



US-China Tensions

For Prelims: Location of Taiwan and China

For Mains: US- China Rivalry over Taiwan Issue and Need to Enhance India-Taiwan Relations

Why in News?

Recently, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of US visited Taiwan, the highest level American official to go to the island since 1997.

- This visit has raised tension between US and China.



What is the Taiwan-China issue?

- **About:**
 - [Taiwan](#) is an island about 160 km off the coast of southeastern China, opposite the Chinese cities of Fuzhou, Quanzhou, and Xiamen.
- **History:**
 - It was administered by the **Qing imperial dynasty**, but its control was passed to the Japanese in 1895.
 - After the defeat of Japan in [World War II](#), the island passed back into Chinese hands.
 - After the communists led by Mao Zedong won the civil war in mainland China, Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the **nationalist Kuomintang party**, fled to Taiwan in 1949.
 - Chiang Kai-shek set up the government of the Republic of China on the island and remained President until 1975.

- Following the split of China and Taiwan in the civil war, the Republic of China (ROC) government was relocated to Taiwan. On the other hand, The Communist Party of China (CPC) established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the mainland.
 - Since then, the PRC observes Taiwan as a traitor province and awaits reintegration with Taiwan, if possible, by peaceful means.
- **Present status:**
 - China has never recognized the existence of Taiwan as an independent political entity, arguing that it was always a Chinese province.
 - But China and Taiwan have had economic ties.
 - Many migrants from Taiwan work in China, and China has investments in Taiwan.

What is USA's Policy toward Taiwan?

- **About:**
 - It has maintained a **'One China' policy** since the 1970s, under which it recognizes Taiwan as a part of China.
 - **'One China' policy means** that the nations who want to have diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) have to recognize the PRC but not the ROC as China, breaking the relations with **Republic of China (ROC)**.
 - It established that the communist government in mainland China was the legitimate representative and Taiwan was a breakaway part of it.
 - But it also has unofficial ties with Taiwan.
 - And do support Taiwan in the form of defending the island from external aggression by providing military equipment and intelligence.
- **China's Concern with the Recent Visit:**
 - As China considers Taiwan as a part of its territory, it claimed that the visit would severely undermine China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
 - It could gravely impact the foundation of **China-US relations** and send a seriously wrong signal to Taiwan's independence forces.
 - According to China, the presence of a senior American figure in Taiwan would indicate some kind of US support for Taiwan's independence.

What is Indian Policy towards Taiwan?

- India also follows One China Policy and it doesn't have formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan. But it has an office in Taipei for diplomatic functions.
 - **India-Taipei Association (ITA)** is headed by a senior diplomat.
 - whereas, Taiwan has the **Taipei Economic and Cultural Center (TECC)** in New Delhi.
- The Indo-Taiwanese ties basically **focused on trade, commerce, culture, and education**.
- In recent times, after China's belligerence in [Galwan](#), India has stepped up its relationship with Taiwan.
 - The Indian government had handpicked diplomat to become its envoy in Taipei.
 - Also, the ruling party's two MPs attended the swearing-in ceremony of Taiwan President through virtual mode.

What is the Importance of Taiwan?

- Semiconductors are critical components that power electronics from computers and smartphones to brake sensors in cars.
 - The production of chips involves a complex network of firms that design or make them, as well as those that supply the technology.
- The majority of semiconductors are produced in Taiwan and it dominates the outsourcing of semiconductor manufacturing.
- Further, its contract manufacturers together **accounted for more than 60% of total global semiconductor revenue** last year.

Way Forward

- It is time for India to rethink its One China Policy and separate its relationship with mainland China from that with Taiwan.
- Also, further **enhance its security and economic ties with Taiwan** in the same way as China is expanding its involvement in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) through its ambitious project China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

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