

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – IV Issue - II (March – April) 2026

Frequency: Bimonthly



Red Lines and Blue Waters: U.S. Military Presence and Conflict Anomalies Based on China's Ten Dash Line Claim

Mike Natanael Norend Mandagie^{1*}, Angel Damayanti²

^{1,2} Universitas Kristen Indonesia

| Received: 23.03.2026 | Accepted: 28.03.2026 | Published: 18.04.2026

*Corresponding author: Mike Natanael Norend Mandagie

Abstract

China's unilateral renewal of its claim to Taiwan's sovereignty with the issuance of the ten-dash line in 2023 has triggered a strategic military response from the United States, increasing geopolitical tensions and the potential for conflict in the region. This study aims to examine the anomaly of conflict in the absence of open warfare between Taiwan and China despite their sharp friction. The method used is an explanatory case study. Furthermore, Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel's theory of intrusive systems, along with the concepts of balance of power, bilateral-multilateral arrangements, and conflict anomalies, are applied to analyse how these variables and indicators prevent open warfare. This study argues that the presence of intrusive states in the region has created a balance of power with positive implications, namely maintaining regional stability despite fragile conditions.

Keywords: Conflict Anomaly, Ten Dash Line, Asia Pacific Region, Military, United States

I. INTRODUCTION

Every day, the world faces various conflicts caused by clashes of interests between countries and attempts by one country to dominate another. While in Europe there are currently two countries in conflict with each other in the form of war, namely Ukraine and Russia, in the South China Sea there are two countries that currently have the potential for conflict, namely the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan. This potential conflict between the two countries in the South China Sea is caused by the disruption of Taiwan based on China's ten-dash line claim, which fortifies the Taiwan Strait and the island of Taiwan.

Initially, protests by other countries were directed at China's nine-dash line, which was considered to overlap with the sovereignty of other countries (The Associated Press 2023). The addition of these lines demonstrated Beijing's position that Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait were under its sovereignty. The United States was one of the countries surprised by the issuance of the ten-dash line, even though Washington considered the claim unreasonable. The rapid development of the PRC's military has prompted the US government to make various efforts to prevent Taiwan from falling under Beijing's control, which would result in the expansion of the PRC's military dominance that could jeopardise US interests, and these efforts must involve Taiwan.

Beijing perceives Taiwan and its government as separatists attempting to break away from the PRC's control (Sun 2024). To break away, Taipei continues to draw closer to Washington, prompting the PRC government to take action. It is a fact that Beijing and Washington do not always see eye to eye on various issues. However, there is a greater divide between Beijing and Taipei, so that the actions of the Taiwanese government are always seen as a thorn in Beijing's side. These thorns continue to grow and become larger every year with the help of the United States, which supports their growth.

The United States Government and the PRC Government both needed Taiwan to realise their respective national interests. However, the Biden-Harris administration in the United States took aggressive steps by openly supporting Taiwan's defence. Beijing views the United States Government's support for Taiwan as one of the main obstacles to reunifying Taiwan with mainland China. In China's nine-dash line claim, the PRC Government does not include Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait. However, this changed when Beijing issued a ten-dash line that included islands with close ties to Washington.

The Taiwanese government is the government that currently controls the island of Taiwan, although Beijing considers that the sovereignty of the island of Taiwan belongs to the PRC. The disastrous historical factors between Beijing and Taipei have prompted each country to adopt opposing foreign policies. The presence of China's ten-dash line has created intense competition between the PRC and the United States, and this competition has culminated in a potential conflict involving Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait. Despite the potential for such a major conflict, a fragile peace has been maintained until now. This has become an anomaly, and the reason for the absence of open conflict in the form of war between Taiwan and the PRC is the objective that researchers are striving to achieve.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

A fully-fledged war involving countries with nuclear warheads will be a nightmare that everyone will try to avoid. Therefore, this study aims to find out the reasons why there hasn't been a full-scale war between China and Taiwan based on China's ten-dash line claim, even though the potential for conflict between the two countries is extremely high. The researchers used an explanatory case study proposed by John Creswell. Furthermore, the researcher combines two types of data sources to answer the conflict anomaly based on China's ten-dash line claim.

Interview techniques with international relations experts and high-ranking military officials in the field of maritime security are used to obtain primary data to explore the competition between Washington and Beijing based on the ten-dash line claim, Taiwan's defence strategy, and the intrusive system mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region. Literature study techniques on government foreign policy documents, articles, and international media were collected to map the balance of power in the region. The data was then validated using triangulation techniques and analysed through the stages of reduction, presentation, conclusion, and data verification.

III. CONCEPTS

A. *Intrusive System Theory*

Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel, in their book published in 1970 entitled 'The International Politics of Regions: A Comparative Approach', laid the theoretical foundation for explaining the

condition of Southeast Asia, which has never experienced open warfare. This theoretical foundation is known as the intrusive system theory. A balance of power can be achieved in a region when large countries intervene on a large scale, and these large countries are referred to as the intrusive system (Cantori and Spiegel 1970, 26).

Cantori and Spiegel explain that the intrusive system politically consists of significant external power participation in subordinate system international relations. The core and peripheral sectors do not play a role on their own in a region, but there is an intrusive system which is a manifestation of intervention by major countries outside the region. Significant involvement of extra-regional countries in the subordinate system will create a balance of power in the region.

A country's position in a region, whether it is part of the core sector or the peripheral system, can be determined based on four variables, namely cohesion, communication, power, and the structure of relations. In this study, the researcher only uses three variables, namely cohesion, power, and the structure of relations between countries in the Asia-Pacific region (Cantori and Spiegel 1970, 7-10). There are nine characteristics or variables described by Cantori and Spiegel for an extra-regional country to become an intrusive system in a region, namely 'multilateral arrangements; bilateral arrangements; economic trade and investment; colonial ownership; military intervention; subversion; associations of nations; cultural and educational activities; and propaganda.' (Cantori and Spiegel 1970, 26).

Based on Cantori and Spiegel's definition of intrusive systems above, the researchers used three variables, namely bilateral arrangements, multilateral arrangements, and economic trade and investment, to analyze the absence of open warfare between the PRC and Taiwan based on China's ten-dash line claim, which has a very high potential for conflict. The researcher observes that the United States, as an extra-regional power with considerable strength, has intruded into the Asia-Pacific region through the three variables above, as has the PRC. The researcher observes that the intrusive system in the Asia-Pacific region has positive implications and is manifested through the creation of a balance of power in the region.

B. *Balance of Power*

The balance of power focused on strategic balancing, as defined by Ashley J. Tellis with the definition as an effort to balance power through alliance support, improvement of global trade, investment in military superiority, and revitalisation of the national economy, is one of the concepts used in this study. There are four main variables, namely: increasing the capacity of other countries to limit the abuse of power by opponents, selectively deepening globalisation to strengthen material foundations, maintaining military superiority to ensure regional security, and revitalising the economy through strengthening the production base and national resources (Tellis 2014, 32-33).

In discussing the anomalies of the conflict, the researcher focuses on two variables, namely increasing the capacity of other countries and maintaining military superiority to analyse the intrusions carried out by the United States and its allies as well as the intrusions of the PRC in the Asia-Pacific region (Tellis 2014, 35-42). The variable of increasing capacity refers to the support given to countries bordering the PRC, such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, with the aim of realising strategic potential and

regional balance. Meanwhile, the variable of maintaining military superiority is implemented through military buildup and budget adjustments to stem the PRC's dominance in the region.

Through these two variables, the researchers analysed the creation of a balance of power that prevented open warfare between China and Taiwan, despite the high potential for conflict based on China's ten-dash line claim. The researcher observes that the United States and its allies are able to balance the PRC's power not only in the military sector but also in the economic sector. This balance of power has positive implications in the Asia-Pacific region, resulting in an anomaly where conflict does not lead to open warfare between the PRC and Taiwan.

C. Conflict Anomaly

The final concept used by researchers in compiling this study is the concept of open conflict anomaly, which is a combination of the concepts of anomaly and open conflict. For the concept of open conflict, researchers used a book written by Simon Fisher entitled 'Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action', while for the concept of anomaly, researchers used a book written by Thomas Kuhn entitled 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions'. According to Fisher, conflict is a relationship between two or more parties, either individuals or groups, who have or feel they have something but are not in agreement (Fisher 2001, 4).

Fisher identifies four types of conflict to illustrate the relationship between goals and behaviour and their implications in the context of conflict. The first is no conflict, which means that every group or community must be dynamic in order to survive. The second is latent conflict, which means that this conflict lies beneath the surface and if it is to be dealt with, it needs to be revealed or intensified, but not by increasing violence. The third is surface conflict, which means that this conflict has shallow roots and may occur due to a misunderstanding of objectives, so it can be resolved through better communication. The fourth is open conflict, which means that this conflict is deeply rooted and highly visible, requiring action to address the root causes and visible effects. One form of open conflict is war (Fisher 2000, 6).

According to Yoram Dinstein, war is a hostile interaction between two or more countries, both in a material and technical sense. In a material sense, war results from the use of actual armed force by one or more of the warring parties. In a technical sense, war is a formal status resulting from a declaration of war (Dinstein 2001, 14). Dinstein analyses Max Von Oppenheim's definition of war, which states that there are four main elements of war, and proposes that each characteristic of war be examined in turn.

The first element of war is that there must be a dispute between two or more countries with armed conflict between the warring countries in order to qualify as war. The second element is war in a technical and material sense, where in a technical sense, war begins with a declaration of war and ends with a peace agreement, while in a material sense, war begins regardless of formal steps, but war begins when armed force, i.e. violence, is used. The third element of war is the potential for escalation, whereby international incidents involving the use of force and occurring in relations between states can trigger war if one of the parties decides to go to war by declaring war. The fourth element of war is the existence of implicit symmetry in the positions of the warring parties, which means that one party at war with another has similar objectives. (Dinstein 2001, 5-13).

In his 1970 book 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions', Thomas Kuhn defines anomalies as violations of the grand expectations generated by the paradigms that normally govern science. This indicates that anomalies refer to data results that do not fit established theories, and that this mismatch of data leads to major changes in existing scientific fields. According to Kuhn, the formation of anomalies can lead to new discoveries through several processes, namely recognition of paradigm violations; further exploration of the area of anomalies; and adjustment of the paradigm theory to the anomalies (Kuhn 2012, 52-53).

Based on two existing concepts, namely the concept of anomaly and the concept of conflict focused on war, the researcher uses Yoram Dinstein's definition of war, which is a sub-conflict of Simon Fisher's concept of conflict, and combines it with Thomas Kuhn's concept of anomaly. In this study, the concept of open conflict anomaly is used to analyze open conflict in the form of war that should have occurred between the PRC and Taiwan based on China's ten-dash line claim, particularly the tenth line that fortifies Taiwan Island, but did not occur. Instead, what occurred was latent conflict, which was measured using Dinstein's one indicator of war, namely the potential for escalation. The researcher observes that if a country in a region has a high potential for conflict escalation with the occurrence of international incidents, open warfare is inevitable.

IV. METHODOLOGY

In this study, qualitative research was chosen as the type of research using case study techniques to examine in depth the occurrence of open conflict anomalies in the form of war between the PRC and Taiwan based on China's ten-dash line claim, particularly the tenth line that fortifies Taiwan Island, and the reasons why these anomalies occurred. As a result, the final outcome of this research can answer the research questions posed by the researcher that have been put forward. As explained by the researcher in the sub-chapter on research objectives, the type of research chosen by the researcher is very appropriate for examining why open conflict in the form of war has not occurred based on China's ten-dash line claim. Through this case study, the researcher will be assisted in answering the hypothesis made by the researcher that the reason for the absence of open conflict in the form of war based on China's ten-dash line claim is due to the intrusive system carried out by the United States and its allies as well as the PRC towards the Asia-Pacific region, thereby creating a balance of power.

The scope of research, commonly referred to as the research focus, is necessary to narrow down the research specifically in qualitative research. According to Prof. Sugiyono, there are three aspects that comprise the scope of research, namely place, actors, and activities (Sugiyono 2017, 207). The South China Sea is currently undergoing daily geopolitical changes, particularly with the release of a new standard map by the PRC that affirms its unilateral claim based on China's ten-dash line claim. The tenth line, which fortifies the island of Taiwan, has experienced various periods of pressure from powerful countries such as the United States and the PRC. In this study, the researcher will look at the anomaly of the conflict that occurred based on China's ten-dash line claim, particularly on the tenth line that fortifies the island of Taiwan.

Intrusions by the United States and the PRC through existing variables in the Asia-Pacific region have created a balance that has prompted countries in the region to take sides with either the

United States or the PRC. The creation of this balance in the region has led to conflict anomalies where the conflicts that occur do not correspond to existing theories. In this study, the researcher takes the form of open conflict anomalies in the form of war. Open warfare should have long since occurred between the PRC and Taiwan due to the high potential for conflict following the issuance of China's ten-dash line in 2023, but the outcome did not match the theory; instead, a fragile peace has been maintained.

V. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

A. Conflict Anomalies Between China and Taiwan in Responding to China's Ten Dash Line Claim

a. Catalysts For Ten Dash Line Claims by the PRC

Countries with nuclear warheads ready to be launched at any time, such as China, have profound concerns about Taipei's increasingly aggressive stance towards Washington. The Biden-Harris administration appears to be taking a forthright and open approach in supporting Taiwan's sovereignty. Washington believes that by protecting Taiwan, it is also preventing the spread of China's military influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Beijing did not expect then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to make an official visit to Taiwan, which could be categorised as a reckless act (Tan and Molloy 2022). As Speaker of the US House of Representatives, the visit showed that she was acting on behalf of the entire American people, including the President and the entire cabinet, in supporting Taiwan, even though Washington does not officially recognise Taiwan as a consequence of its recognition of the one China policy.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy, which embodies the President's vision and mission, was released before the establishment of the ten-dash line. One of its key points is to continue supporting Taiwan's defence capabilities. Subsequently, defence assistance for Taiwan was expedited through the Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) scheme, with assistance amounting to USD 1.1 billion in the form of defence equipment and technology (Zengerle and Martina 2022). Washington is aware that the US military cannot be stationed in Taiwan, hence Washington's support for Taiwan indicates that Washington indirectly recognises Taiwan as an independent and sovereign state, and Beijing views this support as a serious threat during the Biden-Harris administration.

In 2019, a survey released by the Mainland Affairs Council showed that 89.3% of respondents did not agree with the one country, two systems initiative initiated by the Chinese Communist Party (Mainland Affairs Council 2019). This figure represents an increase of 13.9 points following the release of Xi's five points, which emphasised the reunification of China. The Great Wall once again faced Beijing when Tsai Ing-Wen was re-elected as President in the 2020 general election, having always been vocal in her opposition to Beijing's dominance with its communist ideology. Beijing felt overwhelmed when facing Tsai Ing-Wen during her first term, and subsequently had to face President Biden with his full support for Taiwan's defence.

b. The Presence of The United States and People's Republic of China Military Forces Based On China's Ten-Dash Line Claim

The island chain strategy was a defence strategy used by the United States to contain communism in the Asia-Pacific region during the Cold War, but it remains strategically important today. The first island chain and second island chain, which are part of

this strategy, are two broken lines stretching from south to north. All countries and islands along the first island chain must be strengthened to contain Soviet expansion. In the context of defence, Taiwan is an island in the first island chain, which is part of the island chain strategy used by the United States Government to contain the dominance of the People's Republic of China in the region (BBC 2024). The Taiwanese Government, which currently has sovereignty over Taiwan, has explicitly expressed its allegiance to Washington. In the island chain strategy, the United States Government has increased its defence cooperation with countries in the first island chain, such as Japan and the Philippines.

Picture 1. China's Ten Dash Line Map 2023



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Source: Retrieved from (Japan Forward 2023)

The United States military increased its transit operations in the Taiwan Strait following China's claim to the ten-dash line in August 2023. The US government also accelerated the delivery of military aid and approved various arms sales to the Taiwanese military through the FMF, FMS (Foreign Military Sales) and PDA schemes, all of which took place before the end of the Biden-Harris administration (Formosan Association for Public Affairs 2023). This increase in military aid and arms sales was also due to the high likelihood of Kamala Harris losing the 2024 US presidential election against Donald Trump. President Biden is aware that Donald Trump will change most of the foreign policies implemented by the Biden-Harris administration, including defense support for Taiwan. To prevent any disruption in aid after the transition of power, the aid was increased and approved quickly.

The presence of the PRC around Taiwan Island after the issuance of the ten-dash line in August 2023 was mostly manifested through military operations carried out around Taiwan Island and the Taiwan Strait (Shattuck 2024). Beijing is aware that the election of President Lai Ching-te in the 2024 Taiwanese presidential election further narrows Beijing's ability to pressure the Taiwanese government in the political sector, so the pressure that Beijing can exert is through large-scale military exercises. Beijing considers its presence within the ten-dash line to be legitimate because the South China Sea, Taiwan Island and the Taiwan Strait are the legitimate sovereignty of the PRC. This unilateral claim has prompted the PRC government to increase its military presence in

the region. Interestingly, despite the increase in PRC military exercises around the island of Taiwan, Beijing has not dared to show its military presence on the island. The military exercises conducted by the PRC military can also be interpreted as Beijing's angry response to the actions taken by the Taiwanese government.

a. Rivalry Between the United States and China Over Taiwan: Potential For Open Conflict Between China and Taiwan

The democratic elections held in Taiwan in 2024 became the initial momentum for Beijing to exert influence through various means so that the next President of Taiwan would be someone who could promote Beijing's interests. However, this momentum turned into a disaster because the candidate elected as President was from the DPP Party, which would increasingly voice its rejection of Beijing's communism (Davidson and Hawkins 2024). The United States government, on the flip side, does not need to intervene or influence Taipei on a large scale, considering that the current Taiwanese government definitely needs the United States to stem Beijing dominance. Taipei will tend to adjust its defence policies related to the budget and meet the demands of the Trump-Vance administration rather than those of Beijing.

The possibility that Beijing will invade Taiwan has become very likely after the issuance of the ten-dash line, which affirms the PRC's unilateral sovereignty. With Taiwan falling under Beijing's control, the PRC's military fleet, such as submarines with nuclear warheads, could instantly spread to the Pacific Ocean and threaten the military and even the mainland of the United States (Wang 2025). In the current situation, with Taiwan siding with Washington, the United States has made the island its last bastion to prevent the spread of PRC dominance. Taipei's alignment with Washington shows that Washington can continue its military presence based on the island chain strategy and, on the other hand, it indicates that the American military is at the forefront of the PRC. Aligning with Taiwan will be very beneficial for the country

it sides with, especially given the strategic position that Taiwan occupies in the line of defence.

Supporting the defense industry, microchip production has become a matter of urgency, and Taiwan, with Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, has become the main supplier. In the 21st century, controlling the production of advanced chips has proven to be like controlling oil supplies in the 20th century. The PRC government has attempted to demonstrate that it is capable of rivalling Taiwan's chip production, but its efforts have not yielded maximum results, with reports indicating that the PRC only has a self-sufficiency rate of around 16 per cent and still imports semiconductors worth more than USD 400 billion (Jones, et al. 2023). The competition between the United States and the PRC is a competition for dominance, and the key to this competition is Taiwan, which is still the world's largest semiconductor producer. Beijing is attempting to break the American technology and defence industry, which has long been supported by TSMC. However, with China's failure to achieve semiconductor self-sufficiency, the second option available to China is to invade Taiwan and seize control of its production.

B. INTRUSIVE SYSTEMS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

a. Subordinate System of The Asia-Pacific Region: Core Sector and Peripheral Sector

The level of cohesion is the first basis for the formation of a subordinate system, with political cohesion, economic cohesion, organisational cohesion, and social cohesion forming part of the variables. Cantori and Spiegel emphasise that the level of cohesion in a region will influence the position of that country in terms of whether it belongs to the core or peripheral sector. In explaining the nature and level of cohesion in the Asia-Pacific region, this study divides the Asia-Pacific region into three sub-regions, namely East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Australasia.

Table 1. Political Cohesion Data for Asia-Pacific Countries in 2025

Region	Country	Democracy Classification	Type of Government	Types of Political Regimes
Asia Timur	Japan	Full Democracy	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy	Electoral Democracy
	People's Republic of China	Authoritarian	Socialist Communist Republic	One-Party Communist System
	Hong Kong	Mixed Regime	Special Administrative Region	Administrative System Under the Control of the PRC
	North Korea	Authoritarian	Juche Totalitarian State	Family Dynasty
	South Korea	Flawed Democracy	Presidential Republic	Electoral Democracy
	Mongolia	Flawed Democracy	Parliamentary Republic	Electoral Democracy
	Taiwan	Full Democracy	Semi-Presidential Republic	Electoral Democracy
	Brunei Darussalam	Authoritarian	Absolute Monarchy	Absolute Islamic Sultanate
	Philippines	Flawed Democracy	Presidential Republic	Electoral Democracy
	Indonesia	Flawed Democracy	Presidential Republic	Electoral Democracy
	Cambodia	Authoritarian	Constitutional Parliamentary Monarchy	One-Party Dominant Democracy

	Laos	Authoritarian	Socialist Communist Republic	One-Party Communist System
	Malaysia	Flawed Democracy	Federal Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy	Electoral Democracy
	Myanmar	Authoritarian	Parliamentary Republic	Military Government
	Singapore	Flawed Democracy	Parliamentary Republic	One-Party Dominant Democracy
	Thailand	Flawed Democracy	Constitutional Parliamentary Monarchy	Authoritarian
	Timor Leste	Flawed Democracy	Semi-Presidential Republic	Electoral Democracy
	Vietnam	Authoritarian	Communist Socialist Republic	One Party Communist System
Australasia	Australia	Full Democracy	Federal Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy	Electoral Democracy
	Fiji	Mixed Regime	Parliamentary Republic	Electoral Democracy
	Papua New Guinea	Mixed Regime	Constitutional Parliamentary Monarchy	Electoral Democracy
	New Zealand	Full Democracy	Constitutional Parliamentary Monarchy	Electoral Democracy

Source: Compiled by researcher from (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2025)

Table 2. Economic Cohesion Data for Asia-Pacific Countries in 2023

Region	Country	Export Commodities	Intra-Region Primary Partner
East Asia	Japan	Cars, Integrated Circuits, Engines, Vehicle Parts/Accessories, Construction Vehicles	Taiwan (6%) South Korea (6%) Hong Kong (4%)
	People's Republic of China	Broadcasting Equipment, Computers, Integrated Circuits, Garments, Machine Parts	Hong Kong (8%) Japan (5%) South Korea (4%)
	Hong Kong	Gold, Integrated Circuits, Gas Turbines, Broadcasting Equipment, Jewellery	Vietnam (12%), South Korea (8%)
	North Korea	Wigs, Iron Alloy, Tungsten Ore, Cars, Electricity	Senegal (3%)
	South Korea	Integrated Circuits, Cars, Refined Petroleum, Plastics, Machine Parts	Hong Kong (4%), Japan (4%) Taiwan (4%)
	Mongolia	Coal, Copper Ore, Gold, Iron Ore, Crude Oil	Thailand (0%), Japan (0%)
	Taiwan	Integrated Circuits, Engine Parts, Broadcasting Equipment, Computers, Plastics	Hong Kong (13%), Singapore (9%) Taiwan (7%)
Southeast Asia	Brunei Darussalam	Refined Petroleum, Natural Gas, Crude Oil, Hydrocarbons, Fertilisers	Japan (17%) Singapore (16%) Malaysia (6%)
	Philippines	Integrated Circuits, Engine Parts, Gold, Insulated Cables, Semiconductors	Hong Kong (12%) Japan (11%)
	Indonesia	Coal, Palm Oil, Iron Alloy, Lignite, Garments	Japan (8%) Singapore (5%)

	Cambodia	Garments, Semiconductors, Luggage and Bags, Footwear, Gold	Japan (6%) Thailand (5%)
	Laos	Electricity, Fertiliser, Gold, Garments, Paper	Thailand (34%) Cambodia (2%)
	Malaysia	Integrated Circuit, Refined Petroleum, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Palm Oil	Singapore (12%) Japan (5%) Hong Kong (5%)
	Myanmar	Garments, Natural Gas, Dried Nuts, Rare Earth Metals, Precious Stones	Thailand (16%) Japan (7%)
	Singapore	Integrated Circuits, Refined Petroleum, Machinery, Vaccines, Gold	Hong Kong (13%) Malaysia (9%) South Korea (6%)
	Thailand	Engine Parts, Integrated Circuits, Trucks, Cars, Broadcasting Equipment	Japan (7%) Singapore (4%)
	Timor Leste	Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Coffee, Scrap Iron, Telephone	Singapore (25%) Japan (15%) Indonesia (5%)
	Vietnam	Broadcasting Equipment, Garments, Integrated Circuits, Machine Parts, Footwear	Japan (6%) Hong Kong (4%)
Australasia	Australia	Iron Ore, Coal, Natural Gas, Gold, Minerals	Japan (16%) South Korea (6%) Taiwan (5%)
	Fiji	Water, Fish, Raw Sugar, Refined Petroleum, Garments	Australia (12%) Tonga (6%) New Zealand (6%) Samoa (4%)
	Papua New Guinea	Natural Gas, Gold, Copper Ore, Palm Oil, Nickel	Japan (25%) Australia (17%) Taiwan (8%)
	New Zealand	Milk, Wood, Beef, Butter, Lamb and Goat Meat	Japan (6%) South Korea (3%)

Source: Compiled by researchers from (Central Intelligence Agency 2023)

Table 3. Organizational Cohesion Data for Asia-Pacific Countries in 2025

Region	Country	Organizations in The Asia-Pacific region				
		APEC	IPEF	ADB	AIB	BRI
East Asia	Japan	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
	People's Republic of China	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
	Hong Kong	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
	North Korea	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	South Korea	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Mongolia	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
	Taiwan	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Southeast Asia	Brunei Darussalam	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Philippines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Indonesia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Cambodia	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓

	Laos	×	×	✓	✓	✓
	Malaysia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Myanmar	×	×	✓	✓	✓
	Singapore	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Thailand	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Timor Leste	×	×	✓	✓	✓
	Vietnam	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Australasia	Australia	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
	Fiji	×	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Papua New Guinea	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
	New Zealand	✓	✓	✓	✓	×

Source: Compiled by researchers from (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation 2024; Office of the United States Representative 2025; Asian Development Bank 2025; Green Finance and Development Center 2025; Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank 2026)

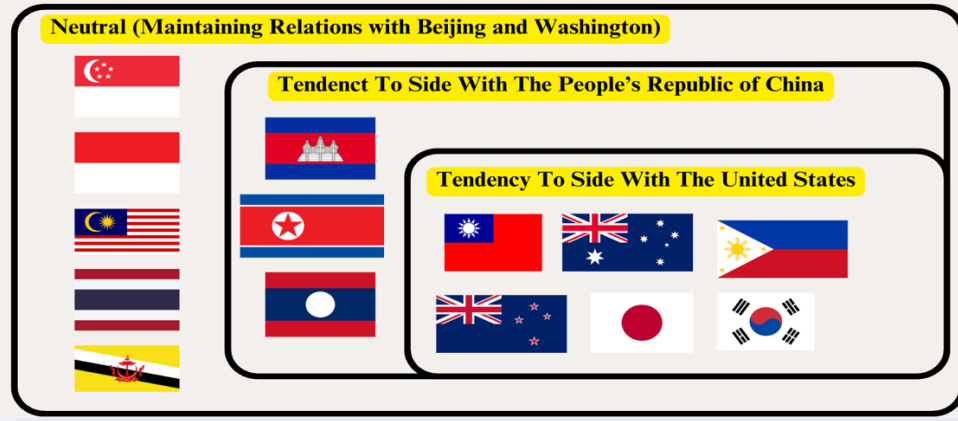
Table 4. Military Strength Data of Asia-Pacific Countries in 2025

Region	Country	Military Strength Index Score	Defence Budget 2025 (USD billion)	Ownership of Nuclear Warheads
East Asia	Japan	0,1839	57	×
	People's Republic of China	0.0788	266,850	ü
	North Korea	0,6016	4,736	ü
	South Korea	0,1656	46,3	×
	Mongolia	2,1135	0,16511	×
	Taiwan	0,3988	19,740	×
Southeast Asia	Philippines	0,6987	4,380	×
	Indonesia	0,2557	10,6	×
	Cambodia	2,0752	0,860	×
	Laos	2,2663	0,135	×
	Malaysia	0,7429	4,8	×
	Myanmar	0,6735	2,948	×
	Singapore	0,5271	15	×
	Thailand	0,4536	5,887	×
	Timor Leste	9,09	0.05511 (2023)	×
	Vietnam	0,4024	8,594	×
Australasia	Australia	0,3298	55,7	×
	Fiji	1,0748	0,1696	×
	Papua New Guinea	4,2	0,1092	×
	New Zealand	1,9039	3,03	×

Source: Compiled by researchers from (Global Fire Power 2025)

Picture 2. Map of Regional Relations in the Asia-Pacific Region Following China's Ten-Dash Line

**Structure of Relations in the Asia-Pacific Region
Following the Issuance of China's Ten Dash Line Claim**



Source: Compiled by the researcher (2025)

Table 5. Subordinate System Data for the Asia-Pacific Region

Region	Core Sector	Peripheral Sector		Intrusive System
		Semi-Periphery	Periphery	
Asia Pacific	Japan Taiwan Australia Singapore South Korea	Indonesia	North Korea	United States People's Republic of China
		Malaysia	Timor Leste	
		Thailand	Fiji	
		Brunei Darussalam	Myanmar	
		Hong Kong	Cambodia	
		Philippines	Laos	
		Vietnam	Papua New Guinea	
		New Zealand	Mongolia	

Source: Processed by Researcher (2025)

Researchers categorize dominant countries in the Asia-Pacific region based on the nature and level of regional cohesion, military strength, and the structure of relations in the core sector. In the peripheral sector, researchers divide these countries into two groups: semi-peripheral and peripheral countries. Researchers observed that not all countries in the peripheral sector have equal power and position, as there are a number of countries that have superior power and these countries are classified as semi-peripheral countries. Countries that have relatively weak power and position are placed in the peripheral sector. This study will look at two countries as intrusive systems in the Asia-Pacific region, namely the United States and the PRC.

The countries of Japan, Taiwan, Australia, and South Korea are countries that do not have high organizational cohesion because they are not members of the BRI, unlike Singapore, which is a member of all organizations. However, the researcher observes that these four countries excel in other variables and indicators, while Singapore, which does not excel in the structure of relations between countries in the Asia-Pacific region, can still prove that it excels based on other indicators and variables. Although North

Korea is a country with active nuclear warheads, it only excels in the military sector, while in other variables, it is in a weak position.

a. The Creation of a Balance of Power: The Anomaly of Conflict Between China and Taiwan

The presence of the United States, which then became intrusive in the Asia-Pacific region through existing variables, was an effort to create a balance of power with the PRC. The US government was aware that the PRC's military and economic power had grown too large in the region, which then prompted the PRC government to take an aggressive stance in the region and enabled the PRC government to invade Taiwan through its military. The magnitude of the PRC's power has prompted the United States Government to create a balance of power, and this has been achieved through the presence of the United States' intrusive system in the Asia-Pacific region.

The support provided by the United States Government to countries surrounding the PRC includes Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines. These four countries are members of the Island Chain Strategy, both in the first island chain and the second island chain, making them a special focus of the United

States Government in its efforts to create a balance of power with the PRC. The involvement of these four countries in a cooperation alliance with the United States further reduces the likelihood of the PRC abusing its power in the Pacific region.

The United States' annual defence budget is the largest in the world, reaching USD 883.7 billion in 2024 (United States Senate Committee On Armed Services 2024). The large expenditure by the United States Government on defence is aimed at maintaining the military capabilities of the United States at a high level while supporting the latest defence technology innovations. The large defence budget also aims to support the presence of the United States military, which is realised through the establishment of United States military bases and military personnel in the Asia-Pacific region based on bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Simon Fisher argues that latent conflicts are conflicts that lie beneath the surface and are deeply rooted. As suggested, they may need to be revealed before they can be dealt with effectively (Fisher 2000, 6). Latent conflict is a type of conflict that is at a dangerous stage and, with the wrong pressure, will cause the conflict to erupt into open conflict, specifically war. The current situation between the PRC and Taiwan is one of latent conflict, where tensions between the two countries have reached a deep level, but these tensions have not escalated into open war even though, based on the potential for escalation, the conditions for open war have been met.

In 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China stated that the steps taken by the United States Government in allowing its military transit in the Taiwan Strait and providing military assistance to Taiwan were steps that could create instability in the region (AlJazeera 2024). The statement from Beijing indicated that the United States Government was playing with fire, which could lead to an open war in the region. The steps taken by Washington are aimed at creating a balance of power with the PRC, and these steps are the only way to prevent an open war between the PRC and Taiwan. Researchers believe that the intrusive actions of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region are capable of keeping the conflict between the PRC and Taiwan at a latent level and preventing it from erupting into open war, even though existing indicators suggest that the conditions for open war have been fulfill

b. Factors of The Intrusive System of The United States With its Allies and People's Republic of China in The Asia-Pacific Region

A nuclear war between China and Taiwan could be avoided through the strong influence of the United States and its allies, as well as China's own influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Washington, together with all its allies such as the United Kingdom, France, and Australia, has realised its intrusive influence through bilateral arrangements, multilateral arrangements, economic trade and investment, and foreign aid that researchers focus on the defence and security sectors.

Table 6. Total Number of Active United States Military Bases in the Asia-Pacific Region

Country / US Territory	Name of Agreement	Year Signed	Number of US Military Bases
South Korea	<i>Mutual Defense Treaty Between United States and the Republic Of Korea – Pasal IV</i>	1953	73
Japan	<i>U.S. – Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security – Pasal III</i>	1960	120
Philippines	<i>Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement</i>	2014	9
Guam	<i>Kedaulatan Amerika Serikat – Guam Organic Act of 1950</i>	1950	3
Hawaii	<i>Kedaulatan Amerika Serikat – Hawaii Admission Act</i>	1959	11
British Indian Ocean Territory	<i>Exchange of Notes between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the United States of America concerning the Availability of the British Indian Ocean Territory for the Defence Purposes of Both Governments</i>	1966	1

Source: Compiled from (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 1960; United States Forces Korea 1953; U.S. Embassy In The Philippines 2023; Office of the Historian, Shared Knowledge Services, Bureau of Administration United States Department of State 2024; U.S. Navy 2025)

Starting from colonialism to the Allied victory in World War II, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France have established a number of military bases in the Asia-Pacific region, either through bilateral cooperation with other countries or through their own ownership, equipped with military personnel and defence

equipment ready for deployment. The high cost of defence equipment remains the biggest challenge in military modernisation efforts. As a superpower, the United States assists countries in the region through security assistance programmes and full support for military modernisation to achieve victory in the realisation of defence equipment. Furthermore, the highest bilateral agreements are realised through the protection guarantees provided by Washington to its main allies, such as Japan, the Philippines and South Korea. If Beijing attacks these three countries, Washington will respond.

Exclusivity remains a hallmark of the United States in leading organisations in the defence and security sector, where members must be in line with Washington's desires. One example of such a multilateral agreement is the AUKUS agreement, which only involves the United Kingdom and Australia, with nuclear weapons transfers, submarine fleet deliveries, cyber warfare, and artificial intelligence forming the basis of the agreement (United Kingdom Parliament House of Commons Library 2025). The scope of the organisation is focused by the United States on the defence and security sectors, such as the Camp David Principles, which focus on economic cooperation with increased security, and the Five Eyes, which focus on the collection and analysis of joint intelligence information.

Through trade and investment policies, the United States Government is more inclined to provide a platform and offer blueprints to countries in the region to connect private investors with countries in the region. Unlike China's BRI, which tends to be a debt trap, United States trade and investment policies prioritise openness and involve regional allies to invest. Financial assistance is also provided by the United States through foreign aid via USAID, although this must eventually come to an end. However, Australia has now replaced Washington as the largest donor to Pacific countries through the ODF programme.

China's intrusive behaviour in the Asia-Pacific region is demonstrated by its bold claims to the entire South China Sea, which Beijing has then armed with military equipment, missiles and military airfields ready to respond to any external intervention. Unlike the United States, Beijing has pursued trade and investment through free trade agreements with a far greater number of countries than the United States, which prioritises its allies. Moreover, Beijing has greater funds in the foreign aid sector, known as the Belt and Road Initiative.

In 2024, the United States Government is expected to provide foreign aid amounting to USD 7 billion to the Asia Pacific region, while the Chinese Government, through the BRI, will provide funding assistance through the BRI amounting to USD 121.8 billion (Nedopil 2025). The PRC government realises that the United States government and its allies cannot provide as much aid as the PRC because the United States government, with its superpower status, has spent its money on the military sector to maintain peace. The presence of the BRI symbolises that Beijing has created a dependency between the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the BRI, enabling the Chinese government to realise its interests in the region under the umbrella of the BRI.

VI. CONCLUSION

The creation of an anomaly of conflict between the PRC and Taiwan was caused by the creation of a balance of power triggered by intrusions carried out by the United States and its allies with intrusions carried out by the PRC in the Asia Pacific region through bilateral arrangements, multilateral arrangements, and economic trade and investment. The intrusions carried out by the United States and its allies then created a balance of power with the intrusions carried out by the PRC government in the region. This balance of power then created an anomaly of open conflict between the PRC and Taiwan.

Upon the issuance of the ten-dash line by the PRC government in 2023, which fortifies Taiwan Island and the Taiwan Strait, this should have created a high potential for open conflict between the PRC and Taiwan due to fierce domination. However, to date, no

open war has occurred between the PRC and Taiwan. This indicates that the intrusive system in the Asia-Pacific region has positive implications.

Researchers successfully applied the theory of intrusive systems proposed by Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel, supplemented by three concepts covering bilateral and multilateral arrangements in the defence and security sectors, as well as policies on trade and economic investment. These three concepts and theories were used to analyse the intrusive systems of the United States and its allies with the PRC in the Asia-Pacific region to create a balance of power. Based on the intrusive system theory proposed by Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel, the intrusive system in the Asia-Pacific region has succeeded in producing a positive impact through its intrusiveness, as evidenced by the creation of a balance of power that has prevented open warfare.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

This research is expected to provide academic benefits for International Relations, particularly in the areas of Political Development, Law, and Sustainable Security. The main reason for the absence of open warfare based on China's ten-dash line claim, supported by existing anomalies, is a unique issue that needs to be discussed. In this study, the United States and its allies, with the PRC as its intrusive system, are important case studies to be analysed and researched in order to create a balance of power. This balance of power is capable of creating an anomaly of open conflict, where an open war between the PRC and Taiwan based on China's ten-dash line claim should have occurred, but did not.

The results of this study can also be used as a reference for future research. This study concludes that intrusive systems in the Asia-Pacific region are capable of creating a balance of power that subsequently creates conflict anomalies. Future research can encourage broader discussion by using different variables to analyse similar issues. Future research can also use different actors in discussing the intrusive actions of powerful countries in a region.

A significant contribution will also be made to the understanding of the intrusive system theory. The fact that there has been no war based on China's ten-dash line claim with high intensity of conflict indicates that there are actors or systems capable of restraining the conflict. The intrusive system is a theory that has been around for decades, but not many parties have discussed a phenomenon using this theory, which is part of a subchapter in a book compiled by Louis Cantori and Steven Spiegel. The results of this study will provide new perceptions and knowledge that complement the intrusive system theory. This study will also test the accuracy of the intrusive system.

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