Promoting Peace and Security

Horizon Insights

Quarterly Journal by Beyond the Horizon ISSG – Volume 7 Issue 2 - 2024 (Apr - Jun)

Beyond the Horizon International Strategic Studies Group (BtH) is an independent next-generation think & do tank in Belgium. BtH aims to promote glocal (global & local) peace and security by its strong in-house capacity and extensive network of partners throughout the world.

Photo Credits : Freepik

Horizon Insights 2024-2 (2024 Apr -Jun)
DOI: 10.31175/hi.2024.02
ISSN: 2593-3582 (printed)
ISSN: 2593-3590 (online)

Please cite as: Surname, Name (Writer) (2024), "Article name", Horizon Insights – 2024/2 Brussels.
For more information visit www.behorizon.org

Beyond the Horizon ISSG
Davincilaan 1, 1930 Zaventem
+32 2 801 13 57-8
info@behorizon.org

Contents

Foreword

Dear Reader,

We are delighted to present the second issue of 2024, bringing together timely, critical, and thought-provoking contributions that navigate the evolving currents of global power and strategic contestation.

This issue opens with Jeremy Garlick's *China's Alternative Global Order*, a comprehensive primer on Beijing's sustained efforts to reshape global governance through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative, BRICS+, and regional forums. The paper traces how China is offering a compelling—though controversial—alternative to the liberal international order, especially for the Global South. It challenges readers to rethink Eurocentric assumptions and critically assess the appeal of China's model.

Our second article, *Crossroads of Power*, examines the pivotal implications of the 2024 U.S. presidential election for the transatlantic alliance. With the potential return of Donald Trump or a renewed Biden mandate on the horizon, the piece analyzes scenarios that could reshape trade, NATO cooperation, climate diplomacy, and the EU's quest for strategic autonomy. In a world where domestic elections ripple outward, the fate of U.S. democracy remains a matter of global concern.

In *Between Ballots and Battleships*, the focus shifts to the Taiwan Strait. The article dissects the 2024 Taiwanese elections and their far-reaching consequences for regional stability, cross-strait relations, and great power competition. From China's coercive diplomacy to the U.S.–Japan strategic recalibration, the piece captures Taiwan's enduring geopolitical significance and its central role in the Indo-Pacific chessboard.

Finally, our book review spotlights *Chip War* by Chris Miller—an incisive account of how semiconductors have become the strategic linchpin of economic competition and military power. Miller's analysis of "weaponized interdependence" in global supply chains brings the intersection of technology and security into sharp relief, offering vital insights into the 21st century's most critical infrastructure battle.

As you turn the pages, we hope these contributions inform, challenge, and inspire. In an era of uncertainty and transformation, understanding the deeper forces at play—from electoral shifts to semiconductor supremacy—is more vital than ever.

We thank our contributors and readers for being part of this dialogue.

Sincerely yours,

Beyond the Horizon ISSG

China's Alternative Global Order: A Primer

by Jeremy Garlick[*]

Key takeaways

- The Chinese government is steadily gaining influence in the nations of the global South. Since 2013, this process has been taking place under the label of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- Influence is gained through Chinese-led international institutions such as BRICS+ and regional cooperation forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Significantly, these institutions exclude the global North, effectively creating an alternative global governance system in opposition to the liberal international order (LIO).
- Influence-building takes place through regional mechanisms such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF), and also via bilateral trade and investment deals.
- The EU (like the US) has been slow to take the BRI and Chinese alternative order-building seriously. Despite talk of a 'Global Gateway', Brussels has so far failed to construct a coherent and coordinated response.
- The EU needs to understand why China's alternative order has more appeal in many parts of the global South. Reasons include the following: the absence of post-colonial baggage and dependency; Beijing's insistence on non-interference in domestic politics; the relative ease of obtaining financial assistance and investment capital; and Chinese infrastructure construction know-how.
- The EU needs to find a way to build more influence across the global South as a counter to China. The basis of a renewed soft power campaign should be greater respect for the needs, interests, and identities of global South countries rather than depending on the uncertain appeal of 'European values' alone. The EU needs to show that it is capable of listening to its potential partners rather than just lecturing them about norms and values. A good start would be to increase diplomatic engagement via EU-led regional cooperation mechanisms promoting and facilitating Global Gateway investments.

Key Words: postcolonialism, EU's Global Gateway, global South, regional cooperation platforms, liberal international order, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

China's challenge to the West

Countries in the global North – defined as the United States of America and European nations, as well as other highly economically developed countries such as Canada and Japan – tend to assume that people worldwide, despite some minor cultural differences, share their belief system. For instance, it is taken for granted that most developing nations in the global South automatically buy into 'Western' norms and values – or that if they don't, they must have been indoctrinated by an authoritarian propaganda machine. Most obviously, 'Western values' include European-style democracy and human rights, underwritten economically by the system of global free market capitalism.

Clearly, not everybody in the global North makes the assumption that developing countries will recognise the soft power appeal of the 'Western model', but many – including some policymakers – do. And, probably as an unacknowledged, perhaps unconscious legacy of the colonial era when Europe ran the world, they tend to do so without sufficient critical reflection upon the role of the global South in the international system. Europe's colonial past – which involved virtually every country in Western Europe, including the UK, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and even Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland – continues to colour the developing world's relations with the EU. At the same time, as Belgian historian David Van Reybouck points out, the consequences of European imperialism – inequality and exploitation – are underemphasised in Europe itself. Chatham House scholar Hans Kundnani goes so far as to refer to the EU as a "vehicle for imperial amnesia."

Be that as it may, internationally, 'Western values' are transmitted through what is often called the 'liberal international order' (LIO). The LIO rests on the international system represented by multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. All of these institutions have their headquarters in the US or Europe. Hence, it goes without saying that the global South has a limited role in the running of these organisations. Even in the UN, three of the five

This article is written as a part of the EuroHub4Sino project funded by the European Union.
* Director of the J. Masaryk Centre of International Studies at Prague University of Economics and Business

permanent members of the Security Council (with the right of veto) are Western countries. Importantly, none of the five permanent members is from Africa or Latin America, while the sole Asian representative is China.

However, bit by bit and without the process being particularly well observed in Europe, China is constructing an alternative global order which challenges the global governance system based on Western values. As Rush Doshi points out, China is playing a "long game", seeking to increase geopolitical and geo-economic influence over decades. It is doing this by gaining influence in the global South through instruments such as investments and bilateral deals. It is also using Chinese-led multilateral institutions such as the BRICS+ platform and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). These arrangements exclude Western countries and so stand outside the LIO.

It should be noted that for each region of the global South there is a dedicated Chinese-led regional cooperation mechanism. The importance of these is often underestimated in the West but emphasised by many Chinese scholars. Apart from fostering economic cooperation, these are instruments for gradually transmitting Chinese norms of cooperation to partner countries. Among them, the most prominent platforms are the SCO in Central Asia, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Africa, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CAS-CF) in the Middle East, and the China-CELAC. forum in Latin America. Institutional arrangements such as these are subsumed under the overarching label of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), alongside bilateral deals with individual countries The BRI is the flagship of Chinese foreign policy in the Xi Jinping era and now has a decade of activity behind it.

Regional cooperation platforms play a key role in the BRI and broader Chinese foreign policy in the global South. They allow China to build influence and simultaneously dampen suspicions on the part of target partners, conveying the idea that the benefits of cooperating with China will be spread fairly evenly among all who join the platforms. They also encourage countries to see their region as a community of sorts – in Chinese official jargon, a 'community of shared future.'

This may seem like mere rhetoric, but there is evidence to demonstrate that regional cooperation platforms such as the SCO have achieved a degree of success in defusing tensions and enhancing economic ties between neighbouring nations. Most notably, Central Asia has been relatively peaceful since the advent of the SCO in 2001 despite ongoing territorial disputes in the region. These might have flared into something more serious if it had not been for the annual discussions carried out behind closed doors in the SCO – with China and Russia at the helm rather than at each other's throats.

It is often assumed that the primary goal of the BRI is connectivity through investment in infrastructure. This is one of its key aspects – but there are others. Among them, in addition to the aforementioned regional cooperation platforms, are what the Chinese government calls 'people-to-people exchanges.' Often, these consist of training sessions and trips to China for selected elite groups in partner countries. Very specific groups are targeted: military officers, civil service elites, and journalists. Scholarships to Chinese universities are also offered to impoverished students, for instance in Africa or Pakistan. Such activities are often coordinated through Confucius Institutes, hundreds of which have been set up around the world. Although Confucius Institutes have been controversial in Western countries due to the perception that they are instruments instruments through which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) spreads propaganda and monitors Chinese students abroad, in the developing world they are often seen more positively: as platforms offering education and opportunities to locals.

Through such methods, the Chinese government is generating considerable influence in the global South. There is copious evidence of such influence. First, global South countries tend to vote in line with the PRC in the UN , for instance on the issue of human rights. Second, there is a long-term trend for developing countries to switch their allegiance from Taiwan to China, the most recent case being the Pacific microstate of Nauru, which dumped Taiwan immediately after the January 2024 Taiwanese general election. This development left Taiwan with only twelve remaining diplomatic allies worldwide. Other signs of influence include lack of criticism of China's human rights record, high attendance at BRI forums such as the one held in Beijing in October 2023 even in the absence of representatives from most of the global North, and opinion polls showing a surprising amount of approval for China. For instance, a Pew Research Center survey published in July 2023 revealed a favourable attitude towards China among 80 per cent of the Nigerian population.

In short, there is good reason to believe that China is becoming increasingly influential in the global South and that its multilateral institutional mechanisms are gaining a considerable amount of credibility in many countries. Meanwhile, according to a recent report published by the Munich Security Conference, many people in the developing world believe the "western emphasis on the 'rules based order' is hypocritical and aimed at preserving the status quo of western domination, including over the global South."

The clock is ticking – but not the one you think

Some observers suggest that China has a 'demographic timebomb.' This is the argument that as China's population ages and declines, it will run out of younger workers and the economy will stagnate. Indeed, China's economic growth *is* slowing down as its decades-long 'economic miracle' comes to an end. At the same time, China's political system is thought to be unsustainable in the long term and incompatible with a free market system. So, the argument runs, China cannot keep rising and must now go into decline.

However, there are no signs so far that China is collapsing economically. Economic data reveal that China is still managing to sustain 4-5 per cent economic growth per annum despite high levels of corporate debt and the bursting of the housing bubble in 2023. Nor is there evidence that China's political system is imploding or that the population are losing faith in the Party. The CCP under President Xi Jinping retains a firm grip on power, and control has become more entrenched over the last decade. Research done in China by Bruce Dickson, a professor at George Washington University in the US, reveals that there is a surprisingly high level of long-term popular support for the government. This finding, albeit in need of an update for the 2020s, negates the argument that the Chinese population's supposed frustrations are about to boil over into open revolt.

At any rate, assuming that the CCP holds onto power (as seems likely), its policy of building influence in the global South is likely to pay dividends in the long run. Economists note that trade between countries in the global South is rising steadily. According to one recent calculation, South-South economic transactions are catching up with trade between nations in the global North. Figures show that South-South trade increased from 10.8 to 25.0 per cent of world trade between 1995 and 2020, while North-North trade's share declined from 52.0 to 37.1 per cent over the same period. This means that as the global South economies collectively gain a larger and larger share in the world economy, they will start to push for more say in how the international system works. The steady increase in the global South's clout constitutes a paradigm shift for the world which is already in motion.

As China gradually becomes a trusted partner of many global South countries via facilitatory mechanisms such as the BRI, BRICS+, regional cooperation platforms, and bilateral trade and investment deals, it is likely to benefit from its companies dominating the growing local markets. For instance, Chinese mobile phone manufacturers already have the lion's share of business in Africa, far ahead of Apple and Samsung. Chinese companies have gained access to supplies of crucial raw materials for industrial production in countries such as Angola (oil), Democratic Republic of Congo (cobalt) and Zambia (copper). As already stated, fewer and fewer developing nations are inclined to continue siding with Taiwan or to criticise China's human rights record.

In short, while the global South is gaining economic importance, China is simultaneously gaining influence in the global South. As Chinese companies build infrastructure funded by loans from Chinese financial institutions, and the CCP gains acceptance for its norms of cooperation via its multilateral institutions such as regional forums and BRICS+, the Beijing government has an increasing capacity to mould interactions with global South countries. Such influence does not necessarily come in the form of coercive 'debt trap diplomacy' as some Western media outlets have suggested, but more in the form of general economic and political leverage. Alongside this leverage, the PRC attempts to demonstrate that it is a trustworthy partner which respects the wishes and needs of countries who choose to cooperate according to modern China's preferred norms of interaction.

Meanwhile, the West has been slow to react to China's BRI-backed influence-building campaign. The Biden administration's 'Build Back Better World' (B3W) and the EU's 'Global Gateway' lack substance two years after they were first announced. Since decolonisation, developing countries have become used to the West talking about aid and development without seeing many results. For instance, gone is the era when the whole of Africa could simply be considered a basket case in need of charity. While some countries do remain desperately poor, while of course remaining far below the level of prosperity in the global North, other nations have made great strides forward and Africa now has many of the world's fastest growing economies. Yet the stereotyped images of starving children and charity concerts remain fixed in the Western mind, in large part as a legacy of the 1984 Band Aid concert. In Western Europe, such assumptions stand alongside residual memories of empire and the unspoken understanding that the US and Europe ought to educate the rest of the world about supposedly civilised standards of democracy and human rights. There is still little discussion about what the global South can – and will – bring to the table as it grows stronger over the course of the twenty-first century.

What to do, EU?

As we have seen, although it is important not to overstate the level of progress, China *is* steadily building an alternative global order through its own multilateral and minilateral institutions. These include global South countries but exclude almost all of the global North (Russia of course *is* included in BRICS+ and the SCO). According to the United Nations, the global South includes 78 countries. Allowing the Chinese government free rein to build a network of relationships with the developing world thus permits it to establish a large bloc of nations which will side with it in UN votes, build economic ties, and potentially group together against the West.

China's new order can be understood as having three levels. First, the broad level of global cooperation labelled "BRI". Second, the regional level of cooperation which includes regional platforms such as FOCAC and CASCF. And finally, nested within these, China's bilateral relations and deals with individual countries. Through this three-tier structure, China is gradually spreading its influence and leverage in the global South.

With this increase in influence comes growing acceptance of Chinese norms and values such as the principle of political non-interference, emphasising collective over individual rights, and acceptance of authoritarianism rather than democracy. Quite obviously, such norms stand in direct, stark opposition to so-called "European values." Although the jury is out on how far Chinese norms have been welcomed or accepted by its partners, the challenge to the West – and 'normative power Europe' in particular – is clear. China is steadily socialising the global South, region by region, into its norms.

So, what to do about China's challenge? First of all, the EU needs to develop a clearer focus concerning how to engage with countries in the global South. It needs to turn discourse about the 'Global Gateway' into a reality, building a coherent response to the BRI. Apart from anything else, prioritising investment in the developing world is a win-win for Europe if it creates jobs and persuades at least some of those who intend to attempt migration to the EU to stay at home. In other words, investing in economic development in the global South is also good for Europe in the long run – if the EU plays the right cards.

Brussels also needs to show global South countries greater respect, making clear that they are not regarded as second-class world citizens. An important part of this is to understand that 'European values' are not automatically universally accepted, and that attempts to force them onto countries which were once colonised by European masters are not appreciated. Even if this may be hard to swallow, European elites do need to listen to their counterparts in the developing world rather than lecturing them on 'European values.' The global South is steadily gaining economic importance and it would be wise not to ignore China's role in this transition.

Ultimately, the obvious strategy to counter China's advances in the global South is to increase diplomatic activity in selected countries – especially those which appear to be wavering or sitting on the fence concerning cooperation with China. The EU needs to enhance bilateral ties with individual countries. At the same time, there is a need for new regional mechanisms as platforms for improving ties. Behind-the-scenes diplomacy can pave the way to increased influence, and dangling some carrots in the form of investment deals under the label of Global Gateway cannot hurt. The way to compete with China strategically is to make an equal or better offer than China, particularly in countries or regions which appear to be uncertain about the benefits of developing closer ties with Beijing. In the end, the potential risk of doing nothing far outweighs the costs of devoting more time and money to the global South.

Crossroads of Power: Navigating the 2024 US Election's Impact on Transatlantic Relations

Ilaria Gallo*

1.Introduction

2024 takes on an influential character as the electoral process is underway in more than 80 nations, including the US, Mexico, India, Russia, South Africa, Venezuela, and Sudan. The results of these elections are evidently significant for the countries themselves. But beyond that for the globe as the positions of the new leaders will factor into the economic stability, human rights status, and international relations in our globalized world.

One of those 80 nations, the United States (US), embarks on the intricate journey of selecting its next leader through the presidential election process. The unfolding electoral saga captivates the attention of Americans and the global community alike. The 2024 presidential election transcends a mere competition between political contenders; it stands as a crossroads where divergent visions for America's trajectory intersect.

Whether it signifies a continuation of the policies under the Biden administration or a return to a Trump presidency, the ramifications reach far beyond the US borders. For the European Union, a vital player in the global arena, the outcome of the upcoming election holds profound implications. The EU finds itself on the brink of navigating a new phase of transatlantic relations, where the decisions made by American voters will shape trade agreements, initiatives on climate action, security partnerships, and diplomatic ties. As the world traverses the complexities of multifold hypothetical scenarios, for the EU, one thing remains clear: the 2024 US presidential election is not just about choosing a leader; it is about defining the future course of transatlantic cooperation, forging partnerships rooted in shared values, and navigating the ever-evolving landscape of global geopolitics.

The commentary explores the complexities and implications of the 2024 United States presidential election on transatlantic relations, mainly focusing on the European Union's strategic positioning. The commentary has been structured into distinct sections, each dedicated to providing an exhaustive analysis of the 2024 US Presidential Election and its profound implications on transatlantic relations. At the outset, it delves into the profound significance of the 2024 US Presidential Election, both within the confines of the United States and globally. Transitioning into hypothetical scenarios, the policy brief depicts the potential ramifications of a second term for President Biden and ventures into the realm of conjecture regarding President Trump's re-election. Finally, the commentary offers concrete recommendations for the European Union in navigating the complex post-2024 election landscape.

2.Status of the Nominations

The United States presidential election is a cornerstone of American democracy, unfolding every four years to determine the nation's leader. Understanding its intricate workings involves delving into a system that combines elements of direct and indirect democracy, resulting in the selection of the President and Vice President of the United States.

At the core of this electoral process lies the Electoral College, a mechanism outlined in the US Constitution. The Electoral College comprises 538 electors, each state being allocated a number equal to its total number of Senators and Representatives in Congress. These electors are the linchpin of the presidential election, tasked with casting their votes for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates on behalf of their respective states. The process culminates on Election Day, 5 November 2024, when American citizens nationwide head to the polls to cast their votes.

Nevertheless, the presidential race isn't the only thing on the ballot. Concurrently, voters also elect members of Congress – both Senators and Representatives – and various state and local officials. As is well known, the path to the presidency begins long before Election Day. It starts with the nomination process within the two major political parties—the Republican Party and the Democratic Party.

For the Democratic Party, the process begins with primaries and caucuses held in states across the country. These events allow party members to cast their votes for their preferred candidate. The results of these contests determine the number of delegates each candidate receives, with delegates being individuals who represent their state at the party's national convention.

At the Democratic National Convention, delegates officially vote for their party's presidential nominee. The candidate who secures a majority of delegates – 2,383 out of the total 4,750 – becomes the party's official nominee for the presidency.

On the other side of the political spectrum, the Republican Party follows a similar process. Primaries and caucuses are held, delegates are allocated based on the results, and the Republican National Convention is the grand stage for nominating the party's presidential candidate. After the nominees are officially chosen, the campaign season

* Research Assistant at Beyond the Horizon ISSG

kicks into high gear, with candidates crisscrossing the nation, participating in debates, and rallying support.

3. Where Are We Now?

The 2024 presidential candidates considered favourites to win are Joe Biden for the Democratic Party and Donald Trump for the Republican Party. Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina, was also considered before she dropped out of the presidential race, as was Ron DeSantis, the current governor of Florida.

On Super Tuesday, March 5, voters in 15 states chose Donald Trump and Joe Biden as the presidential candidates. The nominating contests occurred in Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, and Virginia. Other primaries will take place during March 2024, for example, in Georgia, Hawaii, Mississippi, Washington, Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Ohio, Louisiana, and Missouri, until all states have elected their candidates. After Super Tuesday, despite the now partially definitive picture coming out of the polls, the primaries will continue in the missing states. The Republicans will conclude the round on 4 June, voting in South Dakota, Montana, New Jersey, and New Mexico. For the Democrats, it will continue until 8 June, with voting on the Guam island and the US Virgin Islands territory.

Finally, the last two major events will be the 15-18 July 2024 Republican Convention, at which delegates of the Republican Party of the United States will select the party's candidates for president and vice president in the 2024 US presidential election. On the other hand, the 2024 Democratic National Convention will be held from 19 to 22 August. During that time, delegates of the Democratic Party will select the party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

4. What the European Union Can Expect

It is essential to analyse what the parties, Democrats and Republicans, have in common to understand better what the European Union can expect from the two candidates running for the President of the United States of America.

4.1. Foreign Trade

Republicans and Democrats are gravitating towards a redefined vision of the American economy, moving away from traditional neoliberal stances. Historically, Democrats have been sceptical of free trade pacts, citing concerns about protecting environmental and labor standards. However, the deepening rivalry with China and the competition for working-class voters have prompted a convergence of views between the parties.

Republicans have embraced a shift initiated by Trump, who challenged the party's traditional commitment to free trade in 2016. Trump's perspective centred on rectifying what he saw as unfair trade agreements, with the US bearing trade deficits while the Allies benefited from the US security assurances. His administration imposed tariffs broadly and withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), aimed at covering a significant portion of the global economy. Post-Trump, the Republican party continues to advocate for increased government intervention in markets, emphasising the revitalisation of domestic industries and reducing dependence on foreign markets, especially China.

In contrast, the Biden administration has pursued a targeted strategic industrial policy, offering subsidies to domestic industries to maintain a competitive edge and reduce reliance on foreign sources. Key legislative acts such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) exemplify the strategic shift towards reshoring and strengthening domestic industries.

4.2. Military Operations

Both parties are increasingly aligned in their rejection of extensive military interventions abroad, particularly those aimed at nation-building. The Biden administration has notably deprioritised the Middle East, focusing instead on the competition with China and constraints on Russia, as outlined in the US National Security Strategy 2022.

In the War in Gaza, the Biden administration has found itself in a challenging position. Despite losing support among key voters, President Biden's administration has continued to back Israel's war on Gaza. This stance has sparked serious reservations among progressives, young voters, and Muslim American voters. The administration has faced criticism, especially after an Israeli military bombing on April 1 killed seven aid workers, including an American, delivering supplies for World Central Kitchen.

The Trump administration, on the other hand, has expressed explicit support for Israel's war on Gaza. Former President Trump has voiced backing for the hardline government in Tel Aviv, suggesting he supports continuing the assault until "total victory". Trump's stance indicates that voters opposed to U.S. support for Israel's war will face a dilemma in the 2024 presidential election.

President Biden has struggled to articulate a clear American response to the Gaza war, which has contributed to a decline in his approval ratings and support in the primaries. Only 27% of voters approve of his support of Israel in the war, and his unwillingness to challenge Israel or alter armament exports has drawn criticism.

4.3. China as a Strategic Rival

A solid bipartisan consensus exists regarding China's status as the primary challenge to US national security interests and the global order. Both the Trump and Biden administrations have identified China as the key rival and top foreign policy priority in their respective National Security Strategies. While nuances exist within and between the parties on the nature of the Chinese threat, the ambition to prevail in the US-China strategic rivalry remains a cornerstone of American foreign policy.

Economically, both parties are united in focusing on technological competition with China. The Trump administration imposed significant tariffs on Chinese imports and restricted the export of advanced technologies to China. In a bipartisan effort, Congress expanded the powers of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States to scrutinise and block Chinese investments. The Biden administration has built upon these policies, enacting further restrictions under the Foreign Direct Product Rule and emphasising measures to enhance US competitiveness in semiconductors and green technology.

In conclusion, amidst the shifting tides of American politics, areas of bipartisan agreement offer insights into potential trajectories of US foreign policy. From recalibrated trade strategies to shared views on China's strategic challenge, the next administration—whether Republican or Democratic—will likely navigate a complex global landscape. For the European Union, understanding and adapting to these potential shifts will be essential for maintaining a cohesive and strategic transatlantic relationship.

5.The Impact of a Re-Elected Biden Presidency on the European Union

The European Union stands on the precipice of significant shifts in its relationship with the United States, contingent upon the outcome of the 2024 presidential election. A re-elected Biden administration promises a path of continuity intertwined with notable changes, shaping the landscape of transatlantic cooperation and rivalry.

5.1. Engaging Allies and Tackling Climate Crisis

Since assuming office in January 2021, the Biden administration has taken significant steps to address the pressing issue of climate change, such as rejoining the Paris climate agreement, appointing former Secretary of State John Kerry as the inaugural Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, hosting the Leaders Summit on Climate in 2021, and setting ambitious targets for reducing US greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the administration introduced the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a substantial $737 billion climate legislation. The IRA aims to incentivise investment in clean energy technologies such as electric vehicles, batteries, hydrogen, energy storage, and electricity transmission. The legislation also seeks to diversify strategic supply chains away from China, aligning with the administration's goal of reducing dependence on foreign sources, particularly in critical sectors.

A potential re-election of President Biden would likely see a continuation of these climate-friendly policies. The administration would push for allies and partners to follow America's lead in adopting similar measures, transforming their economic models towards renewable energy generation and enhanced energy efficiency. The strategic focus on climate-friendly investments and technology competition is driven by the administration's aim of domestic renewal to better compete with China on the global stage.

5.2. Re-engagement with International Agreements and Alliances

The Biden administration has also made strides in re-engaging with international agreements, aiming to restore America's leadership role on the global stage. Efforts to re-enter various agreements, such as the Paris Climate Accord, reflect a commitment to multilateral cooperation.

However, challenges persist amidst increased competition with China and ongoing conflicts such as the war in Ukraine. For these reasons, the administration's approach to these issues has been multifaceted, seeking to balance strategic interests with diplomatic engagement.

Regarding alliances, President Biden emphasises the value of strong partnerships with European, Canadian, and Asian allies. These relationships are crucial for bolstering America's position as a global leader, particularly in countering the challenges China and Russia pose.

In the context of the current conflict in Gaza, the Biden administration's handling of the situation has become a significant issue in the 2024 U.S. election. The conflict has added complexity to the administration's foreign policy agenda, requiring a delicate balance between support for Israel and addressing humanitarian concerns.

The emerging paradigm in U.S.-Israel relations includes members of Congress advocating for a more critical approach, opposing the long-prevailing pro-Israel Middle East policy. The shift may impact bilateral relations, leaving Israel to navigate international challenges without its traditional staunch ally.

Despite these challenges, the Biden administration remains committed to re-engaging with international institutions, aiming to restore U.S. leadership, and it starkly contrasts the scepticism and reluctance exhibited during the Trump era, signalling a renewed focus on diplomacy and cooperation on the global stage.

5.3. NATO And Support for Ukraine

A potential second term for President Biden is expected to emphasise continued support for NATO. Throughout his presidency, Biden has consistently demonstrated unwavering backing for the alliance, highlighting the importance of "reinvigorating" key US alliances, particularly in response to challenges posed by Russia's actions in Ukraine.

Regarding Ukraine specifically, the Biden administration has shown a firm commitment to providing military and humanitarian support. His dedication underscores the administration's stance on upholding Ukraine's sovereignty and security amidst ongoing tensions and conflicts.

However, the upcoming congressional elections will play a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of US support for Ukraine. The outcome of these elections will determine the level of resources and assistance the administration can allocate to addressing the Ukraine situation. As such, the results of the congressional races will have significant implications for the Biden administration's foreign policy agenda in the region.

5.4. China

In his first term, Biden continued the tough stance on China initiated by the Trump administration. It included maintaining tariffs on Chinese imports, mainly targeting sectors linked to national security and intellectual property.

The second term will likely bolster efforts to reduce US dependency on Chinese supply chains. Initiatives to restore critical industries, such as semiconductors and pharmaceuticals, are expected to continue. The administration will likely push for increased domestic production to enhance economic resilience and reduce vulnerabilities to disruptions in the global market.

Navigating these potential shifts requires careful calibration of the European Union's strategic positioning. A second Biden term offers continuity but demands greater alignment and contributions.

However, a re-elected Biden administration will also place greater expectations on the EU. The US will likely seek alignment on the strategic industrial policy concerning China and demand increased European contributions to security matters, notably in Ukraine. The push aims to free up US military resources for the Indo-Pacific region, underscoring the evolving dynamics of global power play.

6.The Impact of a Re-Elected Trump Presidency on the European Union

The European Union faces a pivotal moment of anticipation and strategising as the spectre of a re-elected Trump presidency looms over transatlantic relations. Drawing from the contours of American politics and foreign policy, EU leaders must prepare for potential shifts and challenges that may arise.

A future Republican president would likely adopt a more unilateral stance towards China, potentially pressuring European allies to align with US priorities.

6.1. Unilateralism and Transactional Relations with a Republican Presidency

Regarding international relations, the previous "America First" policy under Trump saw the US withdraw from numerous global organisations and agreements, contributing to the erosion of global institutions. In contrast to a more multilateral approach, a Republican administration is unlikely to prioritise regaining influence in these arenas. Instead, the focus would shift towards negotiating new bilateral or regional agreements, emphasising deal-making and the potential for bilateral negotiations.

In terms of alliances, a second Trump administration might neglect efforts to strengthen traditional US alliances, preferring a more transactional approach. Trump openly criticised NATO allies, calling for increased defence spending and questioning the alliance's value. Additionally, a focus could be on maintaining US military advantage while shunning arms control negotiations.

6.2. NATO

If Trump were to return to power, the fate of US military assistance to Kyiv, Ukraine, would become uncertain. Trump, known for his scepticism towards NATO and traditional alliances, would likely neglect and undermine the alliance. He might prioritise bilateral and transactional cooperation over NATO's collective security framework. As a result, he might push for a decrease in US participation in NATO while applying pressure on European partners to dramatically increase their military spending.

While Trump may be unable to withdraw the US from NATO outright, as Congress approved a bill barring any president from unilaterally withdrawing from NATO, he could undermine its effectiveness through neglect and unilateral actions. The approach might also involve questioning the alliance's value and US commitments. Trump's return could further strain relations with NATO allies, especially those not meeting his demands for increased defence spending.

6.3. Ukraine Conflict

In a second term, a Trump administration would likely depart from the current US policy of support for Ukraine in its conflict with Russia. Trump has previously hinted at a more transactional approach, suggesting that he could negotiate a quick settlement to the conflict.

The 45th US President has previously indicated frustration with US involvement in foreign conflicts, and his administration might push for a swift resolution to the Ukraine conflict, even if it means accepting compromises that could be detrimental to Ukraine's interests.

6.4. Impact on Climate Policies and Energy

In the potential second term of a Trump presidency, there is a high likelihood of a shift in policy towards climate change, particularly concerning fossil fuels. Over the past decade, the American energy sector has seen significant advancements due to technologies like shale gas and offshore drilling. The transformation has led the US to become the world's top producer and exporter of oil and gas.

Given the broad support for such measures within the party base, a Republican administration in 2025 is expected to renew Trump's pro-fossil fuel policies, and it could involve deregulation favouring the oil and gas industry, issuing more drilling permits, dismantling the Environmental Protection Agency, and offering tax incentives to fossil fuel companies. Internationally, a Republican White House would likely align with fossil fuel producers, promoting exports to new partners in the global south and Europe.

6.5. China

In a hypothetical second term for President Trump, his foreign policy towards China is expected to be more aggressive and assertive. Building upon his first-term policies, which were characterized by trade disputes and strategic rivalry, Trump's second term would likely intensify efforts to counter China's growing influence on the global stage.

7. Challenges and Preparations for the European Union

The potential scenario presents multifaceted challenges for the European Union. The EU must brace for a more transactional and unpredictable relationship with the US, emphasising the need for strategic autonomy in crucial policy areas. It includes bolstering its strategic industrial policy towards China, preparing for shifts in military dynamics, and navigating the complexities of climate diplomacy without US support.

In conclusion, EU leaders must be prepared to navigate a landscape of unilateralism, transactional diplomacy and changes in global priorities. Strategic autonomy, alignment on critical issues, and readiness to assert European interests will be crucial as the EU charts its course in the face of a transatlantic relationship that a second Trump administration could potentially alter.

8. Who Is Leading?

The current polls are shaped by many dynamics, such as concerns about Joe Biden's age, the rising cost of living, the War in Gaza, and Trump's criminal cases. These concerns could work for Trump, who aims to become the first individual to return to the White House after an absence since the 19th century, or for US President Biden. In addition, Trump faces the challenge of winning over moderate Republicans who voted against him in the primaries.

One of the central issues of the election cycle is immigration, especially in the context of a growing crisis at the border with Mexico. Republicans have criticised Biden for overseeing the increase in illegal immigration, while Trump has intensified his attacks on this front. In addition, the state of democracy itself has emerged as a significant political concern, with left-wing fears about the potential re-election of an authoritarian Trump countered by Republican arguments that the Biden administration is politicising the judiciary against the former president. In addition, inflation remains a critical issue, with the rising cost of living despite a strong economy, which could hurt Biden's position in the long run.

Polls also indicate that most voters disapprove of Joe Biden, and about two-thirds of Americans express concerns about his age, particularly his ability to remain in the White House beyond next year. Specifically, the President is losing support among vital Democratic voters, including young liberals, black voters and Muslims concerned about Gaza.

Although his opponent, on the other hand, has faced four criminal indictments, including charges of election interference and mishandling confidential documents, Trump's poll numbers have remained essentially unchanged. His recent appearance in a $250 million civil fraud trial in New York, which threatens his business empire, has not significantly altered his standing among supporters.

The primaries highlighted Biden's and Trump's dominance, with both candidates winning in almost all states with limited opposition. Swing states, crucial in determining election outcomes, are at the centre of attention. States like Georgia, Florida, Michigan, Arizona, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina are watched closely due to their history of switching between parties and slim margins of victory.

Unexpectedly, Georgia, traditionally Republican, saw Mr. Biden win by a narrow margin in the last election, making it a crucial battleground. With its diverse and unpredictable population, Florida holds significant electoral college votes and has swung between parties in recent elections. Then, Michigan's electoral influence remains consequential despite economic challenges and population decline. The state has shifted between Democrat and Republican in recent elections, and polling shows a close contest between the candidates. In addition, Arizona, historically Republican, leaned towards Mr. Biden in 2020, with a small margin of victory. Pennsylvania's history of switching between parties was evident in recent elections, with narrow margins of victory. Polls indicate a close race between the candidates as the state remains a battleground. North Carolina, typically Republican-leaning, saw a tighter contest in 2020, with Mr. Biden narrowing the margin. Democrats see an opportunity to make gains in this state. In conclusion, these swing states hold immense significance with the election approaching. Each candidate vying for their crucial electoral votes could ultimately determine the next occupant of the White House.

At this point in the election process, monitoring the polls, which favour a second re-election for Trump, is essential. According to the Telegraph UK, the latest polls updated on 26 March indicate that Donald Trump has taken a slight lead in the upcoming US election, particularly in key swing states that could prove decisive for securing the White House in November. Furthermore, the Five ThirtyEight Interactives project, which collects the latest polls conducted by various newspapers, consultancy agencies, and think tanks, shows that Trump, as indicated in 22 polls conducted from 13 to 24 March, is ahead of Biden. However, it should be noted that the Republican candidate's lead never deviates by more than five points from the Democratic candidate.

However, a recent Reuters/Ipsos poll indicated that U.S. President Joe Biden was leading Donald Trump by just a single percentage point heading into the November presidential election. The arrow lead came as both candidates garnered enough support from their respective parties to secure spots on the ballot.

According to the one-week poll, which concluded on 13 March, 39% of registered voters indicated they would vote for Biden, the Democratic candidate, if the election were held today. In comparison, 38% chose the Republican former President Trump. Biden's lead fell within the poll's margin of error of 1.8 %. The survey also highlighted many undecided voters, with 11% expressing support for other candidates, 5% stating they would not vote, and 7% indicating they were unsure or declined to answer. The poll also showed that many voters are not enthusiastic about either Trump or Biden. Independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr garnered support from 15% of registered voters in the survey, should he appear as a third candidate on the ballot.

9. Conclusion and Strategic Foresight

The unfolding saga of the 2024 United States presidential election sets the stage for a captivating journey toward selecting the nation's next leader. As Super Tuesday fades into the rearview mirror and the primaries continue their march across the country, the spotlight remains fixed on the evolving landscape of American politics.

Amidst the flurry of campaign trails, debates, and delegate counts, the road to the nominations winds through a complex tapestry of primaries and conventions. With each passing contest, the Democratic and Republican parties edge closer to officially anointing their presidential candidates.

Yet, beyond the United States' borders, the world watches keenly. For the European Union and the global community, the outcome of this election holds profound implications. The next administration's decisions will resonate far beyond American shores, from trade relations to climate policies, strategic alliances, and geopolitical tensions.

As the international community assesses the potential impacts of a re-elected Biden presidency or a return of Trump to the White House, one thing remains clear: the intricate dance of international diplomacy and global leadership is inextricably linked to the outcome of this election.

The 2024 US presidential election, whether it leads to a re-elected Biden or a return of Trump, will significantly impact transatlantic relations. A renewed Biden administration will likely prioritise strengthening ties with EU member states, potentially revitalising cooperation on critical issues such as climate change and democratic values. Conversely, a Trump re-election could bring a more transactional and unpredictable approach, prompting the EU to brace for trade negotiations and global cooperation challenges.

Regarding trade, a Biden administration would focus on multilateral agreements like the TTP, fostering economic cooperation between the EU and the US. On the other hand, a Trump win might lead to continued trade tensions, requiring the EU to defend its interests and seek alternative cooperation avenues. Moreover, on a vital issue such as climate action, a re-elected Biden administration would align with global efforts by rejoining agreements like the Paris Agreement, offering collaboration opportunities for the EU. At the same time, Trump's return would mean a departure from global climate initiatives, prompting the EU to take a leading role in climate action.

The potential impact of the U.S. election outcome on conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine is a complex issue that requires careful consideration.

Regarding the conflict in Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian situation, a re-elected Biden administration is likely to continue supporting a two-state solution, aligning with the stance of the European Union and many other international actors. The approach aims to create separate, independent states for Israelis and Palestinians, with defined borders and mutual recognition. Such a stance emphasises diplomacy, negotiations, and a commitment to international law.

On the other hand, if former President Trump were to return to office, his administration's policies might embolden Israeli actions and complicate peace efforts. During his term, Trump took several actions that favoured Israel, such as recognising Jerusalem as Israel's capital and moving the U.S. embassy there, as well as unveiling a peace plan that was seen by many as heavily favouring Israeli interests. A return of Trump to the presidency could mean continuing these policies, which may not align with the aspirations of a two-state solution supported by the EU and others.

The implications of a Biden versus Trump presidency for the conflict in Ukraine are also nuanced. President Biden has been a vocal supporter of Ukraine, advocating for its territorial integrity and providing military aid to counter Russian aggression. A re-elected Biden administration would likely continue this stance, which emphasises supporting Ukraine's sovereignty and pushing back against Russian influence in the region.

In contrast, former President Trump's approach to Ukraine was more complicated. While his administration did provide military aid to Ukraine, Trump's relationship with Ukrainian officials and his handling of aid disbursement was subject to controversy and an impeachment inquiry. A return of Trump to the presidency might bring uncertainty to Ukraine's situation, with questions about the level of support and engagement from the U.S. government.

Regarding NATO and security, a Biden win would reaffirm US support, paving the way for enhanced cooperation. At the same time, Trump's return might demand more from European allies, urging the EU to bolster its security capabilities.

In conclusion, the EU must strategically prepare for potential outcomes of the 2024 US election, understanding the impact on transatlantic relations, trade, climate action, and conflicts. By forging partnerships with like-minded nations, the EU can assert its role in global diplomacy, security, and economic stability, shaping a more prosperous and sustainable global community. The decisions made in the coming months will define the future of international relationships and policies beyond American shores.

Between Ballots and Battleships: Dissecting Taiwan's 2024 Electoral Aftermath

Ji-han Lim[*]

Introduction

Within the intricate mosaic of Asia-Pacific geopolitical dynamics, Taiwan stands out not just as a sovereign entity but as a central hub, pivotal to the strategic frameworks of global heavyweights such as the United States and China. Positioned strategically along crucial sea lanes, Taiwan is a key player in the regional security landscape and a portal to major economic networks. This strategic importance is further enhanced by Taiwan's dominance in the tech sector, especially in semiconductor production, where it enjoys a unique global standing. Taiwan's capability to manufacture cutting-edge semiconductors transcends economic value, positioning it as an essential pillar in the global supply chain and thus a vital element in the technological and defense blueprints of leading world powers.

The 2024 elections in Taiwan are set against this backdrop of intense global political maneuvering and intricate economic interdependencies. The electoral results have implications that ripple well beyond Taiwan's borders, influencing the power dynamics in Beijing and Washington, D.C. The impact of these elections is profound, affecting not only diplomatic interactions and trade agreements but also shaping military tactics and regional security frameworks. The direction of Taiwan's future policies, especially those regarding its relations with the Chinese mainland, are closely monitored for their capacity to shift the current finely balanced state of affairs.

Taiwan's democratic processes carry implications that transcend their local context. They act as a barometer for the international geopolitical climate, swaying policy formation, steering military planning, and guiding diplomatic endeavors. The nuances of this electoral process and the subsequent changes in Taiwan's political milieu underscore the island's disproportionate influence in sculpting the contours of the Asia-Pacific's future and, by extension, the evolving global paradigm. As the major players recalibrate their approaches and tactics in response to the election outcomes, Taiwan's role as a pivotal entity in international affairs is further highlighted and amplified, mirroring the complex interplay between regional stability, economic security, and the dynamics of global power.

Taiwan's 2024 Election: A Mosaic of Democratic Expression

Amidst a geopolitical milieu marked by escalating tensions and tactical realignments, the recent January 2024 elections in Taiwan have risen as a significant milestone, casting profound implications across the Asia-Pacific. This electoral event, marked by an impressive 72% voter participation, showcased the dynamic and mature nature of Taiwan's democratic framework. The elections culminated in the victory of the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) candidate, Lai Ching-te, who ascended to the presidency with a pluralistic 41% of the total votes, mirroring a complex array of public sentiments and a strong public inclination for balanced governance mechanisms.

The story of this election transcends the simplistic binary of victory and defeat, unfolding as a layered narrative of strategic placements and affirmations of political significance. The DPP, while securing the presidential seat, saw a diminution in its legislative stronghold, signaling the electorate's preference for nuanced governance and thorough oversight. Conversely, the Kuomintang (KMT), despite its setback in the presidential contest, succeeded in securing the highest number of seats in the legislature, a testament to its sustained organizational prowess and astute political strategy. The Taiwan People's Party (TPP), although not victorious in the presidential race, carved a strategic niche within the legislature, positioning itself as a potential kingmaker in legislative affairs, thereby poised to shape legislative narratives and potentially influence the nation's policy trajectory.

In this intricate political fabric, the dynamics of cross-strait relations were prominently featured, encompassing a range of narratives and strategic orientations. The DPP, KMT, and TPP, despite their ideological variances, collectively leaned towards preserving the current status quo concerning Taiwan's political status, signaling a broad-based political consensus against precipitous moves towards outright independence or unification. This consensus is framed within a broader historical canvas, where the complex interplay of national identity, aspirations for sovereignty, and external influences molds the island's geopolitical stance.

China's Strategic Calculus Post-Election

Post the 2024 Taiwanese election, Beijing's reaction was a complex tapestry of diplomatic, economic, and military strategies, reflecting its multifaceted approach towards Taiwan, particularly under the governance of the DPP, perceived by Beijing as less amenable to its overtures. The shift in diplomatic ties by Nauru, orchestrated shortly after the election results, was emblematic of China's tactic of diplomatic isolation aimed at diminishing Taiwan's international presence. This maneuver is part of a broader pattern where Beijing seeks to curtail Taiwan's global diplomatic footprint, thereby reinforcing the One-China policy.

* Researcher at Beyond the Horizon ISSG

Simultaneously, economic levers were employed to exert pressure. The probing into Taiwan's compliance with trade agreements such as the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) signals Beijing's intent to leverage economic interdependencies as a tool of influence. These economic measures, although not immediately disruptive, carry an implicit threat of escalated economic sanctions, reflecting a strategy to sway Taiwan's domestic and foreign policy directions through economic dependencies.

While direct military confrontation was not an immediate aftermath of the election, Beijing's strategic posturing had a pronounced military dimension. The deployment of high-altitude balloons in proximity to Taiwan's airspace, coupled with the historical context of frequent military exercises, constitutes a form of coercive diplomacy. This military signaling serves multiple purposes: it demonstrates Beijing's readiness to escalate to military means if deemed necessary, it acts as a psychological tactic to assert pressure on Taiwan's governance and populace, and it serves as a signal to international observers of China's stance and capabilities regarding Taiwan.

Beijing's approach, blending diplomatic isolation, economic coercion, and military posturing, reveals a comprehensive strategy aimed at asserting its claims over Taiwan while attempting to reshape the island's domestic and international policy orientations. This multifaceted strategy underscores the complexity of cross-strait relations and the intricate balance of power, influence, and diplomacy that defines the Asia-Pacific region's geopolitical landscape.

The U.S. and Japanese Strategic Response

The strategic recalibration of the U.S. and Japan in response to the evolving dynamics in the Taiwan Strait epitomizes a wider regional adjustment. The growing perception of threats originating from China has spurred a heightened level of military collaboration and strategic synchronization between the U.S. and Japan. This united front spans a range of initiatives, from strengthening military capabilities and improving the interoperability of joint forces to affirming a steadfast dedication to maintaining regional security and stability.

The deepened military collaboration between the U.S. and Japan is evident in several aspects, including combined military drills, the sharing of intelligence, and the fortification of defense infrastructures, notably in areas such as cybersecurity, space, and sophisticated missile defense systems. The foundation of this partnership extends beyond a bilateral framework and is seamlessly integrated into the wider network of regional alliances and partnerships. This denotes a collective commitment to preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific, showcasing that cooperative security is a hallmark of modern geopolitical interactions, where combined resilience and strategic deterrence are crucial in confronting shared challenges.

Regional and Global Consequences

The complex interaction of the outcomes of the Taiwanese elections, China's multifaceted strategic maneuvers, and the adjusted approaches of the U.S., Japan, and other key regional actors, profoundly influences both regional and global geopolitical landscapes. The ramifications of these shifts are extensive, affecting regional stability, economic interconnections, the coherence of security alliances, and the broader framework of global power relations, especially concerning U.S.-China dynamics.

The strategic readjustments and alignments highlight the intricate balancing acts nations must perform to achieve stability and peace. The regional scenario, marked by a combination of diplomatic initiatives, economic entanglements, and military preparedness, mirrors the intricacies of modern international relations. While diplomatic solutions remain a primary goal, the undercurrents of military readiness and strategic deterrence emphasize the necessity for vigilant and insightful diplomacy.

In this context, the strategic stances of the U.S., Japan, and their allies are not mere reactions but form part of a forward-looking strategy aimed at cultivating a regional order that fosters peace, stability, and growth. The collective endeavor to create a robust and adaptable regional framework, capable of countering various challenges, from economic pressure to military provocations, signifies a unified determination to support the principles of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. The progression of this strategic scenario will inevitably influence the future directions of both regional and international geopolitics, highlighting the importance of continuous involvement, strategic insight, and dedication to a rules-based global order.

Conclusion

The recent elections in Taiwan transcend the realm of local politics, marking a crucial chapter in the larger narrative of Asia-Pacific geopolitical relations. The election outcomes and subsequent shifts in regional strategies highlight the complex interweaving of local political dynamics, international diplomatic relations, and military strategies. As the immediate aftermath of the elections unfolds, the trajectory of the Taiwan Strait and the wider Asia-Pacific region depends on the intricate interaction of these diverse forces.

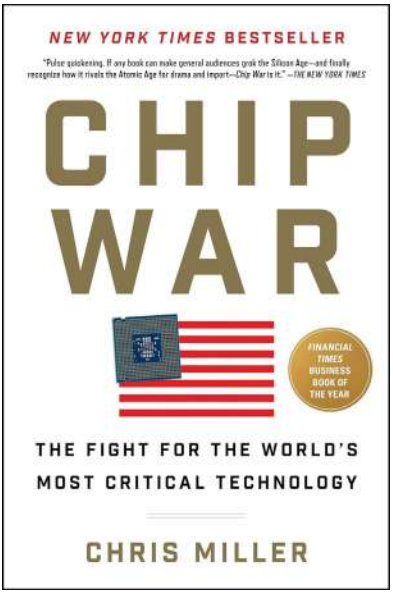
The path forward for the region hinges on adopting a balanced and cautious approach that emphasizes stability, fosters peace, and honors the sovereign rights of nations. The electoral results in Taiwan, signaling a preference for a sophisticated governance model, combined with the strategic orientations of key global players, set the stage for a challenging yet manageable geopolitical landscape. The collective pursuit of a stable and peaceful regional environment calls for a steadfast dedication to diplomatic initiatives, strengthened through multilateral collaboration and a unified commitment to resolving conflicts amicably.

In this scenario, it becomes crucial for the U.S., Japan, and other involved parties to adopt a vigilant but diplomatic posture. The fragile balance in the Taiwan Strait reflects the wider regional and global equilibrium, where the interplay of power, sovereignty, and alliances is constantly in flux. The evolving strategic narrative in this region serves as a stark reminder of the complex interdependencies and the subtle acts of balancing that nations must undertake to foster a stable, affluent, and peaceful regional climate.

At this critical crossroads, navigating the future requires not only an acute awareness of the changing geopolitical landscape but also a proactive, collaborative stance. Adherence to a rules-based international framework, supported by mutual respect, diplomatic discourse, and strategic insight, is fundamental in maneuvering through the complexities of the Asia-Pacific geopolitical scene. In this effort, the unified vision and collective actions of the global community will play a vital role in sculpting a future that aligns with the goals of peace, stability, and mutual prosperity in this strategically crucial area.

Book Review: Chip War

By Ji-han Lim[*]



In Chip War: The Fight for the World's Most Critical Technology, Chris Miller presents a powerful and timely narrative about how the semiconductor industry—once the preserve of niche engineers—has become the epicenter of twenty-first-century geopolitical rivalry. The book is an urgent hybrid: a strategic history, a technological briefing, and a political economy of the silicon age. For scholars and practitioners concerned with the intersection of statecraft, industrial power, and technological infrastructure, Chip War offers both an invaluable empirical chronicle and a strategic warning.

Miller, a historian at Tufts University, argues that control over microchips—integrated circuits carved into slices of ultrapure silicon—now determines not only economic competitiveness but also national security and global influence. At the heart of this argument lies a stark geopolitical reality: while the United States retains dominance in chip design and the software tools that enable it, it has offshored most fabrication capacity to East Asia, especially to Taiwan's TSMC, the world's most advanced chipmaker. China, meanwhile, remains heavily reliant on foreign technology, despite multibillion-dollar efforts to build domestic capacity. The resulting configuration has created a global economy wired to a set of fragile chokepoints—and thus acutely exposed to both technological and strategic disruption.

The narrative opens with a compelling scene: the USS Mustin sailing through the Taiwan Strait in August 2020, signaling freedom of navigation while symbolically cruising past TSMC's Fab 18—the single most advanced semiconductor manufacturing facility in the world. In this juxtaposition, Miller sets the stakes: chips are not only embedded in every smartphone and satellite but are also enablers of military precision and technological sovereignty. Power in the 21st century, the book suggests, will be measured not only in megatons or GDP, but in nanometers—the unit used to describe transistor density on cutting-edge chips.

Chip War excels in making the history of microelectronics both comprehensible and gripping. Miller traces the arc from Cold War-era military R&D and Silicon Valley's entrepreneurial dynamism to the rise of Japan and South Korea as semiconductor powers and China's contemporary tech nationalism. He gives due credit to pioneering figures such as Jack Kilby, Bob Noyce, Gordon Moore, and Morris Chang—each of whom reshaped the global tech-industrial landscape. But beyond biography, Miller highlights the structural choices that led to today's vulnerabilities: the offshoring of fabrication, the hollowing out of domestic manufacturing in the U.S., and the hyper-concentration of critical capabilities in geostrategically volatile regions.

Where the book truly distinguishes itself is in linking technological dependence to strategic coercion. Miller provides a lucid account of the U.S. government's use of export controls to cripple Chinese tech champions such as Huawei. These controls, while short of war, function as tools of geoeconomic containment—what some scholars might call weaponized interdependence. The implication is clear: in a world where technological ecosystems are deeply entangled, power increasingly resides in the ability to deny access.

From an international political economy perspective, Chip War offers a rare and welcome synthesis of micro-level industrial detail with macro-level geopolitical consequence. It illuminates how global value chains—heralded for decades as vehicles of efficiency—have become vectors of insecurity. As the U.S., EU, and others scramble to reshore or "friendshore" production, the book makes it plain that rebuilding capacity is not simply a matter of capital or will, but of mastering deeply specialized expertise and multi-tiered supply chains involving gases, photolithography tools, and intellectual property scattered across jurisdictions. As such, the global semiconductor industry emerges as both a triumph of distributed capitalism and a vulnerability of neoliberal globalization.

The book also complements growing literature on the strategic implications of emerging technologies. Miller treats semiconductors not only as technical inputs but as enablers of military innovation—from precision-guided munitions and AI-enabled surveillance to next-generation telecommunications. The book implicitly echoes the logic of offset strategies: the idea that technological leaps can compensate for conventional asymmetries. In this light, chips are not just commercial products but elements of national deterrence and force projection.

Yet Chip War is not without limitations. It largely eschews explicit theorizing, leaving it to the reader to map its insights onto existing paradigms—be it realism, techno-nationalism, or global production network theory. Similarly, while Miller excels at explaining the U.S. and East Asian trajectories, the political economies of Europe and

* Researcher at Beyond the Horizon ISSG

the Global South receive less attention. Nonetheless, these are tradeoffs of accessibility and narrative momentum rather than oversights.

In conclusion, Chip War is a masterclass in techno-strategic storytelling. It bridges disciplines and speaks urgently to policymakers, scholars, and business leaders alike. As the scramble for semiconductor sovereignty intensifies—from Washington to Beijing, Brussels to Seoul—Miller's book will be essential reading for those seeking to understand the circuitry of global power. It reminds us that in a digitized, militarized, and data-driven world, the true contest may not be for land or ideology—but for control over the tools that make modernity possible.

@Beyond the Horizon

@BehorizonOrg

@BehorizonOrg

BEYOND THE HORIZON