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AUS MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

Director's Welcome Letter:

Dear delegates,

I am honored to welcome you to AUSMUN 2024, where you will play an essential role in shaping global discourse about world issues. This year's conference is set to be a platform for innovation, collaboration, and meaningful dialogue. Here we will explore global issues, analyze the complexities of the same, and propose solutions that satisfy the varying perspectives of countries in the international community.

It is important to remember that you think critically, engage in constructive debate, and seek to achieve common ground with your fellow delegates. At AUSMUN, we encourage you to approach this experience with an open mind and a commitment to finding a solution. This conference is not only a simulation but also an opportunity for you to develop skills that benefit your academic, professional, and personal lives. It is a chance to form connections with individuals who share a similar passion for global issues and diplomacy. I encourage you to make the most of this unique experience and to challenge your limits by thinking beyond the ordinary. Together, we will all contribute to the legacy of excellence that AUSMUN is known for.

I look forward to meeting you all and witnessing the remarkable contributions each of you will make to our conference.

Welcome to AUSMUN 2024, and let us embark on this enriching journey together.

Warm regards,

Sarvagya Sharma
Director of Research
AUSMUN 2024

Moderator's Welcome Letter:

Dear delegates,

Welcome to the AUSMUN 2024. We are thrilled to extend our heartfelt welcome to the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) members at the seventeenth annual American University of Sharjah Model United Nations Conference (AUSMUN). An essential component of the international community's ability to pursue a comprehensive peace agenda is the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), an intergovernmental advisory organization that aids peace initiatives in nations affected by major conflicts. As your dedicated chairs, we eagerly await the opportunity to meet and engage with each and every one of you and to ensure that this experience is as enriching as possible through active interaction, effective communication, and cooperative problem-solving. During this three-day conference, we will be discussing the following topics: "The Palestinian conflict and the possibility of a two-state solution" and "China and Taiwan's Worsening Relations; Preventing another armed conflict". We strongly encourage all delegates to delve deep into their research, going beyond the confines of the background guide. A profound understanding of your designated country's stance, capabilities, and viewpoints is paramount in ensuring that our debates are not only meaningful but also fruitful. We look forward to meeting you all at AUSMUN 2024 and wish you well with your preparations. If you have any questions, please contact us via email (pbcausmun2024@gmail.com).

Best regards,
Suma AlHeyari, Nada Shteiwi

Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission

Nada, now a high school senior, embarked on her journey in the realm of public speaking several years ago. While her foray into public speaking initially began, she discovered the world of Model United Nations (MUN) with the international CWMUN conference, marking her first conference experience. Since then, she has delved deeper into the MUN community, actively participating in a series of conferences. These engagements have not only enhanced Nada's confidence but also expanded her skill set while forging lasting friendships along the way. Beyond MUN, the skills she has acquired hold significant potential to shape her future both professionally and personally. Nada is enthusiastic and honored to serve as a chair for the PBC committee for AUSMUN24', where she is committed to making this experience enriching and memorable for all participants.

I'm Suma AlHeyari, your Chair for PBC. Currently a sophomore at AUS, I've been into Model UN since middle school, loving the whole diplomacy scene. Looking forward to seeing what you all have up your sleeves. I am excited to see what you all have planned for the conference. I'm here to keep things on track and make sure we have a productive time. Excited to see the discussions unfold and where we land, as well as the heated discussions and debate.
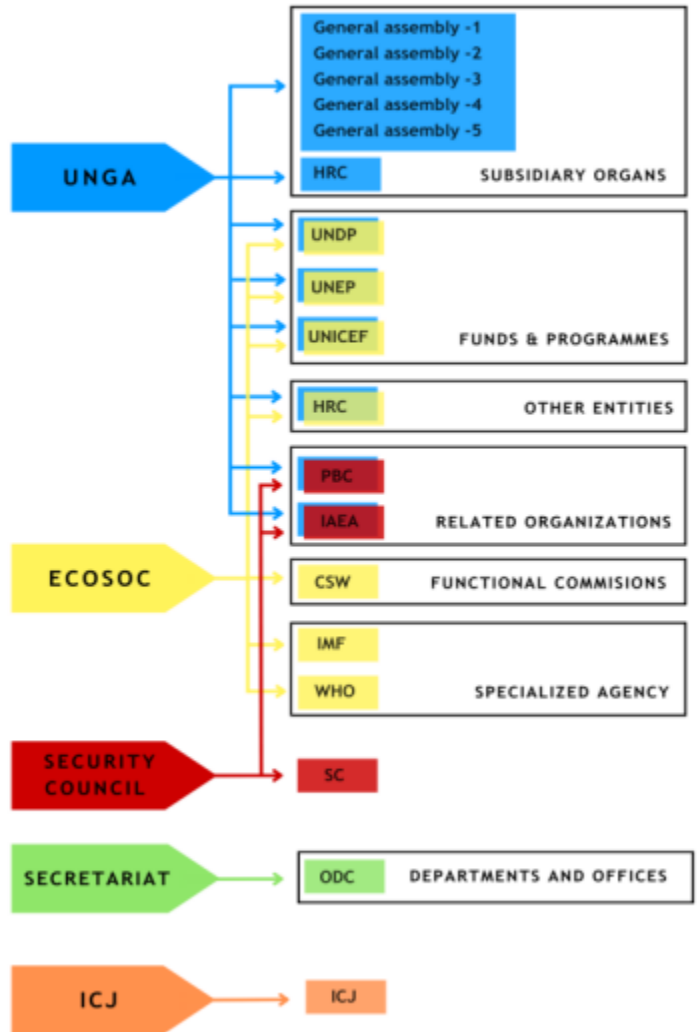
Brief About the Committee

History

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established through a collaborative effort of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council in 2005, creating a unique intergovernmental advisory body. Its primary mission is to offer support for peacebuilding efforts in post-conflict nations. The PBC's core objectives involve crafting comprehensive strategies for the reconstruction and recovery of post-conflict regions, facilitating stakeholder coordination, and mobilizing essential resources.

In its early years, the program initially focused on African nations, such as Burundi and Sierra Leone. One early example of the PBC's involvement was in mediating the conflict in Burundi, which had recently emerged from a prolonged civil war. Similar to the Rwandan Genocide, the Burundi Civil War pitted the Tutsi against the Hutu. Over time, the PBC's goals within the United Nations have evolved. Initially, in 2015, the Peacebuilding Commission primarily concentrated on providing economic assistance.

In addition to the Peacebuilding Fund, there was a recognition of the need to generate financial resources to ensure a country's sustainability. This involved generating income domestically and fostering self-reliance, reducing reliance on external powers. However, the PBC has since made significant changes to its objectives. Notably, it has included civil societies in efforts to prevent these nations from becoming failed states. Civil societies now have access to attend PBC meetings and conferences. Furthermore, the PBC has shifted its focus towards engaging private donors to contribute to peacebuilding investments (UNSC, 2005).

UNGA

SUBSIDIARY ORGANS
- General assembly -1
- General assembly -2
- General assembly -3
- General assembly -4
- General assembly -5
- HRC

FUNDS & PROGRAMMES
- UNDP
- UNEP
- UNICEF

OTHER ENTITIES
- HRC

RELATED ORGANIZATIONS
- PBC
- IAEA

ECOSOC

FUNCTIONAL COMMISIONS
- CSW

SPECIALIZED AGENCY
- IMF
- WHO

SECURITY COUNCIL
- SC

SECRETARIAT

DEPARTMENTS AND OFFICES
- ODC

ICJ
- ICJ

Funding:

The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the United Nations' primary tool for investing in preventive measures and peacebuilding (UN Secretary-General, 2020). It collaborates with various stakeholders, including national authorities, civil society organizations, and regional entities. The fund aims to coordinate UN responses to critical peacebuilding opportunities by connecting development, human rights, and peacebuilding efforts (UN Peacebuilding Fund, About the Fund). Its core principles are timeliness, catalyzing action, risk tolerance, inclusivity, national ownership, integrated approaches, and cohesive UN strategies (UN Peacebuilding Fund, About the Fund). Since its establishment in 2006, the PBF has funded projects with over USD 1.9 billion in 60-plus countries (UN Peacebuilding Fund, About the Fund). The 2020-2024 PBF Strategy targets an investment of USD 1.5 billion over five years, focusing on preventing violent conflicts and expanding peacebuilding efforts (UN Secretary-General, 2020).

The function of the committee

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) plays a pivotal role in post-conflict peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Its key functions include advising the UN Security Council and General Assembly on peacebuilding strategies, mobilizing resources, coordinating various stakeholders, and emphasizing conflict prevention. The PBC fosters sustainable peace and stability by aligning international efforts and resources, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring peacebuilding initiatives address the root causes of conflict. It also serves as a platform for donor countries to provide financial support for essential projects in post-conflict areas.

The PBC was established to address the challenges of post-conflict peacebuilding, recognizing the need for sustained support to prevent a return to violence and instability. It brings together diverse stakeholders, including governments, international entities, donors, and civil society, to create a comprehensive and cohesive approach to peacebuilding. The PBC bridges the gap between humanitarian, developmental, and peace-focused activities, all crucial in addressing the root causes of conflict and preventing its recurrence. Ultimately, it aims to provide holistic solutions and help countries achieve long-term peace and stability.

Voting procedure

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) employs a consensus-based decision-making process, emphasizing the importance of reaching a unanimous agreement among its members. In this approach, all participating stakeholders, including countries emerging from conflict, contributing countries, and relevant international organizations, strive to build a shared understanding and achieve collective agreement on proposed actions or recommendations. If consensus proves elusive on a particular matter, the PBC conducts consultations and negotiations, fostering an environment for dialogue to address concerns and explore potential compromises. relies on formal voting procedures with specific majority requirements, the PBC typically avoids formal voting, prioritizing consensus-building to ensure collaboration and unity in its peacebuilding efforts.

Topic 1: The Palestinian conflict and the possibility of a two-state solution

Summary and History

The Israel-Palestine conflict has remained in the global spotlight due to its protracted nature and deep-seated issues. This enduring dispute centers on territorial claims and the quest for self-determination, with the United Nations (UN) serving as a vital platform for discussions and potential solutions. Chief among the proposals within the UN is the two-state solution, envisioning distinct sovereign states for Israel and the Palestinians. This approach is backed by the UN as a means to foster peace, stability, and equitable coexistence in the Middle East. However, achieving consensus and implementing this solution is a challenging endeavor, involving intricate geopolitical concerns, historical grievances, and intricate negotiations among the involved parties.

At its core, the Israel-Palestine conflict is a complex and multifaceted issue born from the clash between Israel and the Palestinians. It's rooted in their competing claims to the same land and their aspirations for statehood. Both sides assert historical and religious rights to the territory, with Jerusalem serving as a particularly contentious focal point. This conflict has resulted in prolonged violence, political strife, and humanitarian crises, with the UN assuming a major role in mediating and seeking a resolution. The two-state solution, which proposes independent, self-governed states for both parties, offering territorial sovereignty and a chance for peaceful coexistence, proves difficult to realize due to various factors, including border disputes, security concerns, settlement expansion, refugee status, and the challenge of establishing a shared capital in Jerusalem. This intricate issue is deeply entrenched in history, emotions, and geopolitical complexities, rendering it a sensitive and formidable challenge for all parties involved.

The historical roots of the Israel-Palestine conflict trace back to the late nineteenth century when Jewish Zionists aimed to establish a homeland in what was then known as Ottoman Palestine. In 1917, the British declared their support for a Jewish state in Palestine in the aftermath of World War I. Following World War II, the United Nations proposed a partition plan in 1947, leading to the formation of the state of Israel. This move incited a war with Arab states and resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. This territorial dispute has been a source of violence, negotiations, and international pressure over the decades in pursuit of a lasting solution.

This complex issue is grounded in a combination of historical, political, and socio-cultural elements. Zionism, a movement dedicated to creating a Jewish state, gained

momentum at the end of the nineteenth century, sparking increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. The issuance of the Balfour Declaration by the British government in 1917 endorsed the establishment of a Jewish state in the region.

The Israel-Palestine conflict exerts a profound impact on the global stage. It has destabilized regional stability in the Middle East, affecting neighboring countries and the broader peace process. Humanitarian concerns are exacerbated by the conflict's impact on civilian life, leading to a pressing refugee and displacement crisis. The ongoing tensions influence international alliances and diplomatic relations, which, in turn, affect global security dynamics. Moreover, the conflict's economic ramifications extend beyond the region, influencing trade and investment. The adherence to international law and the protection of human rights in resolving the conflict are crucial, as they shape perceptions and strategies for conflict resolution worldwide, underlining its global significance.

Discourse on the issue

The Israel-Palestine conflict holds immense significance, encompassing religious sites central to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Its global impact extends to regional instability and geopolitical dynamics, with dire humanitarian consequences, including mass displacement and loss of life. Diplomatically, it symbolizes the complexity of deep-rooted disputes and serves as a model for international conflict resolution. A peaceful resolution can set a precedent for conflicts worldwide and shape global perceptions.

The conflict violates the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter. It contravenes the Charter's emphasis on using force solely for self-defense or territorial integrity, displaying a persistent breach in the context of ongoing territorial disputes. Peaceful dispute resolution, as advocated by the Charter, remains elusive. Human rights violations, like displacement and civilian casualties, contradict the Charter's promotion of fundamental freedoms.

Globally, the conflict sparks regional tensions, destabilizing security and impacting economic stability, humanitarian crises, and cultural divisions. Resolution offers the potential for regional stability, economic growth, social harmony, and reduced human suffering. It can improve diplomacy, conflict resolution, international cooperation, and respect for international law.

While the conflict profoundly affects the people of Israel and Palestine, countries in the region face security threats and influence due to their geopolitical interests. Nations farther removed have fewer direct consequences. Humanitarian organizations play a crucial role in alleviating suffering, illustrating the issue's depth, with the impact varying based on stakeholder involvement and proximity.

Past IO (International Organizations) Actions and Latest Developments

Numerous international organizations (IOs) have played crucial roles in addressing the enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict and advancing the prospects of a two-state solution. Notably, the United Nations, encompassing its branches like the UN Security Council and General Assembly, has consistently taken a central role in peace negotiations by frequently passing resolutions that address critical facets of the conflict.

The European Union, on its part, has been a prominent player in the Middle East peace process, offering financial assistance to Palestinians while resolutely advocating for the two-state solution as the fundamental framework for conflict resolution. Furthermore, the Arab League, representing Arab states, has made active contributions to peace negotiations by endorsing the Arab Peace Initiative, which, in exchange for Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, offers comprehensive peace and recognition.

The Quartet on the Middle East, constituted by the United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia, has engaged in mediating and promoting the two-state solution. In addition, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, representing Muslim-majority countries, has been steadfast in its support for the Palestinian cause and the establishment of a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as the representative body of the Palestinian people, is actively involved in diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving Palestinian self-determination. Not only that, but the Al-Quds Committee is dedicated to supporting Jerusalem (Al-Quds) as the capital of the State of Palestine and preserving its Arab identity.

The mandate of international organizations, including the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies like the Peacebuilding Commission, has played a significant role in addressing the Palestinian conflict. Over the years, various international organizations have sought to mediate, facilitate negotiations, and promote peaceful resolutions to this enduring conflict. These efforts have aimed to address key issues such as borders, refugees, settlements, and

self-determination, aligning with the broader principles of international law and the United Nations Charter. Despite the challenges, the international community's mandates underscore the ongoing commitment to finding a peaceful and just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ensuring the rights and security of all involved parties.

Questions that the Committee and Resolutions should address

1. What mechanisms can be established to hold accountable those responsible for human rights violations in the Palestinian territories?
2. How can the international community assist in the reconstruction and development of Palestinian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and housing?
3. What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure the protection of human rights and access to basic services for Palestinians in the occupied territories?
4. What measures can be taken to address the impact of settlements, including economic and social ramifications, on Palestinian communities?
5. How can the Peacebuilding Commission ensure that its initiatives align with existing peace processes and do not inadvertently hinder progress?

Recommended Resources for further research

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) - Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank:
https://www.cfr.org/
United Nations - Division for Palestinian Rights:
https://www.un.org/unispal/
Brookings Institution - Center for Middle East Policy:
https://www.brookings.edu/
BBC News - Middle East Section:
https://www.bbc.com/news/world/middle_east

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Topic 2: China and Taiwan's Worsening Relations; Preventing Another Armed Conflict
Summary and History

In recent years, the relationship between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China, has deteriorated significantly, raising concerns about the potential for another armed conflict in the region. This issue revolves around the historical and political complexities of the Taiwan Strait and the conflicting claims over Taiwan's sovereignty. Understanding the origins of this dispute, the factors that have contributed to its intensification, and the key terms associated with it is essential to appreciate the global implications and the efforts to prevent an armed conflict.

The historical roots of the China-Taiwan conflict trace back to the Chinese Civil War that ended in 1949. The Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT), led by Chiang Kai-shek, retreated to Taiwan following its defeat by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Mao Zedong. The KMT established a separate government on the island, while the CCP established the People's Republic of China on the mainland. Both entities claimed to be the legitimate government of all of China, resulting in a divided China with Taiwan as a de facto independent state.

Several factors have contributed to the worsening of relations between China and Taiwan. First, China's growing assertiveness and military build-up have heightened tensions. The Chinese government views Taiwan as a renegade province and has not ruled out the use of force to achieve reunification. Second, the United States' continued support for Taiwan, both militarily and diplomatically, has exacerbated the situation. Arms sales to Taiwan and official visits by U.S. officials have angered China, leading to increased hostility. Third, Taiwan's own pursuit of international recognition and its desire for a more distinct identity has led to provocative actions such as changing the name of its passport, making it clear that it is "Taiwan." This has incited a response from China.

Key Terms Pertaining to the Issue:

One-China Policy: This is a diplomatic principle that acknowledges the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government of China while maintaining unofficial relations with Taiwan. Both China and Taiwan adhere to this policy but interpret it differently.

"Status Quo": The current situation in the Taiwan Strait, where Taiwan operates as a self-governing entity but stops short of declaring formal independence.

"Cross-Strait Relations": Refers to the political and military relations between Taiwan and mainland China.

Global Implications: The China-Taiwan issue has significant global implications. First and foremost, it impacts regional stability in East Asia. A military conflict between China and Taiwan could draw in neighboring countries, particularly the United States, given its security commitments to Taiwan. This, in turn, could disrupt global trade routes and supply chains, as the Taiwan Strait is a crucial maritime route.

Furthermore, the China-Taiwan conflict has broader implications for international diplomacy and the idea of self-determination. It raises questions about how the international community navigates the delicate balance of recognizing the People's Republic of China while respecting Taiwan's unique identity. Additionally, the global implications extend to human rights concerns, as any military conflict would inevitably lead to significant humanitarian consequences.

Discourse on the issue:
The issue of China and Taiwan's worsening relations holds profound significance on the global stage, with a potential for grave consequences. It not only challenges the principles of the United Nations Charter but also has far-reaching implications for world affairs, affecting social, economic, and political aspects.

In terms of the United Nations Charter, the issue violates the fundamental principle of maintaining international peace and security. The Charter emphasizes the peaceful resolution of disputes and discourages the threat or use of force. The escalating tensions between China and Taiwan, with the possibility of armed conflict, directly contradict this core tenet, undermining global peace and stability.

On the global stage, this issue has both positive and negative implications. The negative consequences revolve around the potential for military conflict, which could disrupt regional and global stability. Economically, any disruption in the Taiwan Strait, a vital maritime route, would affect international trade, supply chains, and economic growth. Socially, the issue of China-Taiwan relations carries deep historical, cultural, and identity dimensions. In Taiwan, many residents identify themselves as Taiwanese and advocate for maintaining their distinct

cultural and political identity. This sense of identity has led to debates on whether Taiwan should seek formal independence or maintain the status quo. Meanwhile, in China, there is a strong emphasis on the "One China" policy, where Taiwan is considered an integral part of Chinese territory. Socially, the issue stirs emotions on both sides, and it often becomes a focal point in political discourse and international relations, affecting the daily lives of people in both regions. Public sentiment and the views of Taiwanese and Chinese citizens are key factors that shape the course of this ongoing complex relationship.

Positively, the issue reinforces the importance of diplomacy and conflict prevention. The global community's involvement in finding peaceful solutions and upholding the principles of the UN Charter underscores the commitment to international peace. Additionally, it serves as a stark reminder of the need to respect the right to self-determination, as the people of Taiwan's future should be decided by their own choices.

Stakeholders are differentially affected. Taiwan and its citizens are most directly impacted, facing the daily reality of the situation. China and the United States, as major players, bear significant economic and political consequences, with the potential to shape the geopolitical landscape. Countries in the Asia-Pacific region are also affected, as the situation directly impacts their security and stability. On the other hand, countries further removed from the conflict have fewer immediate implications, but they are still influenced by the broader economic and diplomatic repercussions.

Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

Several international organizations (IOs) have been engaged in addressing the issue of China and Taiwan's worsening relations. The United Nations (UN) has played a prominent role in this matter. The issue has been discussed at the UN, particularly within the framework of the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council. However, the UN's efforts have been limited by its inability to directly intervene in bilateral conflicts or enforce resolutions without the consent of the involved parties.

The UN's history of addressing the issue can be traced back to the UN General Assembly's adoption of Resolution 2758 in 1971. This resolution recognized the People's Republic of China as "the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations." As a result, Taiwan, previously represented at the UN, lost its seat. This move was significant and

indicated the UN's stance on the issue. Subsequent resolutions reiterate the One-China policy without providing a concrete resolution to the conflict.

The UN continues to address the China-Taiwan issue in its various forums, particularly through the Secretary-General's reports and discussions in the General Assembly. However, the effectiveness of these discussions is limited by the lack of consensus among member states. China, which wields a veto in the Security Council, consistently opposes any direct involvement of the UN in the Taiwan issue, while Taiwan is not a UN member and cannot officially participate in its discussions.

Other IOs, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), have indirectly addressed the issue by allowing Taiwan to participate under the name "Chinese Taipei." While these IOs aim to promote cooperation and economic integration, they avoid the sensitive political question of Taiwan's sovereignty.

Major countries involved in addressing this issue include China, Taiwan, and the United States. China seeks reunification with Taiwan and uses diplomatic and military pressure to assert its claims. Taiwan, on the other hand, strives to maintain its de facto independence and international recognition. The United States has a long-standing policy of supporting Taiwan, including arms sales and diplomatic engagement, which adds to regional tensions.

As for the mandate of your committee, it's essential to note that your authority as a delegate depends on the specific committee within the IO you are representing. Your actions may include advocating for peaceful dialogue, proposing resolutions, and fostering international cooperation to prevent further escalation of the issue. It is crucial to work within the framework of your committee's rules and your country's policies to address the China-Taiwan issue effectively.

Questions that the Committee and Resolutions Should Address
- How can the international community encourage dialogue and peaceful negotiations between China and Taiwan to prevent the escalation of tensions and the risk of an armed conflict?
- What measures can be taken to uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and promote conflict resolution in the context of the China-Taiwan issue?
- How can the United Nations, within its limitations, contribute to mediating the dispute and fostering regional stability?

- What role should major powers, such as the United States, play in addressing the China-Taiwan issue, while respecting the One-China policy and avoiding provocative actions?
- How can the international community balance the right to self-determination with the complex political and historical factors involved in the Taiwan Strait conflict, and what steps can be taken to ensure the well-being of the people of Taiwan?

Suggestions for further research
- United Nations Involvement: Research the United Nations' history of addressing this issue, including relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.
- One-China Policy: Explore the One-China policy and how it shapes international relations and diplomacy related to China and Taiwan.
- Major Stakeholders: Investigate the positions and actions of major countries involved, such as China, Taiwan, and the United States, as well as the roles of neighboring countries.
- Economic and Trade Implications: Analyze the economic and trade aspects of the China-Taiwan issue, considering the impact on global supply chains and regional economic stability.

Useful Links:
United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 (1971): This resolution recognized the People's Republic of China as "the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations" and is a significant document in the context of the China-Taiwan issue.
Link: https://undocs.org/A/RES/2758(XXVI)

The Brookings Institution - China and Taiwan: This think tank provides research and analysis on the China-Taiwan relationship, offering various reports and articles that can provide in-depth insights.
Link: https://www.brookings.edu/topic/china-and-taiwan/

Council on Foreign Relations - Taiwan's Future and the China-Taiwan Issue: This resource from the Council on Foreign Relations offers expert analysis and articles related to Taiwan's status and the China-Taiwan issue.
Link: https://www.cfr.org/china/taiwans-future

Asia Society - The One-China Policy: Asia Society provides an overview of the One-China policy, its implications, and its impact on China-Taiwan relations.

Link: https://asiasociety.org/china-taiwan-relations/introduction-one-china-policy

Timeline of major events:
1949: The Chinese Civil War ends with the victory of the Chinese Communist Party, leading the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) to retreat to Taiwan.
1950: The People's Republic of China (PRC) claims Taiwan as a part of its territory, and tensions escalate.
1971: The United Nations recognizes the People's Republic of China as the legitimate government of China, leading to Taiwan's loss of its UN seat.
1992: China and Taiwan agree to the "1992 Consensus," an understanding on the "One China" policy.
2000: Taiwan elects Chen Shui-bian as president, who advocates for Taiwanese independence.
2005: China passes the Anti-Secession Law, authorizing the use of force to prevent Taiwan's formal independence.
2008: Taiwan elects President Ma Ying-jeou, signaling improved cross-strait relations.
2016: Tsai Ing-wen is elected president, and tensions rise due to her refusal to acknowledge the "1992 Consensus."
2020: The U.S. approves significant arms sales to Taiwan, leading to increased tensions with China.
2021: China intensifies military activities near Taiwan, further straining relations

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