



NHSMUNC II

Northwood High School Model UN



United States Senate: Strategic Competition Between the United States and China

Topic Update

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Recent Updates; US Support to Taiwan

In recent weeks, the precarious situation between the US, Taiwan, and China has only heightened. Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen, visited US Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy at the Ronald Reagan Presidential library on April 6th. The pair, alongside a variety of bipartisan lawmakers, discussed US-Taiwan relations and President Ing-wen's trip to Central America, strengthening the US's formal diplomatic relationship with Taiwan as a whole.

After expressing significant concern at the prospect of such a meeting, the Chinese government condemned the US's actions and subsequently began naval operations and military drills in the area. Considered to be "combat readiness patrols," nearly fifty various naval vehicles were detected in the area and the navy plans to hold live-fire drills in areas that are in close proximity to Taiwan. Taiwan also reports that 45 military planes crossed the Taiwan Strait median line, which is the unofficial line separating Chinese and Taiwanese territory. China simultaneously sanctioned the various organizations and individuals associated with Ing-wen's visit. The CCP is expected to continue fostering military activity within the areas surrounding Taiwan in the coming days.

In retaliation, the United States, in cooperation with the Philippines, have begun the largest-ever military drills near the contested regions of the South China Sea where China is currently trying to militarize in an effort to protect their own coasts. Concerns have been expressed regarding Taiwan's vulnerability as a result of the rising regional tensions following the joint military drills between the US and the Philippines, known as Balikatan. These military operations in the South China Sea are taking place just a few weeks after China held similar exercises there. Tensions between Beijing and Taipei have been on the rise lately as a result of Taiwan, which China claims as its own territory and has long been a hotspot in the region. The Balikatan exercises are considered as a symbol of Washington's commitment to its ally, Taiwan, which has received significant

support from the US in the form of military assistance and support. However, the exercises are also expected to increase already high tensions with China.

As lawmakers in D.C. continue to scramble on how to respond to the threat in Eastern Asia, Senator Lindsey Graham has claimed that although he believes in the One China policy (The long standing belief held by the U.S. Government and CCP that there is only one sovereign state under the name China, with the PRC serving as the sole legitimate government of that China, which includes Taiwan), he would be willing to fight for Taiwan and believes that the United States should take a more proactive stance when it comes to the disputes.

As countries such as the U.S. have taken a more aggressive stance in East Asia, French President Emmanuel Macron has been pushing his theory of "strategic autonomy", backed by the Chinese government, which promotes European countries resisting pressure by the United States to take a stand against China, but rather to stay out of the affairs of other countries in an effort to strengthen their own economies. Macron's statement "signals a dead end for the U.S. strategy of luring Europe to contain China," Beijing's Global Times tabloid said on Monday.

Republican lawmakers have struck back against Macron's statements and have condemned him for his "betrayal" of Taiwan.

As the conflict in the region heats up, more and more factors begin to emerge leaving lawmakers at a difficult time where they must strike a balance between championing U.S. foreign interests and avoiding conflict abroad.

Recent Updates; TikTok's Ascent and Influence

On March 23, TikTok's CEO Shou Zi Chew made his first appearance in Congress after evading the public eye and rarely participating in interviews. Congress remained unconvinced by Chew's answers after hours of hostile questioning.

The main candidate for any sort of legal action towards TikTok is the Restricting the Emergence of Security Threats that Risk Information and Communications Technology Act, or the RESTRICT Act. The RESTRICT Act, pioneered by Senator Mark Warner, was introduced as a new way to evaluate and regulate data-based technological services while not targeting any specific platform. However, the bill simultaneously sanctions punishment against individuals who pursue and seek out banned services. The bill also does not guarantee TikTok or Bytedance will actually be banned.

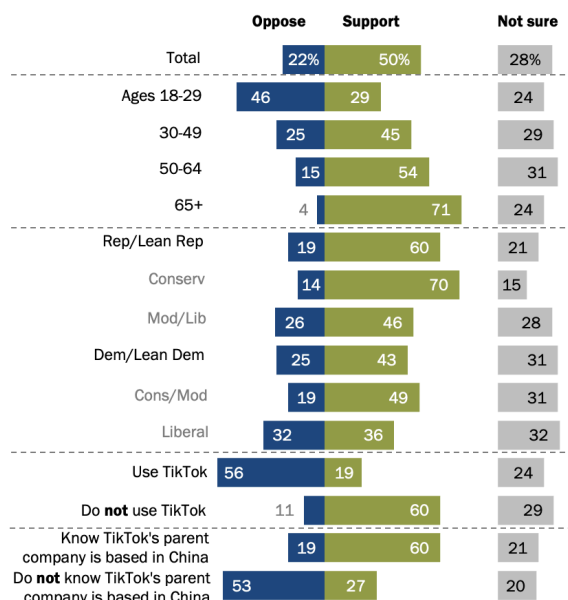
Although a majority bi-partisan block of the U.S. Congress has voiced support for taking some sort of action against TikTok, a group of progressive lawmakers, including members of the progressive "Squad" have opposed the idea of a ban on TikTok citing that the U.S. needs to implore larger action on data security and that taking action solely on TikTok would do nothing to solve the issue at hand. Surprisingly, Republican Rand Paul has also joined the progressives in opposing a ban on TikTok, breaking with his party caucus. Some of these lawmakers have also voiced concerns about U.S. based social media platforms such as Facebook and Snapchat as well.

In response to the idea of a potential TikTok ban, many youth users of the app have spoken out in support of TikTok, which comes as no surprise considering that an estimated 60% of Generation Z uses the app at least once a month. Although the app is popular amongst youth, a study by the Pew Research Center found that over double the amount of Americans support banning Tik Tok.

than those who oppose a ban.

More Americans support than oppose the U.S. govt. banning TikTok – but not a majority of TikTok users

% who ___ the U.S. government banning TikTok



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 20-26, 2023. Q25a.

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