Strategic ambiguity?

A guide to the unique US approach to Taiwan issue

AFP, *Taipei*

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan has provoked Beijing's ire -- and brought into focus Washington's deliberately ambiguous foreign policy stance toward the democratic, self-ruled island.

BITTER HISTORY: The deep rift between Beijing and Taiwan dates back to China's civil war, which erupted in 1927 and pitted forces aligned with the Communist Party of China against the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) army. Eventually defeated by Mao Zedong's communists, KMT chief Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan, which was still under his control. From there, Chiang continued to claim the entirety of China -- just as the mainland claimed Taiwan as part of its territory to be re-taken one day, by force if necessary. Taiwan's official name remains the Republic of China, while the mainland is the People's Republic of China. Since the late 1990s, Taiwan has transformed from an autocracy into a vibrant democracy and a distinct Taiwanese identity has emerged.

STRATEGIC AMBIGUITY: Washington cut formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1979, switching recognition to Beijing as the sole representative of China. But at the same time, the United States maintained a decisive role in supporting Taiwan. Under a law passed by Congress, the United States is required to sell Taiwan military supplies to ensure its self-defence against Beijing's threat. But it has maintained "strategic ambiguity" on whether it would actually intervene militarily, a policy designed both to ward off a Chinese invasion and discourage Taiwan from ever formally declaring independence. There is now growing bipartisan discussion in Washington over whether a switch to "strategic clarity" is preferable given Beijing's increasingly bellicose approach to cross-strait relations. Yet analysts broadly agree that despite all its aggressive posturing, Beijing does not want an active military conflict over Taiwan -- just yet.

'ONE CHINA' POLICY: US policy on Taiwan has always hinged on diplomatic nuance. In what is termed the "One China policy", Washington recognises Beijing, but only acknowledges the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China. It leaves it to the two sides to work out a solution, while opposing any use of force to change the status quo. In practice, Taiwan enjoys many of the trappings of a full diplomatic relations with the United States. Only 13 nations, all in the developing world, and the Vatican still recognise Taiwan.

An injured Palestinian child is being carried to a hospital following an Israeli air strike on Gaza City, yesterday. A child and a senior militant were among four people killed in the Israeli air strikes. PHOTO: AFP

ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEET

US-Sino rivalry trumps regional concerns

AGENCIES

Tensions over developments in Taiwan overshadowed an Asian meeting of foreign ministers yesterday, diverting attention at a forum that had been expected to focus on efforts to end the crisis in Myanmar among other issues.

The gathering of foreign ministers hosted by Southeast Asia's regional bloc Asean has included counterparts from the United States, China, Russia, Japan and Australia.

But this week's meetings have seen diplomatic discord over US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's trip to Taiwan, which prompted China to conduct major military drills in the Taiwan Strait, including launching live missiles around the self-ruled island it claims as part of its sovereign territory.

"There is no justification for this extreme, disproportionate and escalatory military response," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told a news conference on the sidelines of an Asean meeting. "Now, they've taken dangerous acts to a new level."

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations on Thursday called for restraint and warned of the risk of miscalculations and confrontation among major powers.

Asean ministers were joined yesterday for plenary sessions of the East Asia Summit and the annual Asean Regional Forum security gathering, attended by 27 foreign ministers.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov walked out of a session yesterday when their Japanese counterpart spoke, a person in the room said.

Asean issued a communique yesterday after a meeting of foreign ministers from the bloc.

The communique covered Myanmar but did not mention Taiwan. Asean said it was "deeply disappointed" by the limited progress made by Myanmar's military rulers in implementing a peace agreement to end the conflict in the country.

The communique recommended that an Asean summit in November assess progress by the junta in implementing the peace plan "to guide the decision on the next steps".

Thai nightclub fire kills 14

AFP, *Sattahip*

Thailand's prime minister yesterday ordered an investigation into a massive blaze that tore through a nightclub, killing at least 14 people and injuring around 40. The fire broke out around 1:00 am at the Mountain B nightspot in Chonburi province's Sattahip district, about 150 kilometres southeast of Bangkok. Video footage posted by a rescue service showed desperate revellers fleeing the club screaming, their clothes ablaze, as a huge fire raged in the background. The victims were aged between 17 and 49 and all are believed to have been Thai.

India bids to sell fighter jets to Malaysia

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India has offered to sell 18 light-combat aircraft (LCA) "Tejas" to Malaysia, the defence ministry said yesterday, adding that Argentina, Australia, Egypt, the United States, Indonesia, and the Philippines were also interested in the single-engine jet. The Indian government last year gave a $6 billion contract to state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd HIAE.NS for 83 of the locally produced Tejas jets for delivery starting around 2023 - four decades after it was first approved in 1983.

PROTEST AGAINST PRICE HIKE

Rahul, Priyanka detained

AGANCIES

Indian police yesterday detained several Congress workers and leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, while they were protesting against inflation, unemployment and rising prices defying prohibitory orders imposed by police. They were released after six hours. Before starting the protest, Congress MPs led by party chief Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi wore black clothes to parliament. Proceedings were adjourned as Congress members created an uproar over the alleged misuse of probe agencies and the government "ignoring people's issues".

Mastermind

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Another suspect named Raja Mia, who was arrested on Thursday, told police that Ratan recruited him to drive the bus.

"Raja was at Tangail bus terminal around 11:00pm on the night of the crime and later joined three other members of the gang who came from Dhaka."

The four of them then travelled to Sirajganj and boarded the bus near Kodda area, he said.

"Ratan, Raja and one other suspect planned the crime. Raja knew only three members of the gang. Of the 10 members, three are from Tangail and the rest are from different districts."

TWO MORE ARRESTED

Detective Branch (Tangail north) of police yesterday arrested two other suspects named Muhammad Awal, 30, of Kaliakair upazila of Gazipur, and Nurnnabi, 26, Roumari upazila of Kurigram.

Both were arrested in different areas of Kaliakair.

Officers found one robbed phone from Nurunnabi's possession, SP Kaiser said, adding that Awal told police that he robbed two phones from the passengers and had already sold one and given away the other to a homeless boy, the SP told a press conference yesterday.

Police are trying to catch the rest of the gang members and recover the things they had robbed, he added.

The robbers took away 16 phones, cash, and jewellery worth an estimated Tk 1.8 lakh.

Another tragedy

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daughter Rahi Akhter Adori.

The injured are Rubel's wife Kajal Akhter, her brother Russell Ahmed and his wife Anika Akhtar.

The child was declared dead at Jaintiapur Upazila Health Complex and the father at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, the OC said.

The injured were undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Raza, Kaia stun Tigers

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laden 109-ball 135 while Kaia scored 110 off 122 balls as the duo spearheaded Zimbabwe's cause.

Before Raza and Kaia took matters into their own hands, Zimbabwe were in a precarious position, having lost two wickets for just six runs in 1.5 overs. Zimbabwe also lost Wessly Madhevere in the 14th over, leaving the hosts with an uphill climb.

Just when things looked to be going Bangladesh's way, Raza and Kaia emerged. They broke a 25-year-old record to pull Zimbabwe out of a perilous situation. Their record stand surpassed Andy Flower and Grant Flower's 161-run opening stand in 1997 in Nairobi -- which till yesterday was Zimbabwe's highest partnership for any wicket against Bangladesh in ODIs.

While Raza and Kaia seemed determined and locked in during the chase, a lacklustre fielding display from Bangladesh aided them. The Tigers fumbled a total of three catches -- dropping Raza on 43, Kaia on 74 and Luke Jongwe on 17. To worsen matters, they also missed a stumping chance.

Earlier, a splendid batting display saw Bangladesh pile up a commendable 303 for two, the platform for which was set by a 119-run opening stand from skipper Tamim Iqbal and Liton Das.

Following some delightful stroke-making from Liton and Tamim, their partnership came to an end when Tamim (62 off 88) top-edged a Sikandar Raza delivery in the 26th over and was caught at short third man after becoming the first Bangladeshi to reach 8,000 ODI runs.

Liton then starred in another fifty-plus stand for the second wicket with Anamul Haque, who returned to the ODI format for the first time since July 2019.

However, Liton, who continued his rich vein of form by reaching 81 off 89 deliveries, saw an abrupt end to his innings as he was stretchered off following an apparent hamstring pull in the 34th over.

But that did not stop Anamul from making a statement as the right-hander, after a steady start, upped the ante in the later stage of the innings on way to stitching a 96-run stand with Mushfiqur Rahim. Anamul departed in the 46th over, after scoring a 62-ball 73 that featured six boundaries and three maximums.

The experienced duo of Mushfiqur and Mahmudullah Riyad then combined for a quickfire 36-run stand for the fourth wicket to help Bangladesh take the score past the 300-run mark. Mushfiqur, on his return from a break, remained unbeaten for a 49-ball 52.

15 killed in Israeli air strikes

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people killed. A further 55 Palestinians were wounded, the ministry said.

Islamic Jihad said several members of its military wing were among those killed, including "the great fighter Taysir al-Jabari 'Abu Mahmoud', the commander of the Al-Quds Brigade in the northern region of the Gaza Strip."

Israeli tanks were lined up along the border and the military said Thursday it was reinforcing its troops.

An Israeli military spokesman said "we are assuming about 15 killed in action" in Gaza, referring to Palestinian combatants.

"We haven't finished yet," spokesman Richard Hecht told journalists, adding that the military expected retaliatory rocket fire against Israel by militants.

Islamic Jihad leader Ziad al-Nakhala, who is visiting key backer Iran, told Lebanon's Al-Mayadeen television that "Tel Aviv will... be one of the targets of the resistance's missiles... as will all Zionist cities."

The strikes come four days after Israel closed its two border crossings with Gaza and restricted the movement of Israeli civilians living near the frontier, citing security concerns.

The measures follow the arrest in the occupied West Bank of two senior members of Islamic Jihad, which has a strong presence in Gaza.

Hamas, the militant group which rules Gaza, said Israel has "committed a new crime for which it must pay the price".

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid was due to hold talks with Defence Minister Benny Gantz yesterday evening.

"Anyone who tries to harm Israel should know: we will find you. The security forces will act against Islamic Jihad terrorists to eliminate the threat they pose to the citizens of Israel," Lapid said.

Islamic Jihad is blacklisted as a terrorist organisation by the European Union and the US.

The office of Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas said the Israeli military action amounted to a "dangerous escalation".

"The presidency called on the international community to force Israel to stop this aggression against our people everywhere," said a statement published by the official Palestinian news agency Wafa.

Yesterday afternoon, Israeli military banned large gatherings in communities within 80 kilometres of Gaza frontier, until this evening.

Tagore's 81th death anniv today

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Different cultural organisations and government and non-government institutions will pay their tributes to the great Bangalee poet, who won Nobel Prize in literature in 1913 for his anthology of lyrical ballads titled "Gitanjali" (Song Offerings).

The youngest of 13 children of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi, Rabindranath was born on 25th Baishakh, 1268 of Bengali calendar at the Jorasanko mansion in Kolkata.

Rabindranath, also called the "Bard of Bengal", composed over 2,000 songs which created a separate genre, known as 'Tagore songs".

He also wrote eight novels, 84 short stories and numerous poems in his prolific literary career spanned over almost seven decades.

His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems --Bangladesh's Amar Shonar Bangla and India's Jana Gana Mana.

Eight IT

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through underhand means, as agents can make more profits if they hire more workers.

In reality, if the additional workers are "hired" and go to Malaysia, they remain jobless, their work permits are therefore not renewed and so they become undocumented.

So, migrants suffer for the corruption of agents and certain government officials who do not check the companies' true need for workers before issuing job approvals, Abdul Aziz told this correspondent from Malaysia yesterday.

"The so-called IT company plays a big role in this process," he said.

Ali Haider Chowdhury, former secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), said the arrest of Bestinet officials prove the prior suspicion of massive corruption in recruitment processes.

"We want breaking of any syndicate and fair and transparent system of worker recruitment," he said.

Authorities in both countries need to work thoroughly and sincerely to make it happen, he added.

Meanwhile, in a statement to Malaysiakini, a news portal, Bestinet said it was confident that the company and its staff would be exonerated from any and all allegations.

"Bestinet upholds strict governance regarding business ethics and integrity and practises zero-tolerance policy towards bribery and corruption in all its forms," it said.

Invitation for Tenders

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Project Director, PIU
Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project.
Room No. 326, 2nd Floor, 1st Building
Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE)
Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215

Memo No. 12.01.0000.000.14.054.21/6841 Date 03/08/2022

Invitation for Tenders (Non-Consulting service)

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

1	Ministry/Division	:	Ministry of Agriculture (MOA)
2	Agency	:	Department of Agricultural Extension
3	Procuring Entity Name	:	Project Director, Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project
4	Procuring Entity District	:	Dhaka
5	Invitation for	:	Vehicle Hire/Transportation: For monitoring field activities
6	Invitation Ref. No	:	12.01.0000.000.14.054.21/
7	Date	:	03/08/2022
8	Procurement Method	:	OTM
9	Budget and Source of Funds	:	GOB
10	Project Code	:	2243213
11	Project Name	:	Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project
12	Tender Package No	:	GD/DAE/FMP-501
13	Tender Package Name	:	Vehicle Hire/Transportation: For monitoring field activities
14	Tender Publication Date	:	03/08/2022
15	Tender Last Selling Date	:	18/8/2022 (at 5:00pm)
16	Tender Closing Date and Time	:	21/08/2022 (at 3:00pm)
17	Tender Opening Date and Time	:	21/08/2022 (at 3:00pm)
18	Eligibility of Tender	:	• Minimum 05 (Five) years experience in providing car/vehicle rental services. The firm should have financial solvency of BDT 12000000 (One crore and twenty lakh taka) as Working capital to ensure service delivery or as per Bid Document. • The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor in providing non Consultant Service of at least two contracts of similar nature completed over a period of last three (3) years each with a value of at least of Tk. 80.00 lakh (Eighty Lakh Taka Only) shall be required in govt./Semi Govt./autonomous body. • Contract for providing Service will be treated as similar nature. • The required average annual turnover of the tenderer shall be at least of the amount of Tk 1.0 Crore (One crore Only) over the last three years.
19	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	:	2000/-

20	Package No	Identification of Package	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Weeks/ Months
	GD/DAE/ FMP-501	Vehicle Hire/Transportation: For monitoring field activities by HQ, FSW, DG, DAE office including ICT Wing in Regions, districts, UZ, and UP & PIU	Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project, Room No. 326, 2nd Floor, 1st Building, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215.	3,50,000/-	30-month

21	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Tarik Mahmudul Islam
22	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director
23	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Farm Mechanization Through Integrated Management Project, Room No. 326, 2nd Floor, 1st Building, Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Khamarbari, Dhaka-1215
24	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	01718114480
25	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the Tender proceedings	

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GD-1495