATO forces and weapons systems from Europe's eastern flank, returning the defence pact to its pre-1997 borders.⁶⁷ Strategic clarity in the opposite direction, prematurely declaring transatlantic allied intentions to commit British and American troops to the defence of Taiwan, may likewise enable hardliners in Beijing who support an accelerated timeline to reunify Taiwan before the CCP's stated goal of 2049.

While a robust defensive posture is required to deter Beijing aggression before it ever begins, lessons from Ukraine's defence against the Russian military must be contemplated and factors which could lead to a catastrophic, region-wide war considered. The United Kingdom and its partners cannot overextend their security guarantee commitments throughout the entirety of the Indo-Pacific and lessen the ability to defend key partners within the three island chains, which are of utmost national interest, such as Taiwan. Beijing has already diminished the island chain containment strategy aimed at restricting the PLA's sea access through a defence cooperation pact with the Solomon Islands.⁶⁸ The RAND Corporation's Derek Grossman believes the Chinese pried Honiara from Western influence to prevent the US and its allies from using the second chain against them, adding, "to be able to use it [the second chain] against us is at the forefront of their minds when it comes to Oceania".⁶⁹ Australia's previous government stated that Beijing establishing military facilities on the Solomon Islands was a "red line".⁷⁰ With a change in government in Canberra, and the US attempting to woo the Solomon Islands with policymaking "carrots", rather than "sticks", London has an opportunity to increase diplomatic pressure on Honiara and throughout the Indo-Pacific to counter Chinese hegemonic policies and prevent a breakdown of the cross-Strait *status quo*.

⁶⁶ Claire Mills, "Parliamentary Approval for Military Action", *Commonslibrary.parliament.uk*, no. CBP 7166, May 8, 2018, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7166/>.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, "Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of the Russian Federation and Member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации", *mid.ru*, December 17, 2021, https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/vnesnepoliticeskoe-dos-e/dvustoronnie-otnoshenij-rossii-s-inostrannymi-gosudarstvami/rossia-nato/1790803/?lang=en.

⁶⁸ Wilson Vorndick, "China's Reach Has Grown; so Should the Island Chains".

⁶⁹ Kine, "Xi Bests Biden".

⁷⁰ Daniel Hurst and Paul Karp, "Scott Morrison Denies Solomon Islands 'Red Lines' Rhetoric Puts Australia More at Risk", *The Guardian*, May 6, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/06/scott-morrison-denies-solomon-islands-red-lines-rhetoric-puts-australia-more-at-risk>.

4. Lessons Learned from Ukraine

4.1 Deterring Beijing and Sanctions

Following Russia's February 2022 attack on Ukraine, Western policymakers understand that economic sanctions have had little to no impact on deterring Russia's revanchist objectives. It is also clear, following Ukraine's initial battlefield success, that asymmetric weaponry can repel a larger, better armed enemy. Questions remain though, on whether the stockpiling of asymmetric weaponry by smaller forces such as Ukraine or Taiwan is sufficient as a deterrent, by helping discourage larger military forces from ever launching an attack.

"Sanctions never deter," stated US President Joe Biden, marking one month since Russia's invasion.⁷¹ Over-reliance on economic measures to attempt to deter revanchism also puts the strength of the US dollar and British pound at risk, as Russia and China seek workarounds to sanctions and other economic policy sticks. Despite President Biden boasting US-led sanctions policy reduced the ruble to "rubble", Russia's currency strengthened 25 per cent against the dollar in late May 2022, to become the "best-performing currency in the world".^{72, 73} While Russia did default on its foreign debt in June 2022, after Washington and its allies restricted Moscow's ability to repay bond holders, no "immediate ripple effect" was expected on Russia's economy.⁷⁴ US Representative Mike Gallagher illustrated the danger of over-relying on sanctions for deterrence, warning, "we put all of our eggs in the basket of sanctions, and soft power, and a ruthless thug ignores it and invades a country. We cannot allow that to happen in Taiwan."⁷⁵

4.2 "Peace through Strength" Needed to Maintain the Status Quo

Western policymakers must also question whether the word of the CCP on maintaining the *status quo* in the Taiwan Strait can be trusted. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, American diplomats shared US intelligence with Beijing, in hopes of influencing Chinese authorities to warn off the Kremlin from Ukraine. Instead, in a sign of a further tightening bond between Moscow and Beijing, the CCP forwarded the US intelligence to the Kremlin.⁷⁶

Beijing's belligerence toward Taiwan requires the transatlantic community to demonstrate "peace through strength", as President Ronald Reagan stated.⁷⁷ This entails building a coalition to deny Beijing its ambitions and demonstrate to the CCP the resolve of the coalition's military forces to defend regional interests if needed. Ukraine did not have the benefit of such international weapons sales to fortify its defence prior to Russia's invasion, nor did it initially have the military support of its European neighbours. While an unwavering defence in the

⁷¹ Katherine Fung, "Biden Says Sanctions Weren't Meant to Deter Putin from Invading Ukraine", *Newsweek*, March 24, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/biden-says-sanctions-werent-meant-deter-putin-invading-ukraine-1691590>.

⁷² Aimee Picchi, "Biden Mocked the Ruble as 'Rubble' but the Russian Currency has Rebounded", *CNBC News*, April 8, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ruble-rebound-price-after-sanctions/>.

⁷³ Eshe Nelson, "Russia Cuts Its Benchmark Rate to 11 Percent as the Ruble Hits a Multiyear High", *The New York Times*, May 26, 2022, sec. Business, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/business/russia-rates-ruble.html>.

⁷⁴ Caitlin Ostroff and Chelsey Dulaney, "Sanctions Push Russia to First Foreign Default since Bolshevik Revolution", *Wall Street Journal*, June 26, 2022, sec. Markets, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/sanctions-push-russia-near-first-foreign-default-since-bolshevik-revolution-11656248212>.

⁷⁵ Mike Gallagher, "Gallagher: We Can't Allow What Happened in Ukraine to Happen in Taiwan", Congressman Mike Gallagher, May 10, 2022, <https://gallagher.house.gov/media/press-releases/gallagher-we-cant-allow-what-happened-ukraine-happen-taiwan>.

⁷⁶ "Report: China Told Russia about U.S. Intel on Invasion", *Axios*, February 25, 2022, <https://www.axios.com/2022/02/25/china-russia-us-invasion-ukraine>.

⁷⁷ Keeghan Sweeney and Roger Zakheim, eds, *Peace through Strength: Reflections on President Reagan's Guiding Principle for Our National Defence* (Simi Valley, CA, and Washington, DC: Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation & Institute, 2018).

Taiwan Strait is required, British diplomats should prepare for shuttle diplomacy, as well as the flexibility to present sufficient carrots to Beijing, if needed, to maintain a path toward a political solution between Beijing and Taipei.

4.3 Learning from Washington's Mistakes in Ukraine

The UK government can also learn from the mistakes made by the Biden administration during the lead-up to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 and apply these lessons towards future planning for Taiwan. Negotiations about Taiwan's future should always focus on furthering a political solution between Beijing and Taipei. The Biden White House did not consider the importance of brokering high-level diplomatic discussions between Moscow and Kyiv and, by waiving sanctions against the Russian-supplied gas pipeline Nord Stream 2 in May 2021, maintained no leverage over the Kremlin.

Number 10 must also present a clear assessment to Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on London's position *vis-à-vis* Taipei. It should be assumed that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky did not sense Ukraine was a critical component of US foreign policy prior to the invasion. The White House did not initiate a phone call with Zelensky until early April 2021, over two months into the Biden presidency.⁷⁸ President Biden did not nominate a US ambassador to Ukraine until April 2022, which was 14 months after the US President's inauguration and 2 months after the Russian attack. The United Kingdom should not allow Taiwan to feel this level of underappreciation.

The UK government can delegate cabinet-level ministers and parliamentarians to visit their counterparts in Taiwan, helping bolster economic ties with the Taiwanese and sending an undeniable message to Beijing: Taiwan is critical to the UK's national security and economic interests. Post-invasion visits to Kyiv by US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) were political theatre at its worst and provided Ukraine little solace, as the Russian attack had already taken a toll on Ukraine's citizenry and economy. Such visits before the Russian attack ever occurred would have sent an unmistakable message to the Kremlin that the West was committed to defend Ukraine. The United Kingdom can send such a signal to the CCP: Taiwan is the UK's strategic partner.

The United Kingdom should also note the impact of misspeaking during sensitive diplomacy and pre-crisis diplomacy, as demonstrated by the White House's bungled statements throughout Russia's military build-up prior to its invasion of Ukraine. In January 2022, President Biden apparently accepted a Russian invasion of Ukraine as a *fait accompli*, publicly acknowledging the invasion was inevitable.⁷⁹ During the same press conference, President Biden inexplicably stated that the United States may not respond to any "minor incursion" by Russian forces into Ukraine. Weeks earlier, a senior Biden administration official was asked about instances when US sanctions have successfully deterred Russian actions and replied there were "none".⁸⁰ London can sharpen messaging from top UK leaders during public and private discussions related to Taiwan, to help ensure CCP officials do not mistake the United Kingdom's resolute commitment to defending the Taiwan Strait.

Finally, the United Kingdom can learn from its own and Washington's actions when negotiating agreements with regional Indo-Pacific partners. Kyiv has often cited commitments agreed upon

⁷⁸ Natasha Bertrand and Lara Seligman, "Biden Holds First Call with Ukrainian President amid Russian Buildup", *Politico*, April 2, 2021, <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/04/02/joe-biden-ukrainian-president-call-478917>.

⁷⁹ Yuliya Talmazan, Tatyana Chistikova, and Teaganne Finn, "Biden Predicts Russia Will Invade Ukraine", *NBC News*, January 19, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/blinden-ukraine-russia-attack-short-notice-invasion-fears-mount-rcna12691>.

⁸⁰ David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Details Costs of a Russian Invasion of Ukraine", *The New York Times*, January 8, 2022, sec. US, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/08/us/politics/us-sanctions-russia-ukraine.html>.

in the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 to ensure Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty in exchange for Ukraine willingly surrendering its stockpile of 1,900 nuclear warheads as security "guarantees", which would now require the defence of Ukraine by the both the US and British military.⁸¹ However, the commitments in the Memorandum were not guarantees, as Kyiv assumed. Unlimited support was not offered, only vaguely worded assurances. Such diplomatic uncertainties cannot occur should the United Kingdom, along with its allies, expand any anti-hegemonic coalition in the Indo-Pacific to counter China's ability to forcibly reunify with Taiwan. A large coalition at the expense of overextending British and allied assets in the Indo-Pacific is not in the United Kingdom's interest. Basing rights or logistical support throughout the three island chains should not be contingent upon broad security guarantees, which would risk the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) alliance's ability to defend Taiwan, if necessary, and secure the first island chain and Taiwan Strait for ensuring unimpeded trade routes during any PLA invasion.

⁸¹ Steven Pifer, "Why Care about Ukraine and the Budapest Memorandum", *Brookings*, December 5, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/12/05/why-care-about-ukraine-and-the-budapest-memorandum/>.

PART TWO

5. Negative Implications of Indo-Pacific Collective Defence

5.1 An Indo-Pacific NATO is Impractical

During an April 2022 Raisina Dialogue panel discussion moderated by American defence contractor Lockheed-Martin, Admiral John Aquilino, Commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, stated that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was “a pretty good model for Indo-Pacific nations that value freedom”.^{82,83} While NATO’s geographic commitment to Europe spreads across 2 per cent of the world, collective defence of the Indo-Pacific could overextend US, UK, and other allied forces to secure upwards of 44 per cent of the global surface. As NATO is often cited as the world’s most successful alliance organisation, for effectively deterring USSR aggression throughout the Cold War, replicating a similar collective defence model in the Indo-Pacific may make theoretical sense. The National Interest commentator Vincenzo Caporale acknowledged, “given NATO’s success throughout the Cold War, it is easy to understand the rationale behind the admiral’s comment”.⁸⁴ However, national security, economic, and domestic considerations for the United Kingdom and its allies should quash the suggestion of a larger region-wide collective defence treaty in the Indo-Pacific.

Moving forward with such a collective defence pact is likely to raise the risks of an accelerated PRC military modernisation push, with Beijing expected to become even more aggressive in the Taiwan Strait, based on past statements by President Xi and other CCP officials. Dr Reilly believes that while Beijing is resigned to America’s defence commitments to the region, regional collective defence by the United Kingdom and other partners is likely to be viewed as a “red line”.⁸⁵ Furthermore, the United Kingdom and its partners do not have the bandwidth to guarantee security for the entirety of the region, based on the Indo-Pacific’s geographic spread through three large island chains. Spreading military assets too thin could put Taiwan at even greater risk. Targeted, limited defence cooperation (without stated guarantees of collective defence) between the AUKUS trilateral defence agreement and governments within the three island chains provides far greater security for the UK’s regional partners, particularly Taiwan.

5.2 Coalition-Building Requires Building Economic Ties

Forcing UK partners in the Indo-Pacific into an “us vs. them” scenario, requiring countries to choose between collective defence with the United Kingdom and its allies or trade with China is not realistic, considering existing transatlantic economic policy in the region. Until the West offers the Indo-Pacific region significant market access and practical solutions for energy security and infrastructure development, any effort aimed at only bolstering defence will be viewed sceptically. Washington’s Indo-Pacific Economic Forum (IPEF) is considered “more symbolic than it is effective or real policy”, by the Biden administration failing to include meaningful tariff reduction in the agreement.⁸⁶ While Taiwan’s exclusion from the IPEF is unquestionably discouraging to Taipei, the US-Taiwan Initiative on 21st Century Trade appears promising and could serve as a model for the United Kingdom’s own trade discussions with Taipei. America and Taiwan have committed to further digital trade talks, and to improve market

⁸² Observer Research Foundation and India’s Ministry of External Affairs, “Terranova: Impassioned, Impatient and Imperiled”, in Raisina Dialogue (New Delhi: Government of India, 2022).

⁸³ Admiral John A. Aquilino, Raisina Dialogue (New Delhi: 2022), quoted in Vincenzo Caporale, “NATO is Not a Good Model for the Indo-Pacific”, *Realist Review*, May 10, 2022, <https://realistreview.org/2022/05/10/nato-is-not-a-good-model-for-the-indo-pacific/>.

⁸⁴ Caporale, “NATO is Not a Good Model”.

⁸⁵ Dr. Reilly, telephone conversation with author, May 30, 2022.

⁸⁶ Su-Lin Tan, “The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework: What It Is – and Why It Matters”, *CNBC*, May 26, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/26/ipef-what-is-the-indo-pacific-framework-whos-in-it-why-it-matters.html>.

access for agricultural products, and combat trade distortions from non-market economies, all issues on which London should focus its trade talks with Taipei.⁸⁷

As Caporale notes, an ASEAN Studies Centre survey found only 11.1 per cent of respondents believe it has to “choose between one of the two major powers, as remaining neutral is impractical”.^{88,89} Therefore, the UK should prioritise soft-power policies with targeted partners, such as increased trade, infrastructure development finance, and diplomacy aimed at positioning any defence cooperation agreements as necessary for maintaining open and free Indo-Pacific trade routes.

5.3 Taiwan's Self-Defence

Arming Taiwan for the island's self-defence is not an economic strain on the United Kingdom and its partners. Taipei purchases its weapons directly, with minimal aid, minimising the cost to British and allied taxpayers. Taiwan has purchased over US\$24 billion of US defensive weaponry since 2010.⁹⁰ Taiwan spends approximately 2.1 per cent of its GDP on defence, exceeding the 1.69 per cent average defence expenditure as a percentage of GDP in 2021 of NATO's European members and Canada.^{91,92} However, China has increased its own defence spending by 7.1 per cent in 2022, with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute calculating Beijing's total defence budget in US dollars is 20 times larger than Taipei's.⁹³ US defence officials have publicly stated Taiwan's defence spending as “insufficient”, and, despite Taiwan's Parliament appropriating an additional US\$8.6 billion for its defence budget, pro-Taiwan US lawmakers are proposing tying future US aid for defensive arms purchase to Taipei commitments to “match the appropriated spending on a dollar-for-dollar basis”.^{94,95} During discussions with their Taiwanese counterparts, UK defence officials should emphasise the need for increased defence procurement budgets, echoing the comments of former head of the American Institute in Taiwan, Richard Bush, who has warned that Taiwan needs to increase defence spending because “it faces a serious adversary”.⁹⁶

While Taipei has a legal and moral right to self-defence, according to the “declarative theory of statehood”, the CCP will likely view the United Kingdom or European allies selling defensive weapons to Taipei as interfering in Beijing's internal affairs.⁹⁷ Beijing may only tolerate

⁸⁷ Office of the United States Trade Representative, “United States and Taiwan Announce the Launch of the U.S.-Taiwan Initiative on 21st-Century Trade”, United States Trade Representative, Press Release, June 1, 2022, <https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2022/june/united-states-and-taiwan-announce-launch-us-taiwan-initiative-21st-century-trade>.

⁸⁸ Caporale, “NATO is Not a Good Model”.

⁸⁹ Sharon Seah, et al., “The State of Southeast Asia 2022 Survey Report”, ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore: ASEAN Studies Centre, February 16, 2022, p.31, www.iseas.edu.sg.

⁹⁰ Lara Seligman, “‘Deadly Serious’: U.S. Quietly Urging Taiwan to Follow Ukraine Playbook for Countering China”, *Politico*, May 19, 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/05/19/deadly-serious-u-s-quietly-urging-taiwan-to-follow-ukraine-playbook-for-countering-china-00033792>.

⁹¹ Doug Bandow, “Why is Taiwan Only Spending 2.1 Percent of Its GDP on Its Defence?”, CATO Institute, 2022, <https://www.cato.org/commentary/why-taiwan-only-spending-21-percent-its-gdp-its-defence>.

⁹² NATO, “Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014–2021)”, March 31, 2022, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/3/pdf/220331-def-exp-2021-en.pdf.

⁹³ Yew Lun Tian, “China Plans 7.1% Defence Spending Rise this Year, Outpacing GDP Target”, *Reuters*, March 5, 2022, sec. Asian Markets, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/asia/china-defence-spending-rise-outpace-gdp-target-this-year-2022-03-05/>.

⁹⁴ “US Says Taiwan's Defence Budget Spending ‘Insufficient’ against Chinese Threat”, *Taiwan News*, October 7, 2020, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4024855>.

⁹⁵ Marco Rubio, *Taiwan Peace through Strength Act 2022*, https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/d89b13d7-a7e4-4ee7-96ab-84fe03ac3916/C008770ADB654273D52EAC5C34CAFEBB.dav22691.pdf/.

⁹⁶ Peter Coy, “Taiwan Needs to Spend More on Defense, Says a Former Diplomat”, *Bloomberg*, April 15, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-04-15/taiwan-needs-to-spend-more-on-defense-says-a-former-diplomat?sref=p8neHWIG#xj4y7vzkg>.

⁹⁷ David J. Scheffer, “Does Taiwan have the Right of Self-Defense?”, Council on Foreign Relations, November 23, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/article/does-taiwan-have-right-self-defense>.

Washington's continued weapons sales after a decades-long policy of arming Taiwan through the TRA. Should the United Kingdom increase its role in providing arms for Taiwan's self-defence, it will require nimble diplomatic assurances to convince Beijing that the provision of defensive weapons to Taipei is not intended to further any independence movements, but solely for the island's self-defence.

5.4 The Costs of Collective Defence

Any collective security defence pact in the Indo-Pacific would require modernisation of militaries throughout the theatre to ensure interoperability, increasing the need for Western military aid, worsening budget deficits, and likely adding to already troublesome inflation. This could result in blowback amongst voters in the United Kingdom, United States, and with other British allies, leading to a potential reversal of policy within the Indo-Pacific, which would allow China a hegemonic victory.

The United Kingdom and its allies cannot present empty promises to partners in the Indo-Pacific. NATO whispered commitments for collective defence with Ukraine and Georgia during the 2008 Bucharest Summit when North Atlantic allies "agreed" Kyiv and Tbilisi "will become members", yet did not even present a Membership Action Plan (MAP) over the following 13 years. Such policies damage the credibility of Western alliances amongst revanchist motivated hardliners. This is antithetical to UK national interests. As *The New York Times* editorial board opined regarding US military aid to Ukraine, there "are extraordinary costs and serious dangers, and yet there are many questions that President Biden has yet to answer for the American public with regard to the continued involvement of the United States in this conflict".⁹⁸ The same holds true with any British involvement in the defence of Taiwan. The prime minister should articulate a clear strategy for the United Kingdom's role in securing the Strait and communicate how an enduring peace will help ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

At least 1.7 million British citizens reside in the Indo-Pacific region, and each one would be at risk should peace in the Taiwan Strait no longer endure.

⁹⁸ The New York Times Editorial Board, "The War in Ukraine is Getting Complicated, and America isn't Ready", *The New York Times*, May 19, 2022, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/19/opinion/america-ukraine-war-support.html>.

6. Security Dilemma

6.1 *Taiwan is not Ukraine*

British policymakers will undoubtedly grapple with inherent security dilemma implications as the United Kingdom and its allies formulate policies to arm Taiwan for its defence and help secure the Taiwan Strait. The lesson of the Ukraine War initially was that a smaller country can repel a much larger invading force during the opening stages of an invasion if properly armed. Therefore, Taiwan, if properly armed by its partners in the West, should, theoretically, be just as capable of repelling a PLA attack. However, Taiwan is not Ukraine, nor is China comparable to Russia.

China is separated from Taiwan by a 110-mile (177 km) strait, making the denial of PLA air and sea forces a priority. Deterring CCP military planners from ever striking Taiwan is critical, as re-arming the Taiwan island, should war begin, would prove to be a logistical nightmare. Further complicating planning should the PLA invade is the provision of aid to the island and evacuating refugees. Therefore, should the British government determine it is in its national interest to pre-position military assets in the Indo-Pacific region or negotiate emergency basing rights with governments throughout the Indo-Pacific island chains, deft diplomacy will be required by the UK's Foreign Ministry, to explain to China and regional neighbours that such planning is not undertaken to surround the PRC militarily. A careful balance during military planning is required for regional stability, while allowing the UK and its allies to maintain whatever remaining strategic ambiguity there is through substantial force posture for deterrence, as well as adequate pre-positioning for contingency planning. Western policymakers must aim to avoid panicking CCP military planners into a pre-emptive strike aimed at forced reunification.

It is also reasonable for British policymakers to assume that had Ukraine been armed prior to the invasion as it has been since the war with Russia began, that the Kremlin may have reconsidered its military strategy. Others may argue that the transfer of large quantities of arms to Ukraine prior to the Russian invasion may have resulted in a targeted, pre-emptive Russian strike on supply chains. This would have been an attack on the United Kingdom or United States, and a likely triggering of collective defence through NATO Article 5, thus creating a larger theatre of war throughout Europe. Therein lies the potential problem of forward positioning of British military assets and arming Taiwan with arms of a deterrent nature, i.e., offensive weapons, rather than solely defensive arms.

6.2 *Power Competition and Defence Build-Ups*

As John Herz detailed in his article "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," policies aimed at security and building up defences to deter others from attack may cause the other party to feel less secure and result in a countering build-up of defences, causing more unease. Herz wrote, "since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious cycle of security and power competition is on".⁹⁹ Western officials should contemplate this unease and maintain a balance of both denial strategies and political solutions in the West's policymaking toolbox.

As China enters a period of economic and political uncertainty before the 20th National Congress of the CCP, the United Kingdom's intelligence service should assess if the potential

⁹⁹ John H. Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", *World Politics*, 2, no. 2 (January 1950): 157-80, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics/article/abs/idealist-internationalism-and-the-security-dilemma/7094783665386FD81A25DF98C7EEC223>.

for pre-emptive invasion is now elevated following Russia's military challenges in Ukraine and President Xi's determination to maintain power. Assessments should focus on whether CCP hardliners even consider the possibility of political solutions to maintain the *status quo* in cross-Strait relations. Unfortunately, back-channel diplomacy with China effectively ended when Beijing closed the PRC's borders during the COVID pandemic. A determination is needed on whether deterrence centred primarily on militarisation, including the abandonment of strategic ambiguity with limited soft-power policies, would provoke an accelerated timeline for reunifying the PRC with Taiwan. In the George Mason University study, "A Question of Time," authors Michael Hunzeker and Alexander Lanoszka warn that:

attempts to deter a state that has no intention of attacking might spark a security dilemma, thereby inadvertently provoking the very threat that the target was trying to avoid. Conversely, if a potential adversary does intend to challenge the *status quo*, then the target needs to make the necessary preparations for ensuring the aggression would be as costly as possible.¹⁰⁰

6.3 Beijing's Trust Deficit

Beijing's claims that peaceful reunification is still sought can certainly be questioned. Public statements from China's President Xi seem to leave little doubt as to the PRC's intentions regarding Taiwan. Xi has stated: "no one should underestimate the Chinese people's staunch determination, firm will, and strong ability to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity. The historical task of the complete reunification of the motherland must be fulfilled and will be fulfilled."¹⁰¹ He has also remarked, "solving the Taiwan question and realising the complete reunification of the motherland are the unswerving historical tasks of the Chinese Communist Party and the common aspiration of all Chinese people".¹⁰²

The PRC's People's Liberation Army also has clear intentions toward forceful reunification with China, if necessary, with Major General Shou Xiaosong stating in 2013 that: "the PLA continues to prepare for contingencies in the Taiwan Strait to deter, and if necessary, compel Taiwan to abandon moves toward independence. The PLA also is likely preparing for a contingency to unify Taiwan with the mainland by force, while simultaneously deterring, delaying, or denying any third-party intervention on Taiwan's behalf."¹⁰³ More recently, PRC defence minister, General Wei Fenghe, warned attendees at the 2022 Shangri-la Dialogue that "no one should ever underestimate the resolve and capabilities of China's armed forces" to defend sovereignty.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of Beijing's stance towards Taiwan is the PRC's Anti-Secession Law adopted at the Tenth National People's Congress in 2005, which was formulated "for the purpose of opposing and checking Taiwan's secession from China by secessionists in the name of 'Taiwan independence,' promoting peaceful national reunification, maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, preserving China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and safeguarding the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation."¹⁰⁴

Past experience with the CCP may be indicative of future results. The United Kingdom has experienced, first hand, the impact of CCP's broken promises and flawed policies, with Beijing

¹⁰⁰ Michael A Hunzeker and Alexander Lanoszka, "A Question of Time: Enhancing Taiwan's Conventional Deterrence Posture", Center for Security Policy Studies: Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University, November 2018.

¹⁰¹ Nicola Smith and Chi Hui Lin, "'No One Should Underestimate Our Determination': China's Xi Jinping Vows 'Reunification' with Taiwan", *The Telegraph*, October 9, 2021, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2021/10/09/no-one-should-underestimate-determination-xi-jinping-vows-reunify/>.

¹⁰² Xinhua, "Xi's Remarks Set Direction for Resolving Taiwan Question," *China SCIO*, November 21, 2021, http://english.scio.gov.cn/topnews/2021-11/21/content_77884039.htm.

¹⁰³ Caitlin Campbell, *China's Military: The People's Liberation Army* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, June 4, 2021).

¹⁰⁴ People's Republic of China, "Anti-Secession Law, 2005".

passing a controversial national security law in Hong Kong, effectively ending in 2020 the PRC special administrative region's semi-autonomy, 27 years before the promised end of self-rule.¹⁰⁵ China's trading partners in the West have been adversely impacted by trade distortions and slowed reforms due to what former Trump administration trade adviser, Peter Navarro calls China's "seven deadly sins" – intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, hacking, dumping, subsidised state-owned enterprises, currency manipulation, and the exportation of fentanyl.¹⁰⁶ Finally, the recent draconian lockdown in Shanghai which forced 28 million residents inside their homes, further disrupted global supply chains, and has impacted British citizens with import shortages and worsening inflation. The CCP's word in furthering "win-win" policies has not always been its bond.

¹⁰⁵ "China's New Law: Why is Hong Kong Worried?", *BBC News*, May 22, 2020, sec. China, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-52765838>.

¹⁰⁶ Peter Navarro, "China's 8th Deadly Sin", *Twitter*, August 25, 2020, <https://twitter.com/realpnavarro/status/1298328467050823681>.

7. The Australia–United Kingdom–United States Partnership (AUKUS)

7.1 AUKUS as a “Cornerstone Balancer”

US President Joe Biden’s Indo-Pacific strategy is somewhat similar to the Trump administration’s focus on deterrence with, the US Institute for Peace’s Daniel Markey noting, a “greater emphasis on cooperation with regional allies and partners”.¹⁰⁷ AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership launched by Canberra, Washington, and London in 2021, is a platform which could serve to effectively deter Beijing, should it expand beyond its current mandates on nuclear submarine cooperation and advanced defence and security capabilities (quantum technologies, artificial intelligence, advanced cyber, and hypersonics), toward a region-wide denial deterrence platform, with potential for economic cooperation and soft-power initiatives.¹⁰⁸ With a reported 17 trilateral working groups formed (8 dedicated to advanced military capabilities other than nuclear-powered submarines), AUKUS can best maintain regional Indo-Pacific partnerships throughout the three Pacific Ocean island chains to help limit China’s hegemonic aspirations in the region and subsequently develop capabilities to better ensure a secure Taiwan Strait. Former Trump administration official Elbridge Colby has stated: “the most reliable form of deterrence would stem from the demonstrable capacity of the United States and its allies and partners to deny China the ability to subjugate one of them”.¹⁰⁹

Foremost, the Australia-UK-US trilateral pact can serve as, what Colby has termed, a “cornerstone balancer”, with the United States, in conjunction with the United Kingdom and Australia, serving as a regional “anti-hegemonic coalition”.^{110, 111} An expansion of AUKUS to include Japan (JAUKUS) would form a formidable coalition, better allowing interoperability, joint training exercises, and the forward positioning of key military assets, both weapons and supplies.^{112, 113} This coalition with Japan and another large regional partner such as India, could then focus on shoring up targeted alliances throughout the three Pacific Ocean island chains and securing emergency basing arrangements to provide the logistics necessary not only to defend Taiwan, but also to provide humanitarian support, should the PLA force reunification. IPAC member and US Representative Gallagher recognised the importance of regional basing cooperation when he stated during a May 2022 Congressional hearing: “if we’re going to talk about integrated defence, what we should integrate is the State Department moving heaven and earth to negotiate basing agreements with key allies so we can deploy teams of marines and soldiers to deny a PLA invasion of Taiwan”.¹¹⁴

AUKUS members, along with Japan, should also open diplomatic dialogue with Beijing and explain that any attempts at forcible reunification that lead to the decapitation of Taipei’s leadership and installation of a pro-Beijing puppet regime will be answered with severe

¹⁰⁷ Carla Freeman, Daniel Markey, and Vikram J. Singh, “A Closer Look at Biden’s Indo-Pacific Strategy”, United States Institute of Peace, March 7, 2022, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/03/closer-look-bidens-indo-pacific-strategy>.

¹⁰⁸ White House, “Fact Sheet: Implementation of the Australia – United Kingdom – United States Partnership (AUKUS)”, April 5, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/04/05/fact-sheet-implementation-of-the-australia-united-kingdom-united-states-partnership-aukus/>.

¹⁰⁹ Elbridge Colby and Walter Slocumbe, “The State of (Deterrence By) Denial”, *War on the Rocks*, March 22, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/03/the-state-of-deterrence-by-denial/>.

¹¹⁰ Colby, *The Strategy of Denial*, p.19.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.26.

¹¹² Philip Shetler-Jones, “The Case for ‘JAUKUS’”, Council on Geostrategy, April 13, 2022, <https://www.geostrategy.org.uk/britains-world/the-case-for-jaukus/>.

¹¹³ Yukihiro Sakaguchi, “U.S. Needs Arms Storage in Japan in Case of Taiwan Conflict: Armitage”, *Nikkei Asia*, June 25, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Editor-s-Picks/Interview/U.S.-needs-arms-storage-in-Japan-in-case-of-Taiwan-conflict-Armitage>.

¹¹⁴ Mike Gallagher, “If We’re Going to Talk about Integrated Deterrence”, *Twitter*, May 12, 2022, <https://twitter.com/RepGallagher/status/1524869508799815681>.

consequences. Such policies need not be limited to sanctions and travel restrictions against the highest levels of PRC leadership, including the Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party; tariffs against Chinese exports (carefully determined to exact a far greater cost on the Chinese economy, rather than British taxpayers); and increased, more stringent investment restrictions for Chinese citizens in the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia.

7.2 Countering PLA Aggression in the Taiwan Strait

Diplomatic dialogue will not suffice if Beijing continues inflammatory threats toward Taipei and incursions into the Taiwan Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ). The Royal Navy, along with the US Navy and Australian Royal Navy, should continue deployments to the South China Sea, participate in joint training exercises through the Indo-Pacific region, and schedule transits through the Taiwan Strait. The PRC has stated that the Taiwan Strait is not international waters and such freedom of navigation operations “send the wrong signal to ‘Taiwan independence forces’”.¹¹⁵ The UK’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Dame Barbara Woodward, may wish to advise her Chinese counterpart that under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which Beijing is a signatory, “no state may validly purport to subject any part of the high seas to its sovereignty” under Article 88 of the UNCLOS Exclusive Economic Zone regime and that “nations are entitled to territorial waters stretching 12 nautical miles from their coast”.^{116, 117}

In May 2021, the HMS *Queen Elizabeth* led a carrier strike group deployment for seven months in the Indo-Pacific and conducted interoperability training with a US Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer. HMS *Queen Elizabeth* is not based in the Indo-Pacific theatre, making basing rights or a prolonged presence in the region necessary to maintain a deterrence or denial strategy toward the PLA.^{118, 119}

In 2018, the HMS *Albion*, a Royal Navy amphibious assault ship, transited close to the Paracel Islands, leading to condemnation from Beijing. A Royal Navy spokesman replied, “HMS *Albion* exercised her rights for freedom in full compliance with international laws and norms.”¹²⁰ The Royal Navy deployed the HMS *Albion* to the North-East Asia region, in addition to naval frigates HMS *Sutherland* and HMS *Argyll*. During the deployment to the Indo-Pacific, HMS *Sutherland* and *Albion* participated in joint training exercises with the US Navy and other regional partners.¹²¹ The former UK Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson remarked, “Our Armed Forces are at the forefront of Global Britain, and the deployment of HMS *Albion*, *Sutherland* and *Argyll* demonstrates our unwavering commitment to our international responsibilities and to maintaining peace, security and prosperity in the region.”¹²² While these deployments are

¹¹⁵ Isabel Reynolds and Krystal Chia, “China’s Claims on Taiwan Strait Could Raise Tensions with US”, *Bloomberg*, June 13, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-13/china-s-claims-on-taiwan-strait-could-raise-tensions-with-us?sref=p8neHW1G>.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ United Nations, “United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea”, VII § (1982), https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_107_agreements/texts/unclos/part7.htm.

¹¹⁸ Royal Navy, “UK Carrier Strike Group Heads on Historic Deployment after Royal Visit”, www.royalnavy.mod.uk, May 22, 2021, <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/news/2021/may/22/230521-carrier-strike-departs>.

¹¹⁹ Janiel F. Adames, “U.S. Navy Destroyer Assumes Air Defence Duties as Part of Carrier Strike Group 21”, United States Navy, July 19, 2021, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2698887/us-navy-destroyer-assumes-air-defence-duties-as-part-of-carrier-strike-group-21/>.

¹²⁰ Tim Kelly, “Exclusive: British Navy Warship Sails near South China Sea Islands, Angering Beijing”, *Reuters*, September 6, 2018, sec. APAC, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-china-southchinasea-exclusive/exclusive-british-navy-warship-sails-near-south-china-sea-islands-angering-beijing-idUSKCNILM017>.

¹²¹ *Navy Outlook*, “A Continuous Royal Navy Presence in the Pacific Region This Year: Navy Lookout”, www.navylookout.com, April 11, 2018, <https://www.navylookout.com/a-continuous-royal-navy-presence-in-the-pacific-region-this-year/>.

¹²² Royal Navy, “Third Royal Navy Warship Offers Support to Allies in Asia-Pacific: Royal Navy”, www.royalnavy.mod.uk, April 11, 2018, <https://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/news-and-latest-activity/news/2018/april/11/180411-third-royal-navy-warship-offers-support-to-allies-in-asia-pacific>.

critical demonstrations of strength for a successful policy aimed at deterring and denying Chinese attacks on Taiwan, AUKUS should prioritise the pact's announced cooperation on developing hypersonics, counter-hypersonics, and electronic warfare capabilities, as the United Kingdom and its allies are currently behind China and Russia on development of advanced weapon technology.^{123, 124}

7.3 Arming Taiwan for the Island's Defence

AUKUS, through the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence (MoD), the American Pentagon, and Australia's Department of Defence (DoD), can advise Taiwanese military officials on deterrent weapons procurement and work with other governments on sales of weapons and defence systems. While some US officials, who have authorised nearly US\$52 million per day in military aid to Kyiv since Russia attacked Ukraine in February 2022, now acknowledge priority on weapons sales should be given to Taiwan, America's stockpile of asymmetric weapon systems remains committed to Ukraine's defence and will continue to be depleted. During a May Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) warned it would take 32 months to replenish the supply of Javelins already sent to help Ukraine defend against the Russian invasion, while another witness testified existing US stockpiles of the weapon would near zero in approximately 6 months.¹²⁵ As Washington is now publicly committed to defending Ukraine, questions about America's ability to fulfil Taiwan's deterrence needs will grow.

Complicating Taiwan's defence, political sensitivity clouds the UK's willingness to sell Taipei the weapons Taiwanese defence forces need, while Australia lacks the capacity. Dr Reilly believes large-scale arming of Taiwan by parties other than the United States could embolden hard-line policies in Beijing.¹²⁶ Therefore, AUKUS can provide the needed counsel to Taiwan and act as a third-party procurement solicitor, when possible, working to negotiate with large European defence contractors in Germany, or, with the French, if Paris has let bygones be bygones with AUKUS after Australia cancelled its submarine contract with France's Naval Group in September 2021. Alternatively, should Germany and France determine it is in their national interests to pursue close economic ties with China over countering the CCP's hegemonic ambitions, the United States could reduce its arms transfers to Ukraine, focus US weapons sales on Taiwan's defence instead, and the United Kingdom could backfill any arms void in Ukraine.

Dr Chechuan Lee from Taiwan's Institute for National Defence and Security Research (INDSR) believes that while AUKUS cooperation with Taiwan should certainly have an arms sale component, the security of the Taiwan Strait would benefit greatly from joint intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) cooperation.¹²⁷ US Senator Tammy Duckworth also stressed the importance of Taiwan's ISR in her proposed "Strengthen Taiwan's Security Act", writing "[improving] Taiwan's intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities [will] provide better detection of PRC activities indicating a direct threat".¹²⁸

¹²³ White House, "Fact Sheet: Implementation of AUKUS", 2022.

¹²⁴ Robert Burns, "Pentagon Rattled by Chinese Military Push on Multiple Fronts", *AP News*, November 1, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/technology-china-asia-united-states-beijing-aea288656fab23253ee0397dc21ba68a>.

¹²⁵ Svetlana Shkolnikova, "US Weapon Stockpiles Worry Some Lawmakers as Ukraine War Rages On", *Stars and Stripes*, April 26, 2022, <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2022-04-26/ukraine-russia-war-weapons-supply-shortages-senators-5809258.html>.

¹²⁶ Dr. Reilly, telephone conversation with author, May 30, 2022.

¹²⁷ Chechuan Lee, Henry Jackson Society Roundtable discussion on "Securing the Strait: Engaging Taiwan in the United Kingdom's Indo-Pacific Tilt", Director for Division of National Security and Decision-Making, INDSR, June 13, 2022.

¹²⁸ Tammy Duckworth, "Duckworth Introduces Bipartisan Bill to Strengthen Taiwan's Security in Light of China's Provocation", US Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, Press Release, May 27, 2022, duckworth.senate.gov/news/press-releases/duckworth-introduces-bipartisan-bill-to-strengthen-taiwans-security-in-light-of-chinas-provocation.

7.4 AUKUS as a Platform for Defensive Economic Policies

The existing AUKUS Joint Steering Group on Advanced Capabilities should refocus existing efforts on artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum technologies to develop oversight for export control and investment restrictions amongst Group of Seven (G7) nations, to ensure advanced surveillance technologies are not used by the PRC to violate Taiwan's territorial integrity. AUKUS coordinating such policies would help minimise European Union (EU) attempts to instead prioritise similar measures initiated through the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC). Brussels is attempting to influence public opinion on the EU's role in developing sanctions policy against Russia, with the European Commission's Valdis Dombrovskis stating the TTC was instrumental in coordinating sanctions and initiating export controls against Moscow following the Kremlin-ordered invasion of Ukraine. It is in the UK's national interest to lead export control efforts related to China and Taiwan as London works to engage the Indo-Pacific region through the Global Britain framework. The UK's Investment Screening Unit (ISU) should also work in close cooperation with America's Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) and Australia's Foreign Investment Review Board to ensure Chinese investors do not acquire technologies or companies in the United Kingdom, United States, or Australia to infringe upon Taiwan's territorial integrity or gain an unbalanced advantage in technological advancements. The combined force of AUKUS's foreign investment review platforms should also consider the potential of reviewing outbound investment, to help prevent Western investment from enabling the PRC to obtain a competitive advantage in certain sectors, which could make denial of PLA forces in the Indo-Pacific increasingly challenging for the West. However, as Julia Friedlander noted in a review of the Global Britain framework, "defending free markets and core national security equities (i.e., interests,) do not have to be conflicting priorities".¹²⁹ The United Kingdom must strike a careful balance with its use of investment restrictions and export controls with China, as overuse of such economic measures will impact overall global competition.

Nikkei Asia columnist Liam Gibson has suggested the West exert leverage on Beijing related to possible export control of semiconductors manufactured not only in Taiwan, but elsewhere throughout the West and Asia. Gibson believes this would force CCP officials to rethink possible forced reunification. As Gibson writes, the threat of semiconductor export control would "bypass the corporate moral weakness from consumer brands that will likely subvert a defiant response to a Chinese attack".¹³⁰ The Munich Security Conference referenced a similar theme with Western efforts aimed at securing technology supply chains, noting not only the EU-US TTC, but the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue's (Quad) aim to coordinate efforts in critical and emerging technologies, leaving the United Kingdom potentially side lined unless AUKUS can be utilised for this initiative.¹³¹ London can use its position on the G7 to align disparate policies amongst the numerous platforms and coordinate all Indo-Pacific economic policies through AUKUS. In addition, the United Kingdom, through the AUKUS working group on advanced cyber, which aims to strengthen critical communications and operations systems, can provide Taiwan with "grey zone" support needed to prevent PLA attempts to disrupt Taiwan's digital infrastructure.

7.5 Leveraging the Economic Might of AUKUS Signatories

While seemingly not a core strategic objective of the Australia-UK-US trilateral pact, the economic power of AUKUS's three signatories provides significant leverage for limiting Beijing's

¹²⁹ Dame Karen Pierce, et al., *Global Britain: An American Review*, Atlantic Council, October 8, 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/global-britain-an-american-review/>.

¹³⁰ Liam Gibson, "Sanction Semiconductors to Deter China's Taiwan Ambitions", *Nikkei Asia*, May 30, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/Sanction-semiconductors-to-deter-China-s-Taiwan-ambitions>.

¹³¹ Tobias Bunde, et al., *Turning the Tide: Unlearning Helplessness*, Munich Security Report 2022, ed. Amadée Mudie-Mantz, (Munich: Munich Security Conference, February 2022), <https://doi.org/10.47342/qawu4724>.

influence over global governance organisations such as the World Health Assembly (WHA). London, Washington, and Canberra can exert economic pressure on the WHA and other global governance organisations to resist Beijing's efforts to prevent Taipei's observer status at the World Health Organization's (WHO) decision-making body and elsewhere. The United Kingdom has acknowledged "excluding Taiwan from the work of the World Health Assembly hampers [efforts to counter growing community COVID-19 transmissions] and compromises global health and safety", but the UK government has not taken the drastic steps needed to hold the WHA accountable for excluding Taiwan during ongoing global health crises. Simply reaffirming support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Assembly is insufficient. The Biden administration recently signed S.812, which requires the US Secretary of State to develop a strategy to secure observer status for Taiwan at the World Health Assembly.¹³² London should cooperate with Washington on this strategy, working with allies and partners to apply financial pressure on the WHA to permit Taiwan's observer status and help ensure a unified international response to global pandemics. Further attention to the issue should be addressed by the British government during future G7 meetings, following G7 foreign ministers stating: "[we] support Taiwan's meaningful participation in the work of the World Health Organization and Taiwan's participation as an observer in the World Health Assembly".¹³³

If WHA leadership is unwilling, or perhaps unable to allow Taiwan's participation in this critical global health platform, which would only lead to more coordination on key health issues and cannot possibly harm Beijing's national interests, then the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia should individually advise global governance organisations that their taxpayer funds will not further Taiwan's isolation. AUKUS should announce future WHO funding will be withheld until the organisation's leadership takes a stand and advises Beijing that Taiwan's participation is in the interest of the international community. In 2020-1, the United States and United Kingdom were the third and fourth largest WHO contributors, donating US\$693 million and US\$487 million, respectively.¹³⁴ As the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board noted, "China gave the WHO less than a third as much but expects to impose its will on the global health agency".¹³⁵ With an operating budget of US\$5.84 billion for 2020-1, the combined contributions of the United Kingdom and United States represented over 20 per cent of the WHO's total budget.¹³⁶

7.6 UK-Australia Ties

London should also continue to work closely with the newly elected Australian government to ensure there is a smooth transition on all existing AUKUS defence and economic frameworks and that an announced reset in Canberra-Paris relations does not adversely affect the security pact.¹³⁷ Prime Minister Johnson initiated discussions with the Australian leader Anthony Albanese, with Australia's Prime Minister remarking, "we discussed our shared commitment

¹³² United States Congress, "Participation of Taiwan in the World Health Organization", Section 1. § (2022).

¹³³ British Office Taipei, "Support for Taiwan's Meaningful Engagement with the World Health Organization and Participation as an Observer in the World Health Assembly", Gov.uk, May 21, 2022, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-taiwans-meaningful-engagement-with-the-world-health-organization-and-participation-as-an-observer-in-the-world-health-assembly>.

¹³⁴ World Health Organization, "The United States of American and the World Health Organization: Partners in Global Health", [www.who.int](https://www.who.int/about/funding/contributors/usa), May 19, 2022, <https://www.who.int/about/funding/contributors/usa>.

¹³⁵ The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board, "China, Taiwan and the World Health Organization", *Wall Street Journal*, May 19, 2022, sec. Opinion, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-taiwan-and-the-who-world-health-assembly-biden-administration-antony-blinken-beijing-11652909009>.

¹³⁶ World Health Organization, "WHO Mid-Term Review Results Report: Programme Budget 2020-2021", [www.who.int](https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2020-mtr), 2020, <https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2020-mtr>.

¹³⁷ Tiffanie Turnbull, "Aukus: Australia's New PM Vows 'Reset' with France after Submarine Row", *BBC News*, Sydney, June 24, 2022, sec. Australia, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-australia-61919761>.

to AUKUS".¹³⁸ The election of Australia's Labour government on May 21, 2022 initially led to speculation that Canberra would cut ties with the trilateral security pact in hopes of a "Franco-Australian rapprochement."^{139, 140} While Charles Edel, from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) believes there will be a difference in tone and rhetoric related to China from Australia's new government, "the general orientation of Australia's policies ... are unlikely to shift even if there will be changes in emphasis, funding levels, and specific initiatives in both south-east Asia and the Pacific".¹⁴¹ A September 2021 public opinion survey of Australians found 62 per cent support for Australia striking the defence pact with the United Kingdom and United States, and 54 per cent agreeing that: "The AUKUS partnership is in Australia's best security and economic interests."¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Anthony Albanese, "Affirming Australia's Close Relationship with the United Kingdom", *Twitter*, May 23, 2022, <https://twitter.com/AlboMP/status/1528663482216108033?s=20&t=UhPV9YXKvGaslWrYUoipFg>.

¹³⁹ Ashley Townshend, "AUKUS: Enhanced Trilateral Security Partnership with the US and UK", *Twitter*, May 22, 2022, <https://twitter.com/ashleytownshend/status/1528154992766779392?s=20&t=UhPV9YXKvGaslWrYUoipFg>.

¹⁴⁰ Hervé Lemahieu, "A New Government in Canberra Creates the Basis for a Franco-Australian Rapprochement", *Twitter*, May 21, 2022, <https://twitter.com/HerveLemahieu/status/1527987236016254978?s=20&t=UhPV9YXKvGaslWrYUoipFg>.

¹⁴¹ Nic Fildes and Demetri Sevastopulo, "Australia's 'Khaki' Election Campaign Centres on Fears of China", *The Financial Times*, May 18, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/f8e0026d-9963-404b-82b4-cf1a69469305>.

¹⁴² Katharine Murphy, "Essential Poll: Majority of Australians Back Aukus Submarine Pact, but Fear It Will Inflamm Tensions with China", *The Guardian*, September 27, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/sep/28/essential-poll-majority-of-australians-back-aukus-submarine-pact-but-fear-it-will-inflamm-tensions-with-china>.

8. Arming Taiwan's Defence

8.1 Taiwan Arms Sales

AUKUS has the potential to help Taipei secure the arms it needs to defend itself, but the quantity and quality of defensive weaponry needed by Taiwan will continue to be debated. As noted by INDSR's Dr Jyun-Yi Lee, Washington and Taipei have different views on what weapons systems are proper or best for Taiwan's defence.¹⁴³

Multiple reports surfaced in the United States in May 2022 that Washington is strongly encouraging Taipei to better focus its arms purchases for potential naval warfare with China. According to *New York Times* reporting based on discussions with US and Taiwanese officials, the US government has insisted Taiwan purchase anti-ship missiles, air-defence missile systems, drones, and sea mines. Recent Taipei purchase requests of E-2D aircraft, MH-60R helicopters, M109A6 Paladin self-propelled howitzers, and Stinger aircraft missiles have either been delayed or discouraged by Washington. US Rear Admiral (RADM RET) Mark Montgomery concurs with the need for Taiwan to purchase "counter-intervention" gear, writing, "Taiwan needs to have hundreds of Harpoons or an equivalent naval strike missile of some type." In addition, RADM RET Montgomery stated Taiwan requires naval mines, short-range land-attack cruise missiles, anti-armour gear, and manned portable air-defence systems.¹⁴⁴ Kwei-Bo Huang from Taiwan's National ChengChi University (NCCU) stressed the need for Taipei to purchase strong air and naval capabilities to deter the first wave of a PLA attack, because a PRC ground invasion would be difficult to repel.¹⁴⁵

British defence contractor MBDA UK produces some potential alternatives to the Boeing-produced Harpoon anti-ship missile with its range of 93–280 km (58–174 miles), including the BAe Sea Eagle (over 110 km, 68 miles) and the SPEAR 3 (120–140 km, 74.5–87 miles).^{146, 147} A suitable UK-manufactured air-defence system to the Javelins is the Thales Group STARStreak.¹⁴⁸ Should the United Kingdom determine it is not in its national interest to arm Taiwan directly, MBDA France manufactures the Exocet anti-ship missile, with a range of 180 km (112 miles).

8.2 The Allocation of Limited Resources

Washington commitments to arm Ukraine's military during the Russian attack has depleted US military stockpiles and may have resulted in delayed defensive weapons sales to Taiwan. CSIS analyst Mark Cancian reported in April that the US military has transferred 7,000 Javelins to Ukraine, one-third of America's stockpile. US policymakers are growing increasingly concerned with the perceived lack of contingency planning related to Taiwan, including Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), who introduced the "Taiwan Peace Through Strength Act of 2022," which would require not only a force readiness assessment and "detailed strategy of denial", but that "the [US] Secretary of Defence and [US] Secretary of State prioritise and expedite the processing of requests from Taiwan under the Foreign Military Sales program ..." Frustration is also mounting

¹⁴³ Jyun-Yi Lee, Henry Jackson Society Roundtable discussion on "Securing the Strait: Engaging Taiwan in the United Kingdom's Indo-Pacific Tilt", Institute of National Security and Decision-Making, INDSR, June 13, 2022.

¹⁴⁴ Cleo Paskal and Mark Montgomery, "Taiwan Needs Joint Exercises, Missiles, Right Now", Foundation for Defence of Democracies, April 30, 2022, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2022/04/30/taiwan-needs-joint-exercises-missiles-right-now/>.

¹⁴⁵ Kwei-Bo Huang, Henry Jackson Society Roundtable discussion on "Securing the Strait: Engaging Taiwan in the United Kingdom's Indo-Pacific Tilt", Associate Professor of Diplomacy, National ChengChi University, June 13, 2022.

¹⁴⁶ "Harpoon Anti-Ship Missile: Military-Today.com", *Military Today*, accessed May 30, 2022, <https://www.military-today.com/missiles/harpoon.htm>.

¹⁴⁷ "Sea Eagle", *WeaponSystems.net*, accessed May 30, 2022, <https://weaponsystems.net/system/545-Sea+Eagle>. See also, Missile Defence Project, "SPEAR 3", *Missile Threat*, CSIS, July 30, 2021, <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/spear-3/>.

¹⁴⁸ Thales Group, "STARStreak", accessed May 30, 2022, <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/starstreak-ii-hvm>.

within the business community over US attempts to block weapons requested by Taiwan, with the presidents of the American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan and the US-Taiwan Business Council expressing disappointment with the Biden administration's delays. In the letter, the business leaders write, "relegating Taiwan's defence only to capabilities and systems focused on a 'D-Day' scenario ... leaves China free to continue its grey-zone operations without consequences".¹⁴⁹

An adviser to a European president stated the defence of Taiwan should not rest squarely on US shoulders.¹⁵⁰ This adviser suggested that other NATO allies, particularly China's largest European trading partner Germany, have a national interest in securing the Taiwan Strait and ensuring any forced reunification attempt by the PRC does not lead to disruptions in supply chains or impeded Indo-Pacific trade routes.¹⁵¹ If the United Kingdom is unable or unwilling to directly sell Taiwan the British-manufactured defensive arms needed to repel a potential Chinese attack during forced reunification, the UK (or in coordination with AUKUS) could act as an intermediary, when legally permissible, procuring such weaponry from a third party, for example, German defence contractors, including Krauss-Maffei Wegmann (KMW), Rheinmetall, and ThyssenKrupp. INDSR's Dr Chechuan Lee, however, believes European countries are unlikely to sell large quantities of defensive arms to Taiwan because of the high political risk involved in such a decision.¹⁵² Beijing has retaliated against European governments for arms sales to Taiwan in the past, with the Dutch cancelling a US\$2 billion submarine contract with Taipei in 1992 after economic pressure from Beijing, as well as a breakdown in China-France relations after the French sale of six frigates to Taipei in the 1990s.¹⁵³

8.3 Preparing Taiwan for Invasion

Once Taipei, the United Kingdom, and other AUKUS allies determine the weapons best needed for Taiwan's defence and for deterring any potential PLA invasion, British and allied military advisers must ensure the Taiwanese are properly trained with weapons/defence systems. Training Taiwan's All-Out Defence Mobilization Agency is key for ensuring not only interoperability, should the UK ultimately commit military assets for Taiwan's defence during any PLA invasion, but the proper training of Taiwanese reservists. AUKUS can also coordinate with Taiwan's reserve forces on establishing corridors for humanitarian aid in the event of an invasion, and safe routes for evacuation of refugees off the island if necessary. This will require large quantities of civilian aircraft instead of Western military cargo planes which would face the risk of PLA attack. Franz-Stefan Gady and Oskar Glaese write, "as long as this activity is not overly military in nature, China ... may be unwilling to escalate to direct military action by attacking civilian cargo planes en route to Taiwan".¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan and US-Taiwan Business Council to Mira Resnick, "Concerns on Biden Administration's Policy for Arms Sales to Taiwan", May 16, 2022.

¹⁵⁰ Anonymous to author, "Text Messaging Correspondence with Adviser to European President", *Text messaging*, May 20, 2022.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Lee, Henry Jackson Society Roundtable discussion, 2022.

¹⁵³ UPI Archives, "Dutch Government Bars Taiwanese Sub Sale", *United Press International*, February 14, 1992, <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1992/02/14/Dutch-government-bars-Taiwanese-sub-sale/2027698043600/>. Also, Asia Times Contributor, "China Urges France to Scrap Taiwan Arms Deal", *Asia Times*, May 13, 2020, <https://asiatimes.com/2020/05/china-urges-france-to-scrap-taiwan-arms-deal/>.

¹⁵⁴ Franz-Stefan Gady and Oskar Glaese, "What Could European Militaries Contribute to the Defense of Taiwan?", *The Diplomat*, April 1, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/what-could-european-militaries-contribute-to-the-defense-of-taiwan/>.

9. Forging Indo-Pacific Economic Ties

9.1 Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Development

The United Kingdom should forge closer economic ties in Taiwan and elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific through engaging private enterprise to invest in regional infrastructure development projects. The United Kingdom cannot match Beijing's budget for international development projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Last year, the British government reduced its commitment to international development projects from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI).¹⁵⁵ Therefore, it would behoove London to better engage private enterprise to invest in Indo-Pacific infrastructure development projects that have generally been financed through British and allied government funding.

The UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) should encourage the Biden administration to reinvigorate the pro-free market Blue Dot Network (BDN), an initiative originally founded by the Trump-era US Development and Finance Corporation (DFC), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Japan's Bank for International Recognition to identify and certify, high-quality infrastructure projects which would benefit from private investment. With the UK's pension fund totalling an estimated GBP2.58 trillion, encouraging pension fund managers to invest just 1 per cent annually in certified infrastructure projects instead of declining, unstable equities, would equal 43 per cent of Beijing's 2021 BRI budget.^{156, 157} However, there would likely be intense domestic pressure in the United Kingdom to use pension fund investments for financing UK infrastructure projects. Alternatively, London could encourage the Taiwanese to invest some of their substantial foreign currency reserve in regional Indo-Pacific infrastructure to help counter the influence of Beijing's BRI. As of December 2021, Taiwan held US\$549 billion in foreign currency, the world's fifth largest reserve.

The UK could spearhead the expansion of the current tripartite Blue Dot Network into a BDN + 2 with the United Kingdom as well as France or another large European economy. London has an opportunity to also lead a renewed focus on critical Indo-Pacific infrastructure which will better help ensure peace in the Taiwan Strait through the Quad, expanding to a Quad + 2, as the Atlantic Council's James Batchik has suggested, with the existing Australia-India-Japan-United States pact including British and French participation.¹⁵⁸ British leadership on infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific, in partnership with Japan, could side line Brussels' attempts at the same, following an announcement that Japan and the European Union are "exploring cooperation opportunities, notably on transport, energy, digital and supply chains, in the Indo-Pacific".¹⁵⁹

The US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan announced before the 48th G7 Summit that the White House planned to launch a global infrastructure initiative to counter Beijing's hegemonic ambitions in the Indo-Pacific. According to a report, "the effort will rely on private-sector funding" with, Sullivan stating, "relatively modest direct budget allocations [from the

¹⁵⁵ Anna Dickson, "Spending Review: Reducing the 0.7% Aid Commitment", House of Commons Library, November 26, 2020, <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/spending-review-reducing-the-aid-commitment/>.

¹⁵⁶ Duncan Ferris, "UK Now 3rd Largest Pension Market after Being Overtaken by Japan", *Pensions Age Magazine*, February 16, 2021, <https://www.pensionsage.com/pa/UK-overtaken-by-Japan-to-become-3rd-largest-pension-market-WTW.php>.

¹⁵⁷ Christoph Dedopil Wang, "China Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Investment Report H1 2021", Green Finance & Development Center, July 27, 2021, <https://greenfdc.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative-bri-investment-report-h1-2021/>.

¹⁵⁸ Pierce, et al., *Global Britain: An American Review*.

¹⁵⁹ European Council, "Joint Statement EU-Japan Summit 2022", Council of the European Union, May 12, 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/05/12/joint-statement-eu-japan-summit-2022/>.

US government]”.¹⁶⁰ If G7 partners resist the urge to support a repackaging of the Biden administration's failed Build Back Better initiative, and instead engage the private sector to compete with Beijing in the Indo-Pacific, this policy could lead to what Colby suggested is a much-needed “economic analogue” to his defence-focused denial strategy.¹⁶¹ Lord James Bethell praised the Biden administration's pre-summit announcement as “smart diplomacy” and “fiscally prudent”, but the devil is in the details as always.¹⁶² Before details of the initiative were officially announced, Lord Bethell added:

Successfully countering the CCP's hegemonic ambitions in the Indo-Pacific requires both a robust defence and soft power initiatives, such as infrastructure development. However, free market democracies face worsening inflationary shocks. While news of a Group of Seven (G7) initiative for Indo-Pacific infrastructure development is a welcome policy, I would strongly urge the UK government to work hard with the UK's G7 allies to engage the private sector for financing such initiatives.¹⁶³

Now that it seems more government expenditures could fund the initiative than originally believed, Tory monetary hawks should align with their fiscally conservative Congressional counterparts in the United States and ensure government funding for this initiative is minimal to mitigate inflationary shocks.¹⁶⁴

The UK's infrastructure development finance can better serve British interests through a public-private partnership resembling the US DFC. Competere Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Shanker Singham has noted, “international development is critical to ensure UK national security and global security. The United Kingdom has traditionally been an ODA ‘superpower. This has contributed to UK soft power and the British government needs to continue this global role.”¹⁶⁵ Lord Bethell believes G7 infrastructure development must include a sound and practical vision, adding that such an initiative:

makes sense for our security, for the advancement of developing countries and for our economy. This is the way we can help UK's partners in the Indo-Pacific to avoid the debt traps and other investment pitfalls related to Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative and embrace transparency, fair market principles, and certification standards meeting G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment.^{166, 167}

9.2 Pragmatic Energy Policy

The UK government should also recognise the need for immediate energy solutions to allow Indo-Pacific nations to break bonds more easily with non-democratic energy suppliers and infrastructure developers. The temptation to follow the Biden administration in lockstep over its zero-sum game climate policy must be resisted. Policymakers in Europe and Asia most

¹⁶⁰ Jenny Leonard and Jennifer Jacobs, “Biden Plans to Launch a G7 Global Infrastructure Push to Counter China”, *Bloomberg*, June 16, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-06-16/biden-to-launch-g7-global-infrastructure-push-to-counter-china?sref=p8neHW1G>.

¹⁶¹ Elbridge Colby, “What Would be Really Useful? An Economic Analog to the Strategy of Denial”, *Twitter*, June 10, 2022, <https://twitter.com/ElbridgeColby/status/1535271326801440771>.

¹⁶² Lord James Bethell, “Good to See Biden Launching a Global Infrastructure Initiative to Counter China”, *Twitter*, June 17, 2022, <https://twitter.com/JimBethell/status/1537713747476856833?s=20&t=fFI3dBuduTcx7ZR-IGBkGg>.

¹⁶³ Lord James Bethell to author, “Email Correspondence with Lord James Bethell”, Email, June 21, 2022.

¹⁶⁴ Jonathan Lemire and Karl Mathiesen, “G7 Unveils \$600B Plan to Combat China's Belt and Road”, *Politico*, June 26, 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/g7-unveils-600b-plan-to-combat-chinas-belt-and-road/>.

¹⁶⁵ Shanker Singham to author, “Email Correspondence with CEO of Competere”, Email, May 26, 2022.

¹⁶⁶ Lord Bethell to author, “Email Correspondence”.

¹⁶⁷ Japanese Ministry of Finance, “G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment”, June 9, 2019, https://www.mof.go.jp/english/policy/international_policy/convention/g20/annex6_1.pdf.

likely share in the confusion of many Americans, as to why the United States increased liquified natural gas (LNG) exports to China in Q4 2021, when Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) could have benefitted from these US energy exports to reduce dependency on Russian energy and possibly hold leverage over Moscow during the run-up to the invasion of Ukraine. The United States exported only 28 per cent of Europe's total LNG in 2021.¹⁶⁸ Yet, from October to December 2021, US LNG exporters signed seven contracts with Chinese energy importers, fuelling, both literally and figuratively, the Chinese economy, as the PRC became the world's largest importer of liquified natural gas. Instead, the UK and BDN could have engaged both Indo-Pacific and CEE countries to finalise LNG infrastructure projects with Western investors, leading to increased competition with China's BRI, thus decreasing the level of LNG exports sent to the PRC. *The Financial Times* reported "the U.K. can act as bridge to get LNG supplies into Europe. But insufficient pipeline and gas storage are preventing supplies from import terminals in Milford Haven from getting to mainland Europe."¹⁶⁹

A popular expression from across the pond – "go woke, go broke" – should be embraced by the UK government as it carves out its niche for helping secure the Taiwan Strait and ensure the uninterrupted flow of trade in the Indo-Pacific.¹⁷⁰ The Global Britain security, defence, development, and foreign policy strategy will face great obstacles if London continues to curry favour with the progressive Biden administration and implements a climate-driven economic agenda at the cost of exerting necessary influence in the Indo-Pacific. Policies such as the British government's sale of its Tokyo embassy grounds to Mitsubishi to fund solar panels for the diplomatic compound "is undermining Britain's prestige in the world", according to Tory MPs.¹⁷¹ It "sends the wrong signal", said Jeremy Hunt MP, former UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs.¹⁷² Even British Foreign Minister Truss viewed the sale of the embassy grounds as counter-productive, commenting, "I certainly don't want to see any more of that happening."¹⁷³

9.3 "Securitisation of Aid" in the Indo-Pacific

As Beijing's recent overtures to the Solomon Islands indicated, there is now a "securitisation of aid" in the Indo-Pacific, according to *Nikkei Asia's* Gibson.¹⁷⁴ If London, Washington, and Canberra insist on prioritising a government-funded climate change agenda throughout the second island chain, Beijing will almost certainly increase its financial enticements to outspend the competition. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi embarked on a diplomatic journey to the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, and Timor Leste as part of the PRC's hegemonic policies to drive a wedge into the West's island chain economic outreach efforts. It will be challenging for the West to maintain close ties with these remote Indo-Pacific islands if trade pacts offer only limited market access and vague commitments to fund clean energy initiatives.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ European Commission, "Liquefied Natural Gas", [energy.ec.europa.eu](https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/liquefied-natural-gas_en), February 2022, https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/oil-gas-and-coal/liquefied-natural-gas_en.

¹⁶⁹ Andy Bounds, Harry Dempsey, and Ian Mount, "Europe's Push to Plug Its Energy Gaps", *The Financial Times*, May 16, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/dd4aeffe-d243-49c7-9f4e-152ee54a4f26>.

¹⁷⁰ Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), "When Brands Go Woke, Do They Go Broke?", *CIM Exchange*, February 3, 2020, <https://www.cim.co.uk/content-hub/editorial/when-brands-go-woke-do-they-go-broke/>.

¹⁷¹ Cristina Gallardo, "The Incredible Shrinking Global Britain", *Politico*, May 19, 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/the-incredible-shrinking-global-britain/>.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Liam Gibson telephone conversation with author, "Conversation with *Nikkei Asia* Columnist", Telephone, May 27, 2022.

¹⁷⁵ The Financial Times Editorial Board, "US Influence in Asia Depends on Economic Engagement", *The Financial Times*, May 24, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/03802236-4e4c-472f-8552-718f69814534>.

9.4 UK Trade Policy with Indo-Pacific Partners

London also should respond to recent efforts by Europe to bolster trade ties with Taipei and accelerate UK-Taiwan trade discussions, as Brussels seems determined to strike meaningful economic cooperation agreements with the Taiwanese before the United Kingdom or United States do. Now that the Biden administration has opted to exclude Taiwan from IPEF, London has its own opportunity to accelerate ongoing trade talks with Taiwan and try to strike a free trade agreement or bilateral investment treaty before Washington or Brussels. The *Wall Street Journal* editorial page noted, “the exclusion of Taiwan [from the Biden administration’s IPEF] makes no sense if you’re trying to show the US commitment to the region”.¹⁷⁶ The British government can take advantage of this power vacuum in the Indo-Pacific on issues related to trade and the economy and gain a foothold in the region which offers solutions other than the Biden administration’s “all guns, no butter” approach. In a letter to President Biden, over 50 US Senators outlined Taiwan’s role in global trade, writing, the island is “a major hub of the global supply in electronics, computers, and information and communications technologies, and has served a critical role in diversifying the US supply chain”.¹⁷⁷ Conservative Members of Parliament should plan to work closely with pro-market Republican Members of Congress when the GOP likely regains control of Capitol Hill after America’s November 2022 mid-term election, and better use trade and economic soft power to counter China in the Indo-Pacific, and win “hearts and minds” in Taiwan and throughout the Indo-Pacific.

To help ensure a transition from potentially hostile supply chains which could worsen slow global economic growth, London should also demonstrate leadership by furthering efforts launched during the UK’s G7 presidency related to the D10 “Network of Liberty” initiative, launched in 2014 as a 1.5 track strategic forum. However, the British government will have a difficult time engaging Indo-Pacific partners through its Global Britain agenda without first finalising the UK’s accession to the CPTPP. Unlike Washington, which bowed to the pressure of other IPEF participants by excluding Taiwan, London should openly advocate for Taiwan’s membership in the trade bloc. Doing so will better integrate Taipei into the international trading community, while possibly slightly minimising the risk of conflict with China and reducing tariffs between the United Kingdom and Taiwan, which benefits UK businesses and consumers.

¹⁷⁶ The Wall Street Journal Editorial Board, “Biden’s Real Taiwan Mistake”, *Wall Street Journal*, May 23, 2022, sec. Opinion, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/bidens-real-taiwan-mistake-indo-pacific-economic-framework-china-11653339196>.

¹⁷⁷ Robert Menendez, et al., to Joseph R. Biden, “Concern over Exclusion of Taiwan in the Proposed Indo-Pacific Economic Framework”, United States Senate, May 16, 2022.

10. Conclusion

As the war in Ukraine has demonstrated, the newly emerging multipolar world is fraught with risks. Graham Allison warned, “when a rising power is threatening to displace a ruling power, standard crises that could otherwise be contained ... can initiate a cascade of reactions that, in turn, produce outcomes none of the parties would otherwise have chosen”.¹⁷⁸ The war in Ukraine and the failure of Washington to prevent Russia’s aggression before it started may have provided the impetus for Beijing hardliners to force reunification of Taiwan. Admiral Charles Richard, Commander of the United States Strategic Command, testified that “the PRC is watching the war in Ukraine closely and will likely use nuclear coercion to their advantage in the future. Their intent is to reunify Taiwan by 2027”.¹⁷⁹ Former Indo-Pacific Commander Admiral Phil Davidson has warned of the same timeframe at which point the US Navy and PLA will approach parity, ominously called the “Davidson Window”.

While no reputable Western public opinion polls have surveyed PRC citizens on their views of forced reunification, Earl Carr, New York University adjunct professor and the author of “From Trump to Biden and Beyond: Reimagining US-China Relations,” believes the CCP’s focus on reunifying with Taiwan is not reflective of Chinese society.¹⁸⁰ Carr contends that the policy views of ageing CCP hardliners are not representative of the overall sentiments of PRC citizens, stating: “there is not this emphasis amongst the vast majority of Chinese on getting Taiwan back into the mainland. The emphasis is on economic development.”^{181, 182} With unsubstantiated rumours of ongoing power struggles in Beijing between supporters of President Xi versus PRC Prime Minister Li, back-channel appeals from former PRC President Hu Jintao’s inner circle and from the PRC business community who favour Deng Xiaoping’s “reform and opening” policies may help maintain cross-Strait peace.¹⁸³

The PRC’s forced reunification of Taiwan is increasingly possible, but it need not be a *fait accompli*. Western diplomatic efforts, including political assurances during shuttle diplomacy and, possibly economic carrots extended toward Beijing should the PRC demonstrate a commitment toward maintaining the *status quo*, can help prevent conflict. However, Western policymakers also must not be hamstrung by those who warn of the inherent risks from security dilemmas resulting from increased militarisation in the Indo-Pacific. As Russia has done since its invasion of Ukraine, China will likely increase its threats of nuclear response to any third-party interference in what Beijing considers its internal affairs: reunification of Taiwan. These warnings should not be taken lightly. Nor should these warnings pressure Western policymakers away from providing a robust defence of the Taiwan Strait, not only to preserve the territorial integrity of Taiwan, but to ensure the PRC does not gain hegemonic control within the Indo-Pacific’s first island chain. The UK’s national interests are dependent on Beijing not projecting power throughout the region, influencing major trade routes, and further impacting global supply chains.

Foreign policy isolationists and economic nationalists will certainly argue that the blood and treasure of the transatlantic allies should not be spilled over remote island chains in the Indo-

¹⁷⁸ Graham Allison, “Destined for War: Can China and the United States Escape Thucydides’s Trap?”, *The Atlantic*, September 24, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/united-states-china-war-thucydides-trap/406756/>.

¹⁷⁹ Charles Richard, “Testimony on the Nuclear Weapons Council”, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing, May 4, 2022, <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/to-receive-testimony-on-the-nuclear-weapons-council>.

¹⁸⁰ Earl Carr meeting with author, “Meeting with Adjunct Instructor at New York University”, New York, May 19, 2022.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Earl Carr, Henry Jackson Society Roundtable discussion on “Securing the Strait: Engaging Taiwan in the United Kingdom’s Indo-Pacific Tilt”, Founder and CEO at CJP Global Advisors, June 13, 2022.

¹⁸³ Lingling Wei, “China’s Forgotten Premier Steps out of Xi’s Shadow as Economic Fixer”, *Wall Street Journal*, May 11, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-premier-li-keqiang-xi-jinping-11652277107>.

Pacific. Their views should not be discounted. However, helping Taiwan's defence is not neo-conservatism. It is not nation-building. It is in the national interest of the British people and the UK's allies.

The transatlantic economies have become increasingly co-dependent with trading partners in the Indo-Pacific due to globalisation, with US and UK trade helping to give rise to the economic power of the CCP which the West is now struggling to contain. However, isolationism is not an option until Western policymakers have the gumption to reshore supply chains and decouple existing economic reliance with the PRC. One compromise solution offered to help secure critical supply chains while maintaining a global presence is the concept of "friend shoring", a policy in which securing Taiwan's semiconductor supply chain would certainly be deemed necessary.

As the US "unipolar moment" collapses, Washington cannot be expected to lead an effort to defend Taiwan while a leadership vacuum exists at the White House. Unfortunately for Taiwan, Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defence during the Obama administration, once stated: "I think [Joe Biden] has been wrong on nearly every major foreign policy and national security issue over the past four decades."¹⁸⁴ The Taiwanese do not have the luxury of time should the current US administration stumble on policymaking.

Pursuing diplomacy to maintain the *status quo* in cross-Strait relations and effectively arming Taiwan to deter any potential PRC military attack aimed at forced reunification need not be mutually exclusive. Pursuing trade, economic ties, and other soft-power policies with both Beijing and Taipei can project assurances to both the PRC and Taiwan and help ease tensions which could lead President Xi Jinping and Taiwan's leader Tsai Ing-wen back to opening negotiations. As this may seem Pollyannaish to some, considering the harsh rhetoric espoused by Beijing, transforming Taiwan into what some have called a "porcupine" through asymmetric defensive arms sales is also needed.¹⁸⁵ As US Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) and former Senator Phil Gramm (R-TX) illustrated in a *Wall Street Journal* commentary, "through the force-multiplying miracle of modern weapons, we can help make Taiwan a porcupine and deter aggression that could have profoundly negative consequences on Taiwan, China, and the world".¹⁸⁶ With a surge in arms to Taiwan to help deter PRC military aggression before it ever begins, comes the risk of Beijing increasing military build-ups to counter Taiwan's defence, thus perpetuating a vicious cycle of mistrust, and potentially moving the region ever closer to war.

It is in both the UK's and Taipei's interests for the British government to quickly develop a "Secure the Strait" strategy aligning with the Global Britain integrated review agenda. With the UK's next general election scheduled no later than January 2025, the Conservative government and the UK's allies have approximately two years to implement plans to secure the Taiwan Strait through defence and economic policies. Should Labour win, a Starmer premiership would bring great uncertainty. As detailed in a recent Henry Jackson Society report, author Azeem Ibrahim believes Starmer's Labour Party seems "unprepared to meet" the challenges materialising from Beijing forcing reunification, writing, "if China invaded Taiwan, or stepped up its campaign in the South China Sea, it is difficult to predict the response of a government led by Starmer ..."¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Philip Bump, "Robert Gates Thinks Joe Biden hasn't Stopped Being Wrong for 4 Years", *The Atlantic*, January 7, 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/01/robert-gates-thinks-joe-biden-hasnt-stopped-being-wrong-40-years/356785/>.

¹⁸⁵ "What is Taiwan's Porcupine Defence Strategy?", *The Economist*, May 10, 2022, <https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2022/05/10/what-is-taiwans-porcupine-defence-strategy>.

¹⁸⁶ Phil Gramm and Roger Wicker, "Deter China by Turning Taiwan into a Porcupine", *Wall Street Journal*, May 4, 2022, sec. Opinion, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/deter-china-by-turning-taiwan-into-a-porcupine-prevention-missiles-stinger-ships-strait-11651678122>.

¹⁸⁷ Azeem Ibrahim, *The Prospective Foreign Policy of Sir Keir Starmer* (London: Henry Jackson Society, April 2022).

11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, the following steps are suggested for: (a) furthering Global Britain security strategy objectives throughout the Indo-Pacific region; (b) helping the United Kingdom, its allies, and regional partners secure the Taiwan Strait; and (c) better integrating Taiwan into global institutions through increased trade and support for Taipei's observer status at key global governance institutions.

Some recommendations may seem unfeasible to those favouring close ties with Beijing, or overly risky to those who view the world's tense geopolitical condition as unchangeable. The United Kingdom and its allies and regional partners have no choice but to consider all options for preventing a war in the Indo-Pacific. Anything less than considering all options would further Beijing's *fait accompli* on both reunification with Taiwan and the PRC's hegemonic ambitions throughout the Indo-Pacific.

These recommendations are based on the "compete/collaborate/confront" framework adopted by the UK's government in the Global Britain integrated review.¹⁸⁸

Compete

1. Her Majesty's Government must communicate to the UK's citizens that the defence of Taiwan and the security of the Taiwan Strait are not only pillars of the Global Britain agenda, but in the national interest of the British people. However, a full pivot toward strategic clarity is not needed to demonstrate Taiwan's vital importance. Deterring PRC aggression toward Taiwan also does not necessitate abandoning a diplomacy-driven political solution between Beijing and Taipei. British policymakers should acknowledge the national security interests of the United Kingdom and the British people are better served by securing the Taiwan Strait through the existing US/UK "One China" policy and by not abandoning the long-standing transatlantic policy of strategic ambiguity. British citizens should also understand the UK's diplomatic efforts in the Indo-Pacific are not a lofty attempt at democratisation and human rights. Taiwan is not Iraq or Afghanistan. Taiwan is a strategic partner and any PRC attempt at forcible reunification will have grave national security implications for the United Kingdom, its citizens, and the entire world. Two years of Covid lockdowns have sufficiently demonstrated what havoc is unleashed when supply chains shut down.
2. The British government should lead efforts through the D10 at "friend-shoring" supply chains to democratic, free market economies and establishing a plan for defensive, multilateral economic policies, such as export controls and investment restrictions, aimed at preventing China's acquisition of advanced technologies for possible use during PRC forced reunification of Taiwan, or to further Beijing's hegemonic ambitions.
3. UK foreign policy and trade policymakers should prioritise London's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Investment for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), ultimately support Taipei's path for CPTPP membership, and thereby reduce tariffs between Taiwan and the United Kingdom. In the short term, London can negotiate a bilateral investment treaty with Taipei, to better promote investment opportunities in the United Kingdom and Taiwan and protect private investments made by British and Taiwanese investors. The UK's flexible and viable trade policies would set a precedent for other European countries to follow.

¹⁸⁸ Her Majesty Cabinet's Office, "Global Britain in a Competitive Age".

4. London should not offer Indo-Pacific partners any security guarantees which it is not capable of backing up in exchange for basing rights or other logistical support in the region. Any security guarantees must benefit not only Taiwan, but the United Kingdom and its allies as well, without needlessly overextending military forces throughout the vast Indo-Pacific region.
5. The United Kingdom should support infrastructure development investment in Taiwan and elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific by better engaging the British private sector. The United Kingdom and its allies and partners should not expect to challenge Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) pound for pound, and Conservative Members of Parliament need not outspend Labour's climate-agenda wish list to do so. However, UK-led infrastructure investment can be more transparent by developing a British government effort at certifying high-quality infrastructure, thus encouraging the private sector, and possibly UK pension funds, to invest in a trusted project.

Confront

6. London should convey to Beijing, at the very highest diplomatic level, that any PRC attempts to decapitate Taiwan's government, install a pro-Beijing puppet in Taipei, and kill or capture Taiwanese officials to forcibly reunify the People's Republic of China and Taiwan will result in swift and immediate economic, diplomatic, and possible military response by the United Kingdom, its allies, and regional partners. Beijing must fully understand the United Kingdom is committed to securing the Taiwan Strait, defending Taiwan, and ensuring free and open trade routes throughout the Indo-Pacific.
7. To avert a refugee and humanitarian crisis in the Taiwan Strait, which could rival what has transpired in Ukraine, the British government and its AUKUS allies must plan an "Aerial Dunkirk" rescue and relief contingency mission should the PLA invade Taiwan. The United Kingdom along with British charitable organisations should recruit and train volunteer civilian pilots to fly sorties from friendly bases in the Indo-Pacific, to rescue Taiwanese civilians for evacuation and to deliver aid to the island for the humanitarian crisis. A British Royal Air Force (RAF) squadron would escort civilian flights in international airspace from the Indo-Pacific bases to Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ), and for the return to Indo-Pacific airbases once the civilian planes exit Taiwan's ADIZ. The UK government should plan to announce during the outset of any hostilities that any PLA attempts to interdict or attack civilian planes would result in an immediate defensive response by surrounding RAF jets.
8. Downing Street should also advise Beijing through diplomatic channels that the PRC's continued efforts to undermine Taipei's relations with third countries or block Taiwan from participation in international governance organisations will result in stronger ties between Taiwan and the United Kingdom, including potential recognition of the Taipei Representative Office in the UK as an official diplomatic mission.
9. London should schedule regular deployments of UK Carrier Strike Groups to the South China Sea, in conjunction with the US and Royal Australian Navies, to help maintain an overall objective of "peace through strength" in the Indo-Pacific.
10. The UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) should coordinate regular Royal Navy freedom of navigation transits through the Taiwan Strait, along with the US Navy and the Royal Australian Navy, to demonstrate the inviolability of international waters for commerce. At the same time, MoD officials can work with Beijing to lessen the frequency of such transits if Beijing also agrees to decrease a corresponding number of PLA incursions into Taiwan's ADIZ.

Collaborate

11. The United Kingdom should preserve policy flexibility *vis-à-vis* China and Taiwan, allowing London to avoid transatlantic “group think” as well as Washington’s current “all guns but no butter” muscular foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific.¹⁸⁹ On critical Indo-Pacific security issues, the Prime Minister’s government should establish policies consistent with UK’s interests outlined in “Global Britain in a Competitive Age”.
12. If the United States is unable to provide Taipei with the quantity of weapons Taiwan needs or the quality that Taiwanese officials desire, the United Kingdom should sell directly, or, when possible, act as an intermediary to procure, weapons of a deterrent nature to Taiwan’s self-defence forces. Such weapons should include asymmetrical arms: Harpoon or equivalent, anti-ship missiles; land-based, short-range land attack cruise missiles, naval mines, anti-armour gear, and portable air-defence systems. If Taiwan determines a need for more conventional weaponry, such as jets, tanks, anti-submarine helicopters, or self-propelled howitzers, London should work with its allies and regional partners to secure such arms through AUKUS or a third-party country.
13. The British government should not only continue to acknowledge the importance of Taiwan participating as observers at global governance institutions such as the World Health Assembly (WHA), but commit, with G7 partners, to withhold funding of such organisations should Beijing coerce officials and bar Taiwan’s observer status. London and its AUKUS allies should develop a roadmap for Taiwan’s transition from observer status in these key institutions, to full members. The prime minister should advocate for Taiwan’s participation at future G7 Summits, including those for G7 foreign ministers.
14. The Prime Minister should end the UK’s self-imposed limitation on sending cabinet-level ministers of Her Majesty’s Government to Taiwan. To demonstrate London’s commitment to securing the Taiwan Strait and signal to Taipei that the UK’s Indo-Pacific tilt includes ensuring Taiwan can defend itself against potential PLA invasion, the United Kingdom’s Minister of Defence Ben Wallace should be the first UK cabinet-level official to visit the island. Other UK officials designated to visit Taiwan should include the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Secretary of State for International Trade. London can extend invitations to Taiwanese officials, including President Tsai Ing-wen to participate in UK-coordinated international conferences. A recent meeting between US Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Loyce Pace and Taiwan’s Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare Li-Feng Lee on the side lines of the World Health Assembly is effective at maintaining dialogue between Taiwan and transatlantic allies, but a serious effort to recognise the legitimacy of Taiwan’s elected government should include bilateral meetings at ministerial levels in London and Taipei.¹⁹⁰ As Lord Bethell remarked during a House of Lords debate, the United Kingdom has exhibited “an outdated, cautious approach to our dealings with Taiwan”.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Demetri Sevastopulo and Kana Inagaki, “Joe Biden Waters down Indo-Pacific Economic Framework to Win More Support”, *The Financial Times*, May 20, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/91207c37-c9bd-4737-abf5-afc71200f8a1>.

¹⁹⁰ Health and Human Services Department, US (HHS) Press Office, “Readout of HHS Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs Loyce Pace’s Bilateral Meeting with Deputy Minister of Health of Taiwan”, HHS.gov, May 25, 2022, <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2022/05/25/readout-hhs-assistant-secretary-global-affairs-loyce-pace-bilateral-meeting-with-deputy-minister-health-taiwan.html>.

¹⁹¹ James Bethell, “House of Lords – Taiwan Debate”, Vol. 819: Debate, <https://hansard.parliament.uk/lords/2022-03-03/debates/F13CD877-CD88-4B5A-9ED8-450BA3D742E9/Taiwan#contribution-7C6BA8F6-C4FF-4856-9F6B-13FADDDDB0F3>.

15. Diplomatic efforts aimed at oft forgotten regions of Oceania cannot be ignored any longer, which is a lesson the Solomon Islands pact with China has demonstrated. The British government should establish a sound strategy aimed at countering Beijing's influence efforts with smaller governments in the three island chains, through strengthened economic ties, infrastructure development initiatives, and practical energy security policies.

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