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China-Taiwan relations and their implications for international security

Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (RCh), commonly known as Taiwan, and in the UN nomenclature as Taiwan the Province of China, are two states originating from China and coexisting in the international environment for over 70 years. Despite the huge differences in the size of populated areas, size of population itself and economic and military potential, they aspire to assert domination over each other, to lead the Chinese nation as one entity.

There is a place in the world for the nation to function as two separate states. An example is China's neighbour Korea, divided into North and South, both members of the UN and both internationally recognized. The situation is different with the PRC and the RCh, where the desire to exercise power over the whole nation and territory brings negative implications to peace in the region since the beginning of their existence. Due to the level of involvement of other superpowers in this problem, it can be hypothesized that this situation has also significant implications regarding world peace. The aim of this article is to provide detailed outlook on these complex relations, including the threat of nuclear weapons use. It is also to highlight existence of the periods of cooperation and benefits they brought to the region and to the world. In the following text the author presented the most important facts from history and analysed current political and military situation in terms of threats of a new armed conflict.

Historical background to the creation of two Chinese states

The competition for control of China has lasted much longer than the existence of these two entities. It began in 1912, with the fall of the Manchu Qing dynasty, which had ruled China since the mid-seventeenth century, and the proclamation of the Republic of China, leading to a very weakened country overwhelmed by revolutionary upheavals. In 1913, the National Party (Kuomintang) came to the forefront of political arena and won the elections. From 1919, Soviet Russia began to infiltrate China in through popularisation of communist ideas and searching for individuals capable of undertaking organizational activities – as a result, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was formed. In the communist circles, Mao Zedong began to build his position as a future dictator, at the same time cooperating with the nationalists. Soon, Chiang Kai-shek became the head of the National Party, which increasingly began to move away from cooperation with Soviet Russia and the native communists.¹

Nationalism and aversion to the Soviet political model in the National Party, led to an inevitable collision with the Chinese Communist Party. The main reason for the open conflict at the turn of 1926–27 was the attempt by the communists, supported by Soviet agents, to take over the leadership in the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai-shek was familiar with those practices² and strongly opposed them, which resulted in bloody fighting, and sometimes even massacres of members and supporters of both parties.

In the summer of 1927, Mao Zedong decided to leave the nationalists and return to the CCP.³ It was not a good time for the communists and by the end of the year they were defeated, with both sides of the conflict acting with great cruelty. Eliminated from various regions over next few years they remained on the defensive and they were only saved from total defeat by the constant break outs of rebellions by local warlords and the aggression against China undertaken by Japan in 1931.⁴ The capitulation of Japan following the Second World War again caused the outbreak of fighting between communists and nationalists. As a result of diplomatic actions taken by the United States, with the support of Soviet Russia, negotiations were conducted between the feuding parties. Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong met on

¹ J. Chang, J. Halliday, *Mao. Nieznana historia*, transl. by P. Amsterdamski, Znak, Kraków 2021, p. 50–64.

² Chiang Kai-shek spent several months in Moscow in 1923 – this visit left a negative impression on him and did not convince him about the value of the new system. See W. Tomaszewski, *Chiang Kai-shek i komuniści. Nietrwale zwycięstwo*, Histmag.org, <https://histmag.org/Generalissimus-Chiang-Kai-shek-i-komunisci.-Cz.-1-Zwyciestwo-10410> [accessed: 01.12.2022].

³ J. Chang, J. Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁴ H. Kissinger, *Porządek światowy*, transl. by M. Antosiewicz, Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wołowiec 2017, p. 211.

28th August 1945 in Chongqing. The talks in the presence of diplomats of the great powers lasted 45 days, but both sides, contrary to their declarations, were aware that only a violent settlement of the dispute is a viable option.

After the fighting resumed, the government side was supported by the Americans, and the communists by the Russians. United States did not cease its diplomatic efforts and marshal George Marshall, sent as a negotiator, for a year tried unsuccessfully to persuade the parties to the conflict to sign a peace agreement and create a common government.⁵ Communists' advantage stemmed from the land route connection with Soviet Russia and also constant help flowing through it.⁶ The fighting in 1949 gave communists a definite advantage and forced the government forces to withdraw. In the face of defeat, Chiang Kai-shek with about 2 million of his supporters and national treasures, withdrew to the island of Taiwan, announced the transfer of the capital to Taipei, and proclaimed the continuation of the rule over the whole of China with the retention of the country's rightful permanent seat on the UN Security Council.⁷

On 1st October 1949, in Beijing, from the terrace of the Tiananmen Gate, the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong, shouted to a crowd of 300,000, "China has risen from its knees." It was a proclamation of victory over the National Party and a proclamation of the creation of a new state – the People's Republic of China (PRC).⁸

Relationship between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China with the United States in the background

The Republic of China encompasses the island of Taiwan (35961 km² area) and the Fishing Islands (in 1895 annexed to Japan and returned to China following decisions regulating territorial matters after World War II) and the group of islands of Matsu and Quemoy near mainland China.⁹ The Taiwan Strait, about 160 km wide, separating the island from the mainland, was in 1949 a sufficiently effective obstacle, which the communist forces were unable to cross. Although Mao asked Stalin for planes with crews and ships to invade the island in 1950, the vision of confrontation with the United States, with its superior nuclear weapons and navy,

⁵ Idem, *O Chinach*, transl. by M. Komorowska, Wydawnictwo Czarne, Wołowiec 2017, p. 103.

⁶ J. Chang, J. Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 338–340.

⁷ H. Kissinger, *O Chinach*, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

⁸ B. Góralczyk, *Wielki renesans. Chińska transformacja i jej konsekwencje*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, Warszawa 2018, p. 17.

⁹ More on the subject of legal and international issues pertaining to the island's status can be found in: L. Antonowicz, *Status prawnomiędzynarodowy Republiki Chińskiej na Tajwanie*, [in]: *Tajwan w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, ed. E. Halizak, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 1997, p. 33.

did not appeal to Soviet Russia.¹⁰ Following the fall of Chiang Kai-shek's government on the mainland, the United States distanced itself from defeat, blaming the nationalists for corruption and incompetence and President Truman declared at a press conference on 5th January 1950 that the United States would not provide military or advisory assistance in Taiwan.¹¹ To the contrary, after the start of the conflict President Truman quickly changed his approach towards Taiwan. He directed the Taiwan Strait 7th Fleet to isolate the island from the mainland, simultaneously forcing the nationalist government to refrain from any operations against the PRC.

The unresolved issue of the two Chinese governments returned after the end of the Korean conflict. United States and its allies suggested recognizing the entities as separate states, but both communists and nationalists were adamant that Taiwan and mainland China were part of the same political entity. The so-called First Taiwan Crisis broke out in 1954, under the pretext of the military reinforcement of several small islands off the coast of the continent, which were in the hands of nationalists after the withdrawal of the 7th Fleet from the strait. Paradoxically, Mao Zedong made possession of those islands possible, claiming that it would maintain the "rebels" relationship with the continent.¹² After the artillery shelling, which resulted in the death of two American officers (amongst others), the United States allowed for artillery and air force retaliation by nationalists on the continent, and began to develop plans for the possible use of tactical nuclear weapons in the event of further escalation.¹³ Additionally, in order to strengthen the legal and political systems, on 23rd November 1954 a defence treaty was signed between the USA and Taiwan. The actions of communist China caused concern in the Soviet Union which, bound by the alliance treaty, could find itself facing nuclear war, increasingly described by Khrushchev as unacceptable, particularly with readiness to unleash it officially confirmed by the Americans on 15th March 1955.¹⁴ In the face of such a serious threat, the Communists announced their readiness to negotiate, resulting in the establishing of official relations between Washington and Beijing through consular officials based in Geneva.

The lack of progress in the negotiations caused the PRC to trigger a second crisis in the Taiwan Strait. On 28th August the People's Liberation Army began shelling the islands occupied by the nationalists. Just like before it ended with a return to diplomatic talks, and the threat of using nuclear weapons in defence of an ally this time was put forward by Soviet Russia. The crisis resulted in a period of 10 years

¹⁰ J. Chang, J. Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 366.

¹¹ H. Kissinger, *O Chinach, op. cit.*, p. 130–131.

¹² J. Chang, J. Halliday, *op. cit.*, p. 471.

¹³ H. Kissinger, *O Chinach, op. cit.*, p. 165.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 167.

of stagnation in US-PRC relations and the transition to hostile approach towards each other by the PRC and Soviet Russia.

Another breakthrough came when Richard Nixon became President of the United States, subsequently publicly expressing his desire to improve relations with China in 1969. After long and complicated, mostly secret, diplomatic talks in which the main role was played by Henry Kissinger – the President's National Security Advisor, the meeting between Mao Zedong and Richard Nixon was finalised. According to Kissinger, it was the most important event since the end of the Second World War. It also left its mark on US-Taiwan relations, and especially on the international situation of the latter.¹⁵ On 25th October 1971, when Kissinger was in Beijing for the second time in preparation for Nixon's visit, the United Nations voted to change China's representative in this organization – the place of the Republic of China, also as a permanent member of the Security Council, was taken by the People's Republic of China. This decision resulted in the immediate exclusion of Taiwan's representatives from UN and all other organizations associated with it. At the same time, almost all member states broke off diplomatic relations with Taipei and established new ones with Beijing.¹⁶

During the historical meeting, Mao ignored Nixon's initiative to discuss issues important to mutual security, like for example relations with the RCh. The Chinese communists' leader famously stated that the matter was waiting twenty years so it might wait another twenty or even a hundred. Results of negotiations during the ongoing summit were included in the so-called Shanghai communiqué summarizing the visit, in which the US acknowledged that there is one China, and that Taiwan is part of China, confirmed the interest in a peaceful solution to the problem by the Chinese themselves and expressed their intention to withdraw troops from the island in the long term. PRC on the other hand made it clear that it would not try to solve the problem by force.¹⁷ This communiqué was of great importance for both Chinese entities, reducing the level of hostility by recognising the belief of both sides in China's unity, and opening the door to cooperation.

Intense negotiations between USA and PRC centred mainly around Taiwan issue, particularly the existing military alliance, the Taipei-Washington treaty and arms sales. In the absence of agreement on that matter and despite the formal recognition of the government in Beijing as the sole representative in international relations, in April 1979 both houses of Congress passed the so-called Taiwan

¹⁵ In reality it was not only about the USA-PRC relationship but about improvement to international security. Nixon wanted (and achieved) cooperation between the USA-PRC-Soviet Russia triangle, as its lack threatened their peaceful coexistence. See W. Isaacson, *Kissinger*, transl. by F. Filipowski, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2021.

¹⁶ L. Antonowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

¹⁷ H. Kissinger, *O Chinach*, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

Relations Act¹⁸ which defined U.S. relations with Taiwan. It is considered that the fundamental document for further Sino-American cooperation, but also within the framework of existing Chinese entities, was the so-called third communiqué issued after further negotiations (17th August 1982). It is characteristic that US and PRC officials deliberately emphasized different aspects of the Communiqué and proposed significantly different interpretations of the language used. For example, the US side focused on the correlation between limiting arms sales to Taiwan and the peaceful policy of the People's Republic of China towards Taiwan, while the Chinese decided to focus on US commitments to respect China's sovereignty and gradually reduce the export of arms to the RCh. This flexibility of the Communiqué was intentional and accepted by all, which allowed it to succeed.¹⁹

Peaceful coexistence and another cold war in relations between mainland China and Taiwan

The deaths of Chiang Kai-shek (5th April 1975) and Mao Zedong (9th September 1976) combined with the start of the process of change on the continent and on the island, improved relations within China and have had a positive impact on the level of security in the region. The most important changes in the PRC included various changes in economic policy, which in some way forced the opening to the West to acquire new technologies and markets. In turn, Chiang Kai-shek's successor made the process of democratization in the 1980s possible, leading to the illegal creation of the Democratic Progress Party (DPP), the first opposition party in Taiwan, and finally in 1987 the lifting of martial law. The dynamically developing economies of both entities allowed for the establishment of contacts in this field²⁰ and simultaneously the development of tourism, visits between separated families, scientific and cultural exchanges.

In April 1993, the first official meeting of the parties since the fall of the Nationalist government took place in Singapore, where several agreements were signed – these meetings continued.²¹ However, the problem of Taiwan's legal status in the international environment has not disappeared. In particular, the DPP, which was seeking independence from the continent, and some Kuomintang activists, who

¹⁸ *All Information for H.R.2479 – Taiwan Relations Act*, Congress.gov, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/96th-congress/house-bill/2479/all-info> [accessed: 02.12.2022].

¹⁹ *The August 17, 1982 U.S.-China Communiqué on Arms Sales to Taiwan*, Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1981-1988/china-communicue> [accessed: 05.11.2022].

²⁰ In 1993, Taiwan overtook Japan to become China's second largest overseas source of investment. See H. Kissinger, *O Chinach*, op. cit., p. 406.

²¹ A. Ziętek, *Aktualne problemy polityki zagranicznej Republiki Chińskiej na Tajwanie*, [in:] *Tajwan w stosunkach międzynarodowych...*, op. cit., p. 65.

have denied Beijing's unification proposals as part of 'One country, two systems' principle, have taken diplomatic steps²² to recognise the RCh as a sovereign state and restore its membership in the UN.

These actions met with an adverse reaction from the PRC and led to the so-called third Taiwan crisis. China suspended contacts with the USA at the highest level and a demonstration of force against Taiwan ensued. The situation escalated at the turn of 1995/96 in connection with the planned presidential elections there and the possibility of the winning candidate securing independence of the country. In response, the United States sent a powerful fleet to the Taiwan Strait to ensure the security of its ally. Seeing the threat of an inevitable conflict in the event of further escalation, both sides signalled willingness to negotiate. Once again common sense prevailed and peace in the region was maintained. The elections in Taiwan went ahead as planned and Lee Teng-hui became the first president of the Republic of China elected by universal suffrage, and the crisis came to an end.²³ Another period of peaceful coexistence has begun, with both sides astonishingly developing their economic and military potential. Taiwan was increasingly talking about independence, and the continent continued policing the 'One China principle' – all in the shadow of the USA.

The fundamental interests of China, the United States and Taiwan have not changed significantly, and the relationship remained sinusoidal. Beijing remained focused on unification with Taiwan, effectively trying to stop the Taiwanese people's independence aspirations, and it continued encouraging the United States to strictly interpret the 'One China policy'. Not everything was going according to these expectations, which was influenced not only by relations "inside China" but also by international conditions, caused, among others, by the threat perceived by the Western world, posed by the growing economic and military power of this country. At this time, it could be said with certainty that the fourth Taiwan crisis was underway. Reasons for it could be sought in the increasing role of the forces opposing the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland. DPP was growing in strength, supported by the democratic citizens' movement and the decidedly negative attitude towards idea of unification from the popular president of the RCh Tsai Ing-wen,²⁴ who emphasized it many times in her speeches. Beijing's dissatisfaction

²² The activities were carried out as part of unofficial, often holiday trips of large groups of government members to selected countries, there they presented their postulates on purposefully organised forums, see *ibidem*, p. 467.

²³ M. Mazza, *Reflections on 25 Years Ago – risks for a Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis*, American Enterprise Institute, 24.03.2021, <https://www.aei.org/articles/reflections-on-25-years-ago-risks-for-a-fourth-taiwan-strait-crisis/> [accessed: 07.11.2022].

²⁴ *Transformation in the Strait. Prospects for Change in China-Taiwan-US Relations*, Toda Peace Institute, March 2022, <https://toda.org/policy-briefs-and-resources/policy-briefs/transformation-in-the-strait-prospects-for-change-in-china-taiwan-us-relations.html> [accessed: 03.11.2022].

was increased by rekindling of official relations between Taiwan and the United States, such as the visit of congressmen to Taiwan in 2018, the visit to the US by President Tsai Ing-wen in 2019 and the first, since the break in diplomatic relations, visit of representatives of the American government to the island in 2020.²⁵ Bitterness was increased by the visit to Taiwan of Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of the Democratic Party in the United States House of Representatives.²⁶ The visit was of great importance to the Taiwanese authorities, as it further internationally highlighted the problem of the existence of two Chinese states and the need to regulate it. It is difficult to assess whether in response to the communist protests or as part of planned actions, but during the ongoing crisis, the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed the Taiwan Policy Act of 2022, which provides Taiwan with security assistance in the amount of USD 6.5 billion for the purchase of military equipment.²⁷ To reinforce the message, “U.S. President Joe Biden stated in a television interview on Monday, 19th September, that U.S. forces would defend Taiwan if China attacked this self-governing state.”²⁸ In addition, he assured the Taiwanese that they would maintain their status as the main non-NATO ally and could count on support in the field of military and technological exchange and assistance. In response to these events, mainland China issued a number of statements condemning the United States, and Chinese President Xi Jinping, at the opening of the CCP Congress on 20th October 2022 declared “that China will never renounce force as a method of restoring sovereignty over the island if peaceful efforts to reunify China fail.”²⁹ These provoked negative reactions towards communist China from Taiwan, the US and the democratic world. Fortunately, it did not lead, as in the case of the third crisis, to the rupture of diplomatic relations. On 14th November 2022, the presidents of the USA and the PRC held a meeting on the island of Bali in Indonesia, discussing key issues, including trilateral relations (USA, PRC, RCh). From the issued statement it is not clear what is the true result of the meeting and whether

²⁵ See Ł. Wordliczek, *Długi cień smoka: stosunki USA – Chiny w XXI w.*, [in:] *Chiny w polityce międzynarodowej*, ed. J. Kloczkowski, Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, Kraków 2022, pp. 81–82.

²⁶ M. Mazzini, *Nancy Pelosi z wizytą na Tajwanie. W USA złość, Chiny wysyłają myślicze*, *Polityka*, 03.08.2022, <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/swiat/2176179,1,nancy-pelosi-z-wizyta-na-tajwanie-w-usa-zlosc-chiny-wysylaja-mysliwce.read> [accessed: 07.11.2022].

²⁷ The Taiwan Policy Act of 2022, United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Taiwan%20Policy%20Act%20One%20Pager%20FINAL.pdf> [accessed: 10.11.2022].

²⁸ O. Lam, *Taiwan Policy Act 2022: The US becomes less ambiguous about defending Taiwan*, *Global Voices*, 19.09.2022, <https://globalvoices.org/2022/09/19/taiwan-policy-act-2022-the-us-becomes-less-ambiguous-about-defending-taiwan/> [accessed: 10.11.2022].

²⁹ *Tajwan odpowiada Xi Jinpingowi: Chiny nie wygrają przy użyciu siły*, 20.10.2022, *Rzeczpospolita*, <https://www.rp.pl/dyplomacja/art37269501-tajwan-odpowiada-xi-jinpingowi-chiny-nie-wygraja-przy-uzyciu-sily> [accessed: 07.11.2022].

it helped to pursue the interests of America and the entire West in relations with the Middle Kingdom – it is important that the talks will be continued³⁰.

Conclusions

The Taiwan Strait region can be described as a powder keg with a smouldering fuse or one of the most conflict-endangered regions of the world, which is not only related to the Sino-Taiwan-American problems presented in the article. For the main subjects of this dispute – the USA and the PRC – it is also participation in the game for domination in the South China Sea, in which there are many more parties. Returning to the main topic, contrary to earlier predictions, the passage of time does not improve the situation. The basic problem is democracy – for some (Taiwan) the basic aspect of existence, for others (the PRC) unnecessary, and problematic to those in power. In Taiwanese society, fewer and fewer people feel connected to the mainland, and more and more have a sense of their own, separate statehood. Many of them have studied in democratic countries, especially the USA, and want to live by the same principles. Furthermore, growing prosperity, dynamic economic development, a sense of support from a superpower and increasing recognition in the international environment legitimize the pursuit of one's own statehood.

In addition, restrictions on civil liberties and human rights in Hong Kong, after coming under the control of the PRC, discourage Taiwanese from risking reunification even according to the principle of 'One country, two systems'.³¹ For mainland China, where Taiwan is just a rebellious province always destined to re-join, reunification is indisputable. This is especially true of the current situation, in which the PRC has moved to the second position in the world in terms of economic and military strength. In addition, after years of development with "bowed head", the time has come to raise it and this is what a large part of Chinese society expects. Nationalist rhetoric and the lack of visible prospects for democratic reforms in the country mean that the President of China cannot back down, and that unification is a necessary condition for the realization of his basic goal – the great renaissance of the Chinese nation.

What is important in all this is the position of an external participant in the events, actively involved in the dispute since its inception – the United States, which, after a period of cooperation with the communists and the hope that economic development will translate into an increase in democracy and an improvement in respect for

³⁰ *Readout of President Joe Biden's Meeting with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China*, The White House, 14.11.2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/14/readout-of-president-joe-bidens-meeting-with-president-xi-jinping-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china/> [accessed: 20.11.2022].

³¹ B. Góralczyk, *Nowy długi marsz. Chiny ery Xi Jinpinga*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, Warszawa 2021, p. 197.

human rights, understood that they were wrong. If China united, it would become the world's largest economic power.³² During the presidency of Donald Trump, despite the high polarization on the political scene, there was a large unanimity in actions against the PRC and in favour of closer relationship with RCh. Exceptionally, this direction is being pursued by his successor, Joe Biden. The United States not only increased its involvement but continued to expand its coalition system. The AUKUS Pact³³ was created, an agreement on a new format of technological and defence cooperation between Australia, Great Britain and the United States, developed cooperation within the framework of the QUAD initiative (political format of the USA, Australia, Japan and India) and the so-called Alliance of Five Eyes (Anglo-Saxon countries – USA, Canada, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand), and a number of other agreements between the countries of the region and beyond. Role of Japan is also important – a determined and reliable ally of the USA, in which superpower tendencies have awakened and which is dynamically developing its armed forces and is putting forward more and more contentious demands towards the PRC.

An important factor influencing the approach of the United States in this dispute is the trust of partners. Submission to China and consent to the forcible annexation of Taiwan to mainland China would undermine the trust of partners in the Americans. The belief in the ability of the USA to intervene in the defence of its closest partners, strongly demonstrated during the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine, is the glue that binds the system of alliances and other agreements. Undermining this trust could lead to a situation where most Asian countries would make a far-reaching re-orientation in their policies, abandoning Washington or weakening ties. All this, with the inflexible attitude of mainland China, makes even a prominent diplomat, personally involved in the process of stabilizing relations between the USA and the PRC, Henry Kissinger, state that “We are on the brink of war with Russia and China on issues that we have partly created. All we can do now is not to increase tensions and create new options, and for that you need to have a goal.”³⁴ This goal, according to the author, is reflected in the words of the great politician Winston Churchill: “Civilization will not last, freedom will not survive, peace will not reign unless the majority of humanity unites to defend them and shows a force before which barbarians and atavistic forces will feel respect.”³⁵

³² *Ibidem*, p. 210.

³³ M. Bogusz, *AUKUS: nowy format bezpieczeństwa na Pacyfiku wymierzony w Chiny*, OSW, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2021-09-20/aukus-nowy-format-bezpieczenstwa-na-pacyfiku-wymierzony-w-chiny> [accessed: 12.11.2022].

³⁴ L. Secor, *Henry Kissinger Is Worried About 'Disequilibrium'*, WSJ, 12.08.2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/henry-kissinger-is-worried-about-disequilibrium-11660325251> [accessed: 12.11.2022].

³⁵ N. Ferguson, *Cywilizacja. Zachód i reszta świata*, transl. by P. Szymor, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2022.

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*China-Taiwan relations and their implications for international security**Abstract*

The victory of the communist forces in the civil war in China resulted in the flight of the government, with the defeated leader Chiang Kai-shek and about 2 million followers, to the island of Taiwan. Hoping for a change in the situation, the President of the Republic of China announced temporary move of the capital of China to Taiwan. At the same time Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao Zedong, took control of the entire territory of mainland China, with the capital in Beijing, announcing the establishment of the People's Republic of China. This article deals with the assessment of the relationship between those two entities, that have coexisted unchanged since 1949. During this period, they followed different political pathways, but they invariably absorbed international opinion and affected the level of international security. Inspiration to take up this topic came from the significant deterioration of the international situation, influenced by the relationship between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China.

Keywords: China, Taiwan, international relations, South China Sea region, Taiwan Strait, threats to peace, security