

## Formosa: the Beautiful Island



John Michael Preston

When Dutch explorers first sighted Taiwan in 1544, they named it Isle de Formosa from the latin, *fōrmōsus*, which means beautifully formed.

## Island on the Edge of War?

- Jan 26, 2023, General Minihan
- Jan 30, 2023; Rep. McCaul
- Feb 4, 2023; CIA Director Burns
- How did we get here?



America  
 ..the odds of  
 "I hope I am  
 conflict with  
 cowboy My gut  
 China over Taiwan  
 self-governed Taiwan by  
 "are very high  
 2027  
 fight in 2025,"

\*On Jan 26, 2023, an internal memo from the General in Charge of the US Air Mobility Command to the airmen under his command was leaked, telling them to prepare for war with China and update their "Record of Emergency Data" i.e. their dependents contact information and wills. The memo was sent on Feb 1.

\*On Jan 30, 2023, Representative Michael McCaul, new chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said he agreed with the General.

\*On Feb 4, 2023, CIA Director William Burns testified that President Xi ordered his military to be ready to invade Taiwan by 2027.

\*Following speaker Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022 and China's response, I found that I didn't know much about Taiwan and how our relationship came about so I spent the last few months researching its history and our relationship. I wanted to know if we went to war on their behalf would it be more like Afghanistan or Ukraine? Today, I will share some of the information I found with you.

3

## Taiwan: Island on the Edge

- Location
- Geography
- Austronesian
- Indigenous people
  - Plains, Mountains
  - 50% of the land
  - 2% of the population



Let's begin with some background information.

\*The island of Taiwan is 90 miles wide and 245 miles long. It is about 100 miles off the coast of mainland China at the edge of the underwater continental shelf that it shares with Japan to the north and the Philippines to the south. \*It is about a quarter of the size of Florida.

\*Its eastern side is bordered by steep mountains that run the length of the island. Its western shore has flatter areas that are suitable for farming. The islands off the western coast were called the Pescadores by the Spanish for their good fishing but are now called the Penghu.

\*Anthropologists estimate that humans came to Taiwan from the mainland more than 6000 years ago and developed the **Austronesian** language and culture which spread from there to cover the islands from Madagascar to New Zealand and Hawaii.

\*Indigenous tribes that \*originally lived on the western plains have become more integrated with Han Chinese immigrants but there are still separate ethnic villages. In the mountains, there are more than a dozen distinctive ethnic areas.

\*indigenous people occupy about half of the land but have only \*2% of the total population. (2% of the US population are native Americans on 2% of the land)

中国

## Dynasty to Republic

- Traditional name and outlook
- Qing dynasty
- Century of Humiliation
- 1899, Hong Kong, 99 year lease
- 1912, Republic of China (ROC)
- Kuomintang (KMT) political party
- 1927 Shanghai massacre



中華民國

\*China is a name given to the country by foreigners. Its real name is represented by these two characters that stand for Central Kingdom. They represent China's longstanding view that its natural position in the world is at its center. It had little interest in foreign trade or the islands off the coast, including Taiwan.

\*For most of its history, it was ruled by families or dynasties. The last was the Qing dynasty. The Qing were a family from Manchuria in the north that dominated the Han Chinese who lived in the south. The Qing made the Han Chinese men wear their hair in the Manchu style on pain of death.

\*During the Qing dynasty, China was dominated by western powers during the *Century of Humiliation* from 1849 to 1949 including two wars with the British over opium imports.

\*After the Second Opium war, in 1899, the British forced China to lease Hong Kong to them for 99 years. Wars on the mainland between the Qing and Han and with Western powers caused migrations of Han to Taiwan.

\*Internal warfare weakened the Qing government, and it was overthrown by a coalition of groups that called themselves *nationalists* and declared a new form of government. They renamed the country as *The Republic of China* (ROC). Notice the characters used in the name of the ROC include the original character names.

\*Their political party was the Kuomintang (KMT), \*led by General Chiang Kai shek. The coalition also included members of the communist party. \*In 1927, Chiang sought to purge the communists and killed several thousand in Shanghai and tens of thousands in the rest

of the country.

## Communists and Mao Zedong

5

- ▶ Long March 1934-35, 370 days, 5600 miles
- ▶ Adapted communism to peasants
- ▶ 1935, ROC claims South China Sea - 11 dash line



\*Chiang sought to eradicate the communists and had them surrounded in the south and about be defeated but they evaded the Nationalists by heading to the mountains and walking 5,600 miles North which took a year.

\*During the long march, Mao became the leader of the Communists. \*He recognized that the ideas of communism as developed by Karl Marx were intended for factory workers, not peasants. Mao revised the communist ideology to be more appealing to peasants and emphasized communal living, shared property, and equality of the sexes.

\*In 1935, the Republic of China (ROC) published a map indicating its claims in the South China Sea that had eleven dashes which include parts of the Bay of Tonkin between Vietnam and the island of Hainan.

6

## War with Japan

- 1895, Japan takes Korea and Taiwan, administers Taiwan as a colony
- 1930, ethnic revolt by Sediq
- 1932 – Japan takes Manchuria
- 1938 – Japan invades China
- Chiang causes flood to slow their advance
- 80,000 Taiwanese in the Japanese army



\*In 1895, Japan took advantage of China's weakness and seized Korea and Taiwan. Japan copied western practice and governed Taiwan as a colony, improving infrastructure and food supply.

\*There were several revolts by ethnic Han Chinese and by indigenous tribes including a massacre of 130 Japanese by the Sediq. The Japanese used chemical warfare agents on the Sediq.

\*In 1932, Japan took Manchuria, and then in \*1938 invaded China.

\*Chiang broke the dikes of the Yellow river and flooded a large area to slow the Japanese advance. This caused a famine and the deaths of more than 100,000 Chinese.

\*By this time, many Taiwanese saw themselves as loyal members of the Japanese empire and served in the Japanese army. They took part in the slaughter at the old capital of Nanking in China and fought in the Philippines.



## Post War

7

- ▶ 1943 Cairo declaration
- ▶ 1945 Potsdam declaration
- ▶ 1949 KMT retreats to Taiwan and declares martial law
- ▶ 1949 ROC on Taiwan controls offshore islands
- ▶ Peoples Republic of China (PRC)



\*In 1943, during WWII, Roosevelt and Churchill met with Chiang Kai-shek in Cairo and declared that after the war and Japan's defeat, Taiwan and the Pescadores (Penghu) islands would be returned to China (i.e. the ROC).

\*At the end of the war in 1945, The Potsdam declaration specifically ordered the Japanese army in Taiwan to surrender to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

\*In 1949, the communists under Mao defeated the KMT on the mainland. Chiang kai shek and the KMT retreated to Taiwan with more than a million people where Chiang took control and then declared martial law.

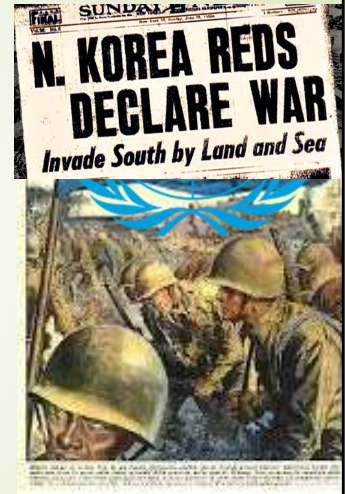
\*Chiang maintained that the ROC in Taiwan was the legitimate government of all of China. The ROC claimed most of the islands off the coast of the mainland, including Hainan.

\*The communist controlled country that occupies the mainland is *The People's Republic of China* (PRC). The ROC and PRC both agree that there can only be one central kingdom, they just disagree over who is the legitimate government.



## United Nations

- ▶ 1945 ROC, founding member
- ▶ 1949 Soviets boycott over Taiwan
- ▶ 1950 North Korean invade
- ▶ 1950 UN votes to send troops



\*In 1945, the ROC was a founding member of the United Nations and had one of five permanent seats on the Security Council along with the US, France, England, and the Soviet Union. To take action, all five must agree.

\*When the PRC under Mao won the civil war, the Soviets insisted that the PRC replace the ROC on the security council. When that didn't happen, they boycotted the council meetings.

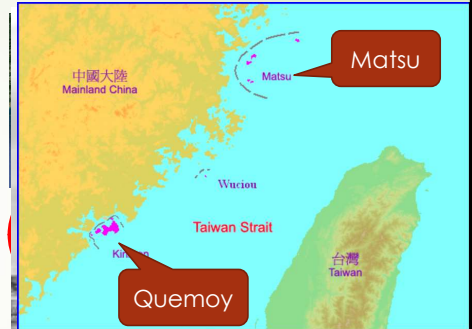
\*In 1950, North Korean communists invaded South Korea.

\*Because the Soviets were not present, the Security council voted to send troops

# Conflict Over Islands

9

- 1950 PRC takes Hainan
- 1950 ROC attacks mainland
- 1950 Truman, 7th fleet
- 1952 Treaty of Taipei
- 1955 Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty (1955-1980)
- 1958 PRC shelling of islands
- 1958 Eisenhower doctrine: "armed forces not to be used for aggressive purposes"



- \*In 1950, the PRC took the island of Hainan and \*Chiang attacked the mainland from the coastal islands of Kinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu.
- \*In 1950, President Truman sent the 7th fleet into the Taiwan Strait to protect Taiwan from the PRC and to stop ROC attacks. Truman said that the status of Formosa must await a final peace settlement, until then its status was undetermined.
- \*In 1952, Japan signed a peace treaty with China in Taiwan's capital city of Taipei renouncing its claims to Taiwan and the Penghus, but without specifying if it was ceding the islands to the ROC or PRC leaving the status of Taiwan undetermined.
- \*In 1955 the US signed a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan that included the Pescadores but not Kinmen or Matsu. \*The US stationed nuclear cruise missiles on Taiwan.
- \*In 1958, the PRC attacked Kinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu with artillery. \*President Eisenhower's advisors pushed for a nuclear attack on China. The PRC stops shelling.\*

## Quemoy and Matsu

- 1960 Presidential debate
- Kennedy: Quemoy and Matsu not defensible
- Nixon: Area of freedom
- Quemoy (Kinmen) within sight of mainland



\*In 1960, the issue of defending the coastal islands of Quemoy (aka Kinmen) and Matsu became an issue in the presidential debates between Vice President Nixon and Senator Kennedy.

\*Kennedy maintained that the islands were too close to the coast to be defended and we should draw the line around Taiwan and the Penghus.\*

\*Nixon said that the islands were in the area of freedom which should be defended everywhere. He ignored the fact that Taiwan was under martial law and not free, just not communist.\*

\*Quemoy remains the most vulnerable of the islands still controlled by the ROC.\*

## Nixon, China and Taiwan

- 1971 UN replaces ROC
- 1972 Nixon's visit to China
- Shanghai communique
  - China
  - US
- 1975 South Vietnam falls

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determined.  
military installations on Taiwan as  
the **tension in the area diminishes.**

\*In 1971, the UN voted to replace the ROC with the PRC and grant them China's permanent seat on the security council.

\*In 1972, during the Vietnam war, Nixon traveled to China where he hoped to obtain China's aid in negotiating an end to the Vietnam war in exchange for recognition of the PRC as the sole legitimate government of all of China, including Taiwan. He and Kissinger asked that the chief negotiator for North Vietnam join them for informal talks. \*The North Vietnamese negotiator did not attend. After the meeting, the two sides published the Shanghai communique. \*Nixon did not get what he wanted. The Chinese emphasized their support of Vietnam and urged all foreign troops to leave, and \*they rejected any wording that implies Taiwan is independent.

\*The US agreed to China's view of Taiwan's status and said that "all Chinese" in Taiwan agree that there is only one China, which ignored those in Taiwan who didn't. He agreed to remove US troops and weapons from Taiwan "as tension diminishes".

\*In 1975, South Vietnam fell to the communists.

## US-PRC Relations

- Deng Xiaoping; 1978-89
- One Country, Two Systems
- 1979 Official diplomatic relations with PRC
- 1979, President Carter withdraws from defense treaty with Taiwan
- Senator Goldwater sues



\*After Mao died in 1976, leadership of the PRC was taken over by Deng Xiaoping. Deng normalized relations with the US and China's neighbors, cut military spending in half, restructured the economy, and raised 250,000 Chinese out of poverty.

\*He proposed a policy of *One Country, Two Systems* to assure residents of Hong Kong that when the time came for the British to return Hong Kong, their democratic rights would be protected. This policy was also proposed for Taiwan.

\*In 1979, the US recognized the PRC as the sole legitimate government of China and closed its embassy in Taiwan. \*President Carter unilaterally withdrew from the mutual defense treaty with Taiwan.

\*Senator Goldwater sued the administration stating that it did not have the authority to withdraw from a treaty without the consent of congress. The supreme court chose not to consider the case because the congress had not passed a resolution opposing the action so Goldwater did not have standing to speak for the congress.

## Taiwan Relations Act, 1979

- Peaceful means
- Provide defensive arms
- Nuclear fuel
- American Institute of Taiwan (AIT) functions like an embassy

... Nothing in this Act, nor ...  
 ... provide an institute in ...  
 ... the year of a president's ...  
 the office of a president's ...  
 of the office of a president's ...  
 incorporated under the ...  
 included in the records of ...  
 laws of the District of ...  
 Columbia, and any ...  
 experience security of the ...  
 Western Pacific area and ...  
 grave concerns to the ...  
 States.

**arms of a defensive**  
**character peaceful means,**  
**nuclear**  
**exports to Taiwan.**

\*In 1979, the congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act and President Carter signed it into law. It is the legal basis for our current relationship with Taiwan. It states that the PRC must use peaceful means to reunite with Taiwan

\*States that the US may provide defensive arms

\*The US will provide Taiwan with nuclear materials under license (fuel for its reactors)

\*The American Institute of Taiwan will function like an embassy and all previous trade and contracts will continue to be in effect.

## Nuclear Power and Weapons Program

- Six nuclear reactors, 16.7% of electricity
- 1973, Canadian reactor
- 1974, Indian bomb
- 1979, US withdraws from defense pact
- 1979, Nuclear weapons program
- IDF Fighter Jet
- 1988, program shut down



\*Taiwan has six nuclear reactors operating with enriched uranium fuel provided by the US, that account for 16% of their electric power.

\*In 1973, Taiwan began operating a Canadian heavy water research reactor that could produce Plutonium

\*In 1974, India tests its first nuclear bomb made with plutonium from the same model reactor. The CIA estimated that Taiwan was within five years of having a nuclear weapon.

\*When US terminated the mutual defense treaty in 1979, they also prevented Taiwan from developing offensive missiles and would not sell them long-range fighter jets like the F16 (2,600 miles).

\*Taiwan decided to develop nuclear weapons secretly with the intent of getting within 3 months of having a weapon without actually building one.

\*To deliver a nuclear weapon without a missile, the Taiwanese developed and built their own jet, known as the Indigenous Defense Fighter (IDF) with a range of only 680 miles. They worked on an elongated nuclear bomb design that could fit inside the fighter's external fuel tank.\*

\*In 1988, Colonel Chang Hsien-yi, a deputy director of Institute for Nuclear Energy Research, decided that Taiwan's nuclear weapons program was a danger to his country and must be stopped. He informed the US all about Taiwan's weapons program and they provided sanctuary to him and his family in the US. Taiwan shut down its nuclear weapons program under pressure from the US and its reactors are monitored by the International



Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

15

## South China Sea Claims

- ▶ Eleven vs. Nine - dash line
- ▶ Other countries
  - ▶ Malaysia
  - ▶ Vietnam
  - ▶ Philippines
  - ▶ Brunei
- ▶ Islands vs. reefs and rocks



\*The map of the South China Sea issued by the ROC in 1935 included claims to the area between Vietnam and Hainan island.

\*In 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) issued a new map that did not claim that area, known as the nine-dash line.

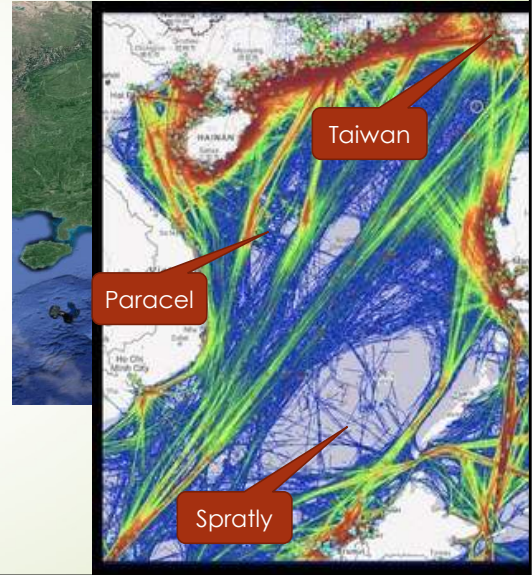
\*Parts of the South China Sea are shallow with more than 250 small rocks and reefs which are claimed by neighboring countries, such as \*Malaysia, \*Vietnam, the \*Philippines, and \*Brunei.

\*Under international law, an island can have territorial waters nearby while a rock or reef that does not have its own indigenous life does not. \*The PRC has increased the size and height of some of these rocks or reefs and built airbases on them.\*

16

## South China Sea

- ▶ Oil and gas
- ▶ Access to deep water for submarines
- ▶ International trade routes; 1/3 world's trade
- ▶ Spratly and Paracel



\*There may be large reserves of oil and natural gas in this area. Exploratory wells have been drilled in less disputed areas with little success and there is little interest in drilling expensive exploratory wells in disputed areas.

\*Submarines are harder to detect in deep water. A base in Taiwan would give the PRC access to deep water just off the eastern coast.

\*About a third of the world's maritime trade passes through the South China Sea. This map shows an overlay of individual ship's paths.

\*Notice that most ships avoid the area around the Spratly rocks and the Paracels

# Modern Taiwan

17

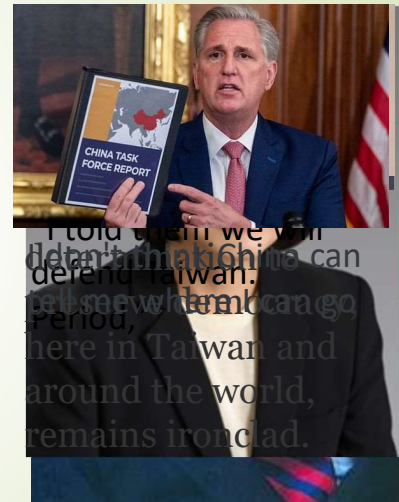
- Population; 23.6 million
- Ethnicities and Languages
  - Austronesian
  - Hokkien
  - Hakka
  - Japanese
  - Mandarin
- Religions

Indigenous  
原住民族  
2.3%

- \*The population of Taiwan is 23.6 million.
- \*Taiwan's languages reflect its history.
- \*Taiwan was the origin of the Austronesian languages that are spoken across the islands of the Pacific and are represented in the languages of the aboriginal people.
- \*Immigrants from the nearby Fujian province on the mainland brought the Hokkien language during the Ming dynasty.
- \*Han Chinese from a larger part of southern China brought the Hakka language during the Qing dynasty.
- \*Taiwan was controlled by the Japanese from 1895 to 1945 when Japanese was the only language taught in the schools of Taiwan, so elderly Taiwanese can speak Japanese.
- \*Chiang Kai shek required Mandarin when he imposed martial law in 1949. Most young people speak Mandarin and either Hokkien or Hakka.
- \*About a third of the people are Buddhist and another third are Taoist, 18% non-religious, and 4% Christian.

## Politics

- Chiang Ching-kuo, 1975-1988
- 1992 "Consensus"
- 1997, Hong Kong
- Democratic Progressive Party
- Tsai Ing Wen
- Visits by US House Speakers



\*Chiang Kai shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo succeeded him and lifted martial law in 1987 and allowed free elections. The KMT was still the dominant party.

\*In 1992, statements were issued by the ROC and PRC confirming the idea that there was only one China. This provided cover for increased trade. They did not agree which government should rule the entire country including Taiwan.

\*Since the PRC gained control of Hong Kong, they have reneged on the promise of *One Country, Two Systems*. Residents of Hong Kong have immigrated to Taiwan and Taiwan no longer thinks it can keep its democracy if it joins the PRC.

\*The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was founded as an alliance of anti-KMT groups. In 2007, it approved a resolution asserting a separate identity from China and called for the enactment of a new constitution for a "normal nation". It struck an accommodating tone by advocating general use of "Taiwan" as the country's name without calling for abandonment of the name Republic of China.

\*In 2016, the DPP candidate, Tsai Ing-wen won the presidency 56% to 31% and the legislature (68 of 113 seats) and she was reelected in 2020. She is the first of aboriginal descent (grandmother) and the second of Hakka descent. President Tsai is limited to two terms. Candidates for the election in 2024 have not been selected yet. The DPP is generally more in favor of independence while the KMT prefers the status quo to avoid a war with the PRC.

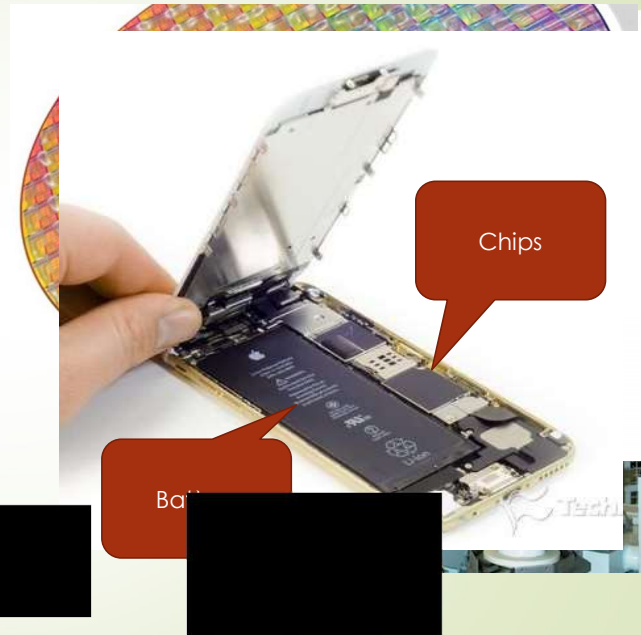
\*The PRC opposes any actions that support the idea that Taiwan is an independent country

such as visits by political leaders.

\*In 1997 US Speaker Newt Gingrich visited China and Taiwan where he vowed to defend Taiwan. In 2022, Speaker Pelosi visited and declared support. Recently elected speaker Kevin McCarthy stated in July 2022 that he would go if elected speaker. In Feb. 2023, he said; "I don't think China can tell me where I can go"

## Chips

- Silicon crystals
- Wafers
- Integrated circuits
- Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, ~90%
- Silicon shield



\*Integrated circuits are made from thin slices of pure silicon crystal. The silicon crystals are grown in long cylinders and \*sliced into wafers. \*Patterns of circuits are etched into the silicon to form 3-D arrays of transistors, capacitors, resistors and connecting pathways called integrated circuits or ICs.

\*The wafers are cut into individual ICs that are mounted on plastic holders with connecting wires. These are called chips. An automobile might use thousands of chips in its electronics  
 \*Inside an i-phone, the largest component is the battery. Advanced chips have smaller components and use less battery power.

\*Taiwan specializes in the world's most advanced computer chips and makes about 90% of them.

\*An attack on Taiwan or imposing a blockade would cut supplies of chips to the PRC as well as the rest of the world. Some call these chips the "silicon shield"

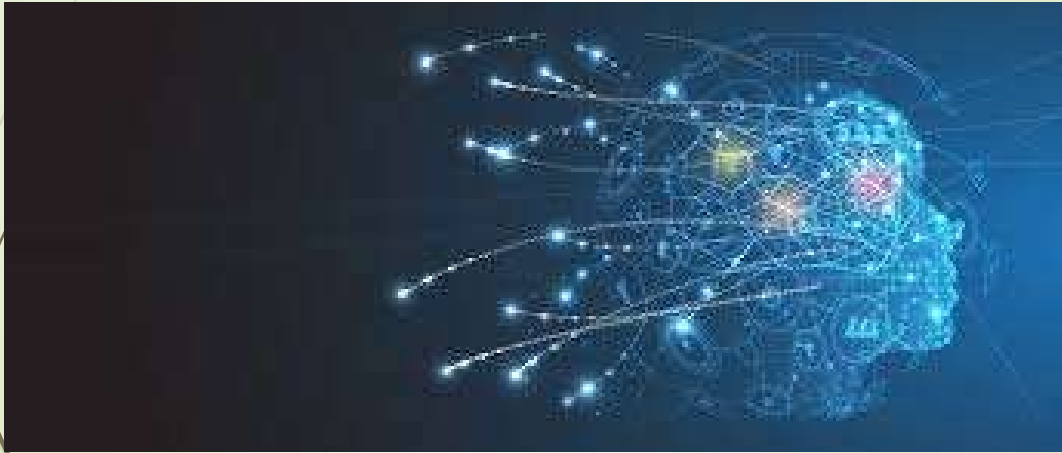


## Summary

- Most residents left the mainland for a better life
- ROC fought the communists
- No trust after Hong Kong
- "Silicon Shield"- chips manufactured in Taiwan too valuable to disrupt
- Taiwan will prevail with US help

21

What experiences and insights  
can you share with us?



## References

- ▶ War is likely [Link](#)
- ▶ Timeline BBC [Link](#)
- ▶ Migration to Taiwan [Link](#)
- ▶ Seediq rebellion [Link](#)
- ▶ Missionaries [Link](#)
- ▶ Taiwan nuclear weapons [Link](#), [Link](#) [Link](#)
- ▶ Nixon and Taiwan [Link](#), [Link](#), [Link](#)
- ▶ US-China diplomatic relations [Link](#)
- ▶ Taiwan Relations act 1979: [Link](#)
- ▶ Rocks vs. Islands [Link](#)
- ▶ South China Sea trade [Link](#)