

Taiwan Between Chinese Escalation and American Confusion

(Translated)

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By: Ustadh Nabil Abdel Karim

At a time when the world seems preoccupied with wars stretching from Ukraine to the Middle East, China is moving quietly and deliberately toward the most dangerous geopolitical flashpoint of the 21st century: Taiwan.

The accelerating military escalation in the Taiwan Sea is no longer a mere passing maneuver or diplomatic pressure tactic. Instead, it has become an indicator of a profound strategic shift in the global balance of power. Beijing seeks to impose a new reality that solidifies its rise as an international power capable of challenging American hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region.

Conversely, Washington faces a complex dilemma. It understands that losing Taiwan would mean a decline in its strategic influence in East Asia, but it also understands that any direct confrontation with China could open the door to a global war with catastrophic consequences for both the economy and the international order.

Therefore, questions are mounting about the nature of the unannounced understandings between the major powers, especially during the Trump era, and whether Taiwan has indeed become an implicit bargaining chip in major deals between Washington and Beijing, or whether it is a Trump ploy to embroil China and drown it in regional and international problems.

The world is far from a final, decisive moment, even temporarily, as we are experiencing one of the most dangerous crises of our time.

Every time China conducts maneuvers around Taiwan, tensions rise, and we witness a temporary show of force. Today, however, we find ourselves on the cusp of a historic shift in the shape of the Asian order. China no longer treats the island as a postponed issue, but instead as the central issue in its national project, and the time for its resolution is drawing near. Meanwhile, America appears less clear than ever in its commitment to protecting Taiwan.

Firstly: What does the current Chinese escalation regarding Taiwan signify?

In recent months, China has intensified its naval and air maneuvers around the island, with a noticeable increase in the number of ships and aircraft operating near Taiwanese airspace. Taipei announced that more than 100 Chinese warships or coast guard vessels are deployed in the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea, close to Taiwan (Al Jazeera, May 23, 2026).

In addition to frequent naval pressure operations around Taiwan's smaller islands, China's objective appears to be more than just military intimidation; it can be understood on three levels:

1. Implementing a gradual blockade, meaning normalizing the Chinese military presence around Taiwan, so that the island is psychologically and militarily encircled.

2. Weakening Taiwanese resolve: China understands that wars are not always won through invasion, but sometimes by eroding public confidence in Taiwan's own ability and that of its allies to protect it.

3. Testing America's true stance: China wants to know how far America will actually go to defend Taiwan if the crisis reaches a breaking point.

Therefore, many analysts believe that China is operating according to a strategy of slow strangulation instead of a costly direct invasion, while simultaneously working to uncover everyone's intentions.

Secondly: What is the American atmosphere after this escalation?

Within the United States, there is clear confusion regarding the Taiwan issue. America continues to officially declare its rejection of any forceful change to the status quo, but it is unclear whether it is making any concessions to China on this issue, or whether it is trying to embroil China in the Taiwan conflict. Meanwhile, worrying signs have emerged for Taiwan, including:

- Reports of some US arms deals with Taiwan being frozen or slowed down due to other military priorities related to the Middle East. A US military official stated that a \$14 billion arms sale to Taiwan will be halted to preserve munitions for its war with Iran (Al Jazeera, May 22, 2026).

- Trump himself used business-oriented language toward Taiwan, suggesting that arms deals could be a bargaining chip with China (Reuters, May 19, 2026).

- The current US administration seems more interested in preventing war with China than in waging it, and we don't know what it's hiding; cunning is in their nature.

This doesn't mean the Americans have abandoned Taiwan, but it does mean that the US priority has become managing the conflict without sliding into a major confrontation with Beijing at the moment.

Thirdly: Was there a tacit agreement between Trump and China regarding Taiwan?

To this day, there is no official evidence of a secret agreement allowing China to annex Taiwan, but it is clear that the island issue has become part of the broader bargaining between the two countries.

During Trump's meetings with the Chinese president, the Taiwan issue was raised forcefully, with significant Chinese pressure, and the only outcome that emerged was the suspension of US military aid to Taipei (Al Jazeera, May 23, 2026)

The problem is that Trump views foreign policy through a transactional lens, not through the lens of traditional ideological alliances. This naturally worries the Taiwanese, as they realize their future could become a bargaining chip in economic, security, and military agreements between China and the United States.

However, there are profound constraints preventing the US from completely abandoning Taiwan. These include the island's strategic importance in containing China, its pivotal role in the global semiconductor industry, the pro-Taiwan pressure

within the US Congress, and Washington's fear that Taiwan's collapse would erode trust with its Asian allies, such as South Korea and Japan.

Therefore, the US might attempt to manage a long and complex transition that prevents war, postpones a decisive outcome, and makes Taiwan's return to China a natural process, but over a considerable period.

Fourth: Is Taiwan's return to China now just a matter of time?

China considers the reunification of Taiwan not merely a political option, but part of restoring China's historical dignity after a century of humiliation by the West. Therefore, the island issue is a non-negotiable objective, regardless of how long it takes. But Taiwan's return is not easy for several reasons, including:

- Taiwanese society has developed a distinct political identity from China.
- Any direct invasion could escalate into a devastating regional war.
- The global economy would suffer a massive shock if Taiwanese semiconductor factories were to shut down.
- Japan and the United States fear that the fall of Taiwan would lead to China's complete dominance of the Western Pacific.

However, the balance of power is shifting in China's favor, especially with China's expanding naval military and the declining willingness of the United States to engage in open warfare, particularly given its current domestic divisions.

The Taiwan crisis today is not merely a border dispute between China and the rebellious island; it is a test for the future of the entire global order.

The United States faces a historic dilemma: either defend Taiwan and risk a major war with China, or gradually accept the rise of a new Asian order led by China. These profound transformations sweeping the entire international system mean that the world, which emerged after the Cold War under absolute American hegemony, now appears to be facing a redistribution of influence. New powers are rising, capable of challenging the traditional Western center politically, economically, and militarily.

Amidst these transformations, a new international power may emerge. The only candidate capable of ascending to the top as quickly as possible, and transitioning from an emerging state to a major power, is the return of the Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly Guided Caliphate) on the Method of Prophethood.

The West understands the implications of this return because the Khilafah is the only power capable of ending America's arrogance and its capitalist ideology, cutting China back down to its natural size, and spreading justice and light throughout this globe, in fulfillment of the glad tidings of the Messenger of Allah (saw) who said, «إِنَّ اللَّهَ» **Allah showed me the earth and I saw its east and west, and my Ummah's dominion will reach what was shown to me of it.**