



# CHINA, INDIA, JAPAN AND THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

A perilous balancing act

A portrait of Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie with a small white pattern. The background is a solid blue color.

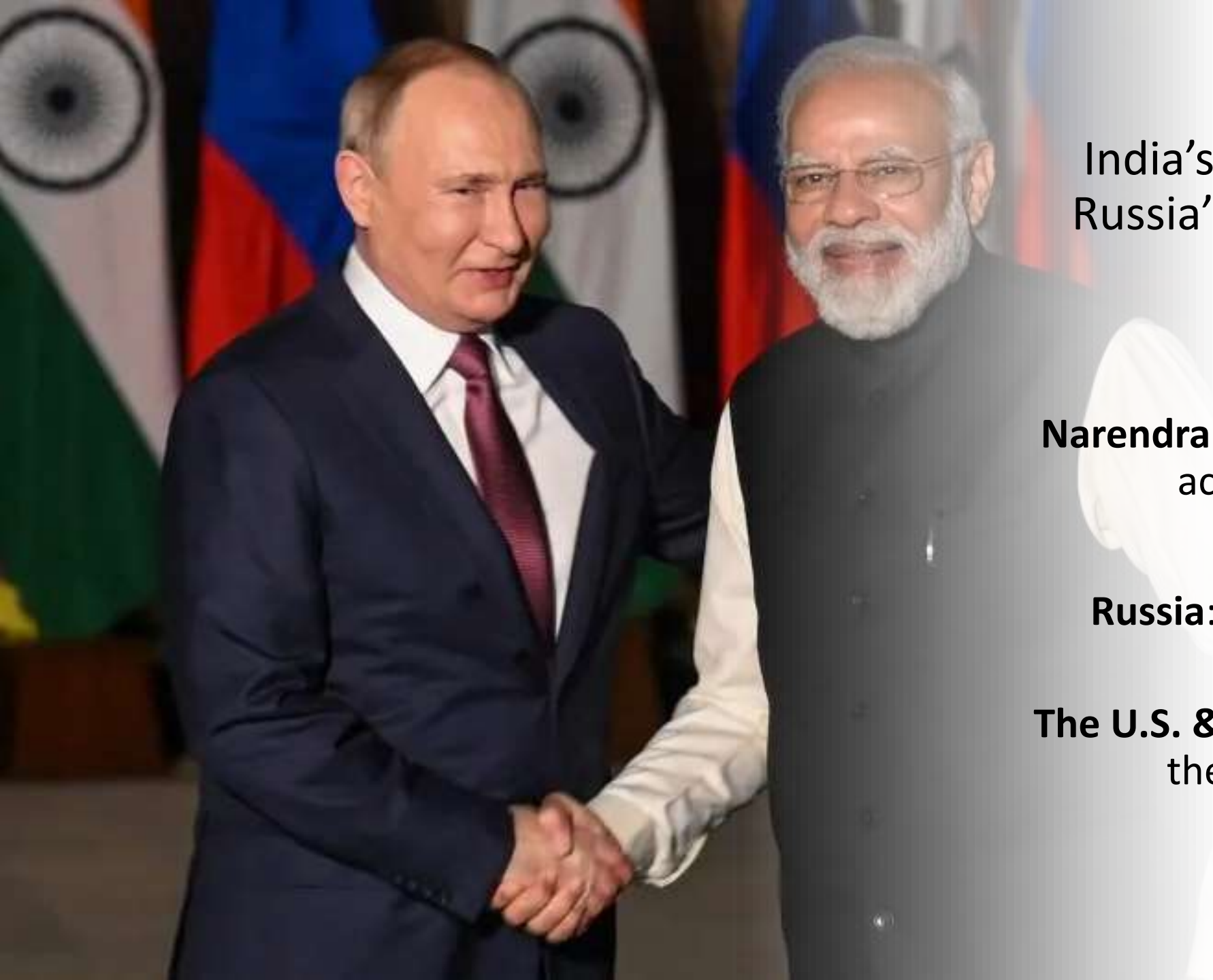
What does Putin want?

**No dialogue** (let alone a ceasefire) unless ALL of Putin's demands are met

A portrait of Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark blue suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie with a small white pattern. The background is a blurred mix of blue and brown tones.

## What does Putin want?

1. A neutral & non-nuclear status for Ukraine
2. A demilitarized Ukraine and its *“denazification”*
3. The formal recognition of the annexation of Crimea by Russia
4. The *“sovereignty”* of the two self-proclaimed Pro-Russian separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk (Eastern Ukraine)

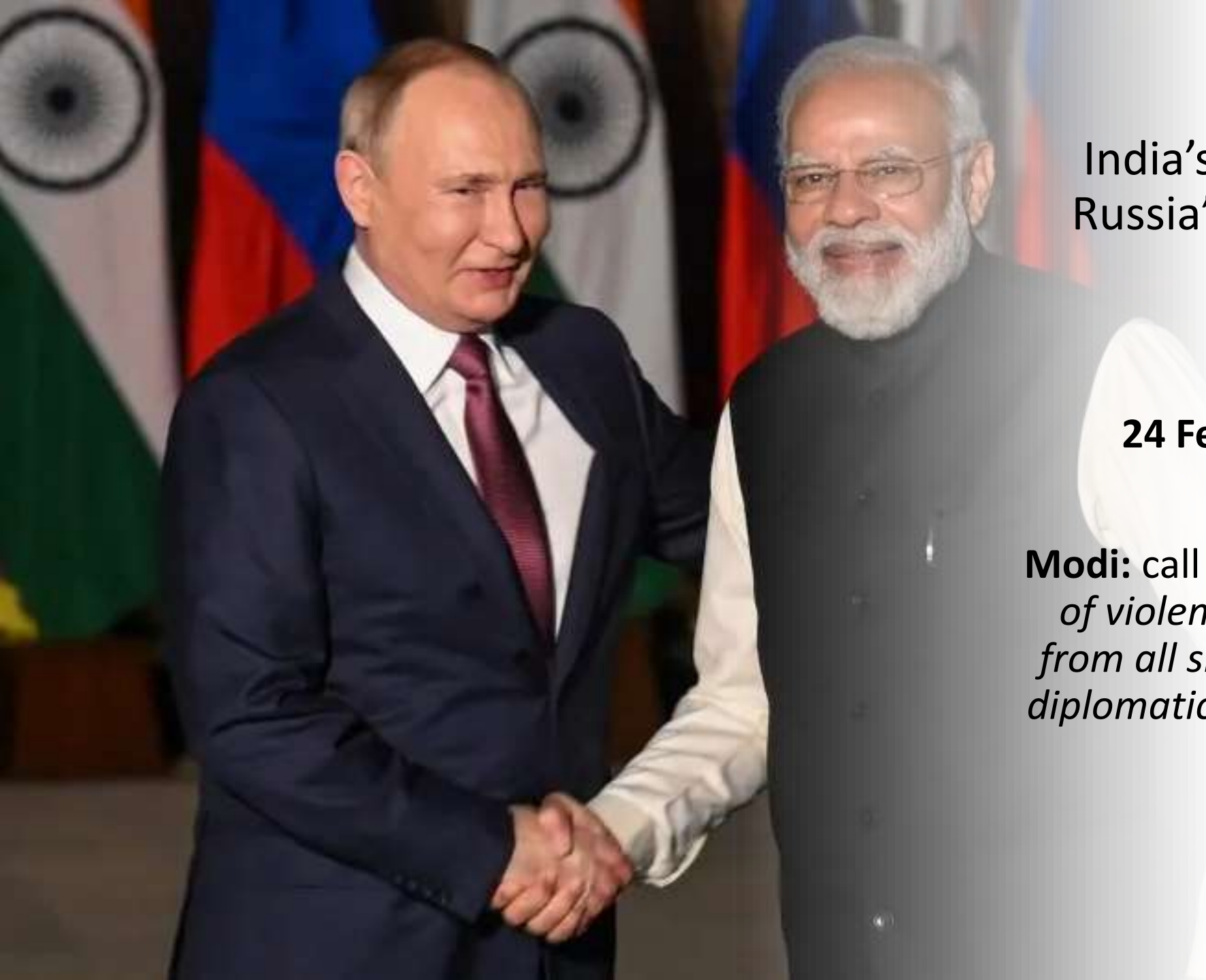


India's refusal to condemn  
Russia's invasion of Ukraine

**Narendra Modi:** a perilous balancing  
act since 24 February

**Russia:** India's primary weapon  
supplier

**The U.S. & Europe:** India's partners in  
the Indo-Pacific region



## India's refusal to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine

**24 February:** telephone call

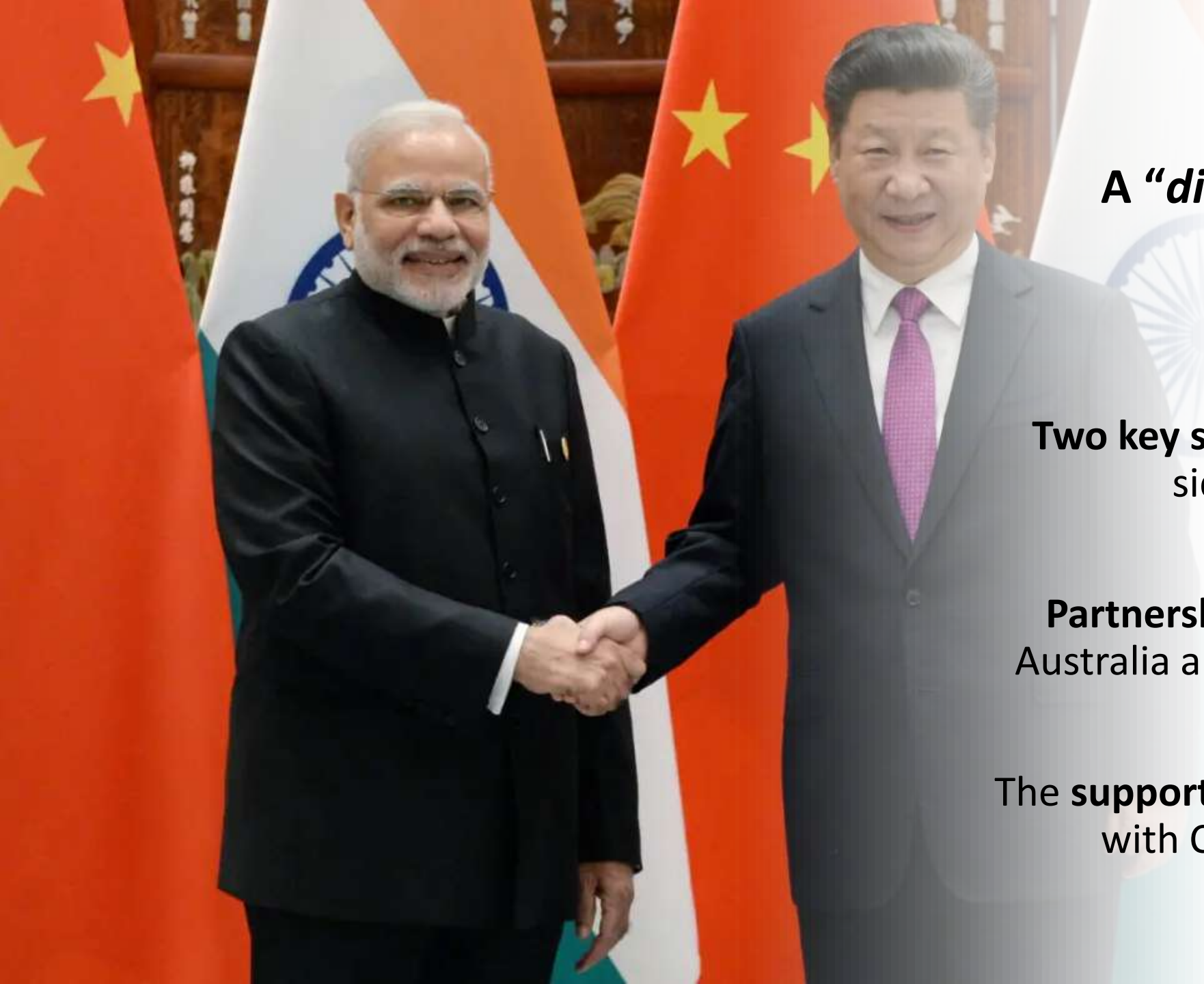
**Modi:** call for an *“immediate cessation of violence”* and *“concerted efforts from all sides to return to the path of diplomatic negotiations and dialogue”*



**25 February:** UN Security Council voted on a **draft resolution** condemning in the strongest terms possible" Russia's aggression, invasion and violation of Ukraine's sovereignty

India abstained...

Dialogue and diplomacy: the only path to a de-escalation



***A “diplomatic dilemma”***

**Two key strategic partners** on both sides of the conflict

**Partnerships** with the U.S., Japan, Australia and France to contain China

The **support** of Moscow (India’s conflict with China in the Himalaya)



A large, olive-green, eight-wheeled military truck is the central focus, carrying a massive, rectangular radar unit on its flatbed. The radar unit is tilted at an angle. To the left of the truck, a tall, cylindrical missile launcher stands vertically. In the background, another similar truck is visible, and a tall antenna tower rises into the sky. The scene is set in an open, paved area under a clear blue sky with a few clouds.

Russia accounts for **70%** of  
India's **military supplies**


**2018:** India bought US\$ 5.5 billion of Russian  
made **S-400 Triumph air-defense system**  
(deployed in the Himalaya)



## India & Russia: an old friendship

India amongst “**Non-aligned**” states: refusing the logic of the Cold War (U.S. vs. Soviet Union)

The U.S. forced to forge a military alliance with Pakistan

A photograph of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin standing on a ship's deck. Modi is on the left, wearing a white shirt and a dark vest, with his hands clasped. Putin is on the right, wearing a dark suit and tie, with his hands resting on Modi's arms. They are both looking at each other and smiling. In the background, there is a body of water and a city skyline with various buildings and greenery under a cloudy sky.

**December 2021:** Putin's visit to  
India

Putin: India as a *“great power”* and a  
*“reliable ally”*

# India: fierce opposition to China's BRI ("*Belt & Road Initiative*")



# Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (« QUAD »)



A vague concept

Bloc of Indo-Pacific democracies that was created to counter China's regional influence (freedom of navigation, Indo-Pacific as a “free and open” space)

**2007:** a Japanese initiative

Two concepts:

The *“Arc of Freedom and  
Prosperity”*

The *“Confluence of Two Seas”*

Rebirth in **2017**



# Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (« QUAD »)



India could be perceived as an unreliable partner



The war in Ukraine &  
Northeast Asia: a **dangerous**  
**precedent**

Increased risks of **regional**  
**tensions**

Renewed **debate** in Japan over  
**nuclear weapons**

## Japan and the **Kuril Islands**

Japan never signed a peace treaty with Russia following its defeat in 1945

Tensions over the sovereignty of the Kuril Islands (occupied by Russia)

Negotiating an agreement: a key objective of Japanese diplomacy



## South Korea and Russia

A good relationship

Economic partnership

Moscow's influence: brokering an agreement over North Korea's nuclear program



A photograph of Fumio Kishida, the Prime Minister of Japan, speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. His hands are clasped in front of him. The background is a blurred red and white flag.

Fumio Kishida

## Japan's reaction to Russian invasion

*“Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a unilateral attempt to change the status quo by force and **shakes the foundation of international order**”*

**Economic sanctions** against Russia

Freezing of Russian financial assets

Russian banks blocked from the SWIFT  
international payment network



The **Society for Worldwide  
Interbank Financial  
Telecommunication (SWIFT)**

**Messaging network** used by banks and  
other financial institutions to quickly,  
accurately, and securely send and  
receive information, such as money  
transfer instructions

A photograph of Fumio Kishida, a Japanese politician, speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. His hands are clasped in front of him, and he is looking slightly to the right. A microphone is visible in the foreground. The background is a blurred red and white flag.

Fumio Kishida

## Japan's reaction to Russian invasion

**Caution:** Japan did not shut down its  
airspace to Russian aircraft

Investments in Russian energy sector to  
be maintained (a question of security)



**South Korea: the use of force against Ukraine condemned**

Sanctions against Russia

**South Korea and the U.S.: treaty of defense**

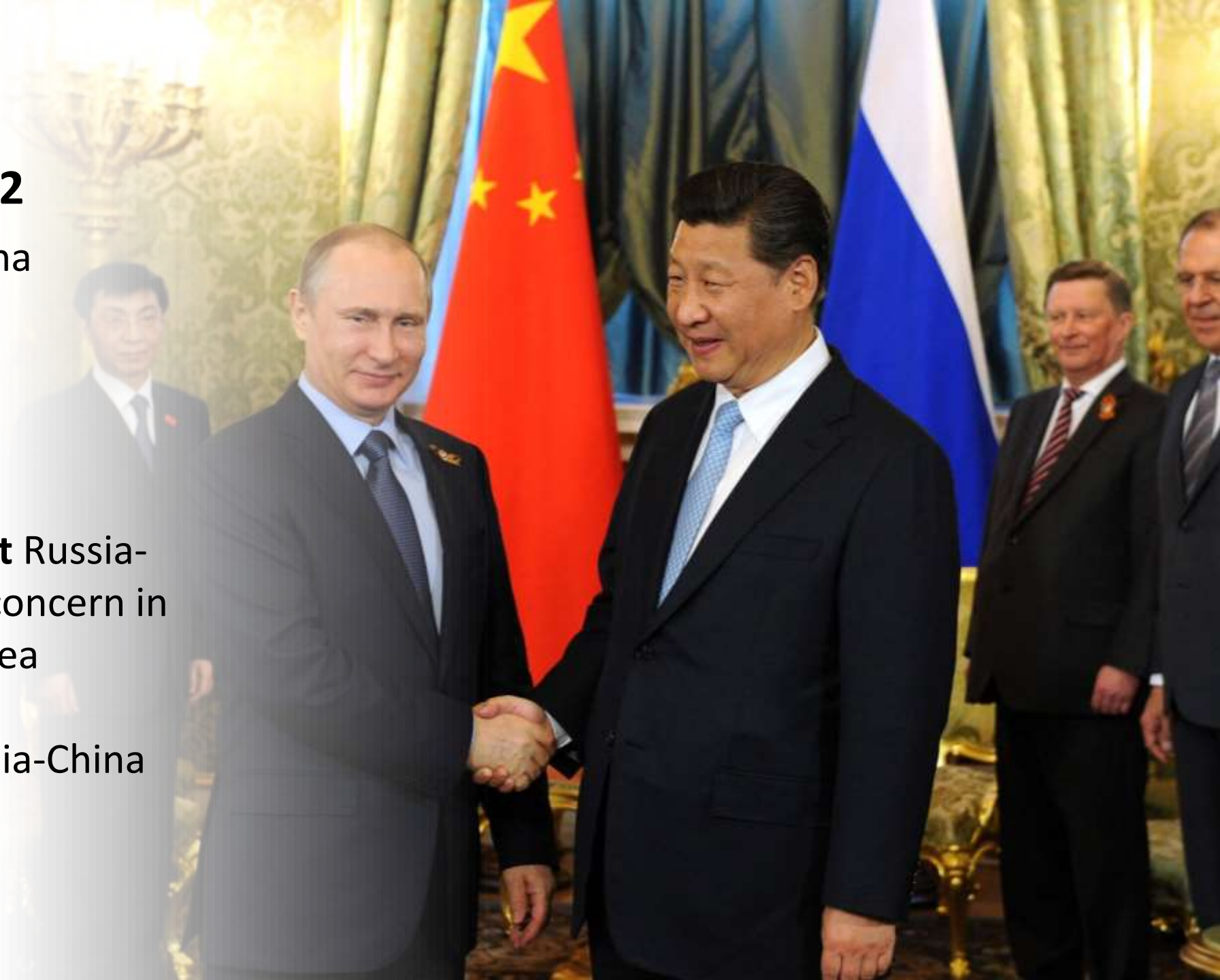
South Korea watching closely NATO's reaction

**4 February 2022**

Putin's visit to China

**Strategic rapprochement** Russia-  
China: a major source of concern in  
Japan & South Korea

Potential combined Russia-China  
threat



# Tensions in the South China Sea & the East China Sea





## Japan-China confrontation

Sovereignty over a group of uninhabited islands since late 1970s (oil reserves)

Proximity to key shipping lanes & fishing grounds



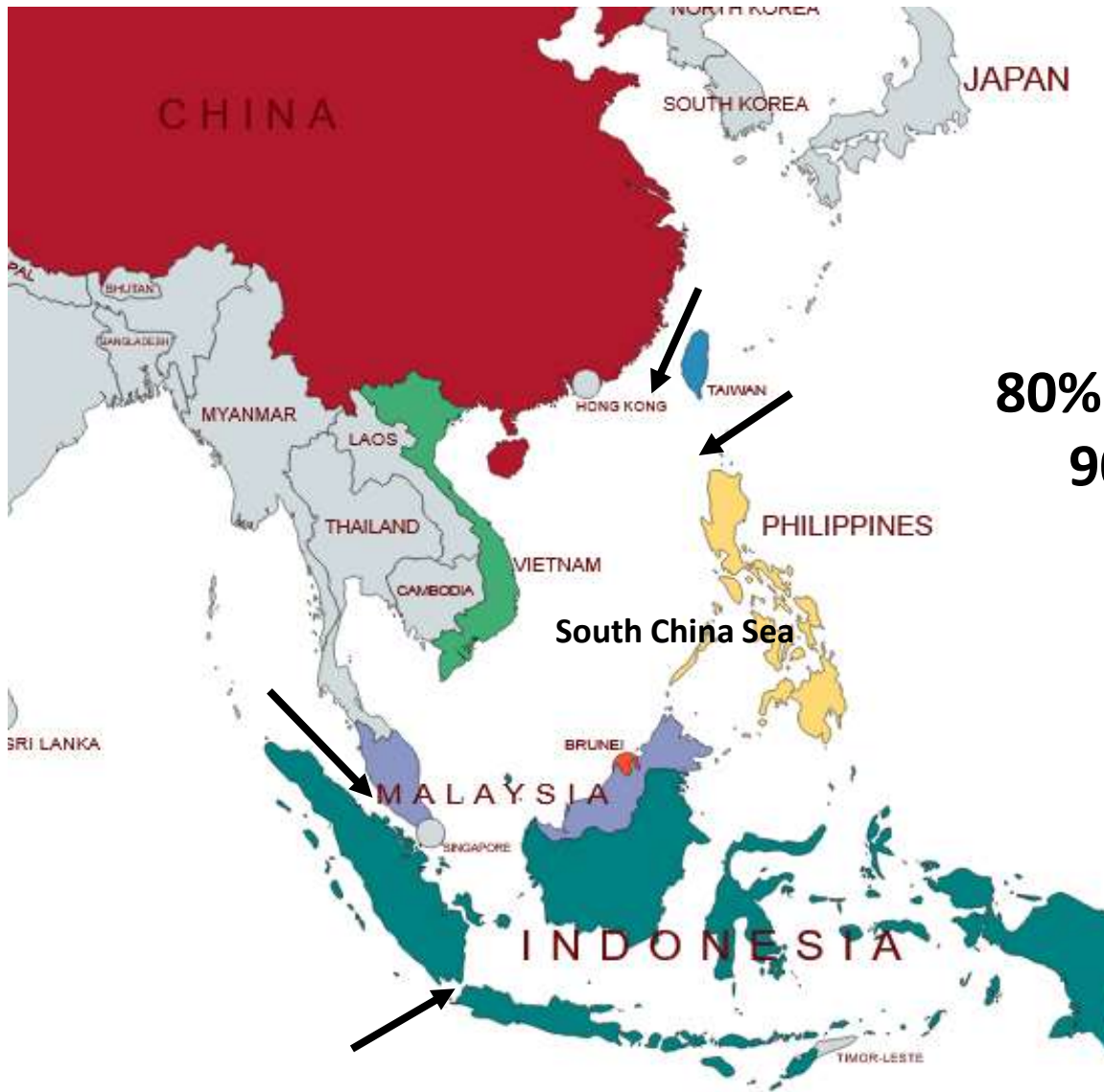
Japan's growing **strategic anxiety** over China

China's bid to dominate East Asia  
and key **shipping lanes**

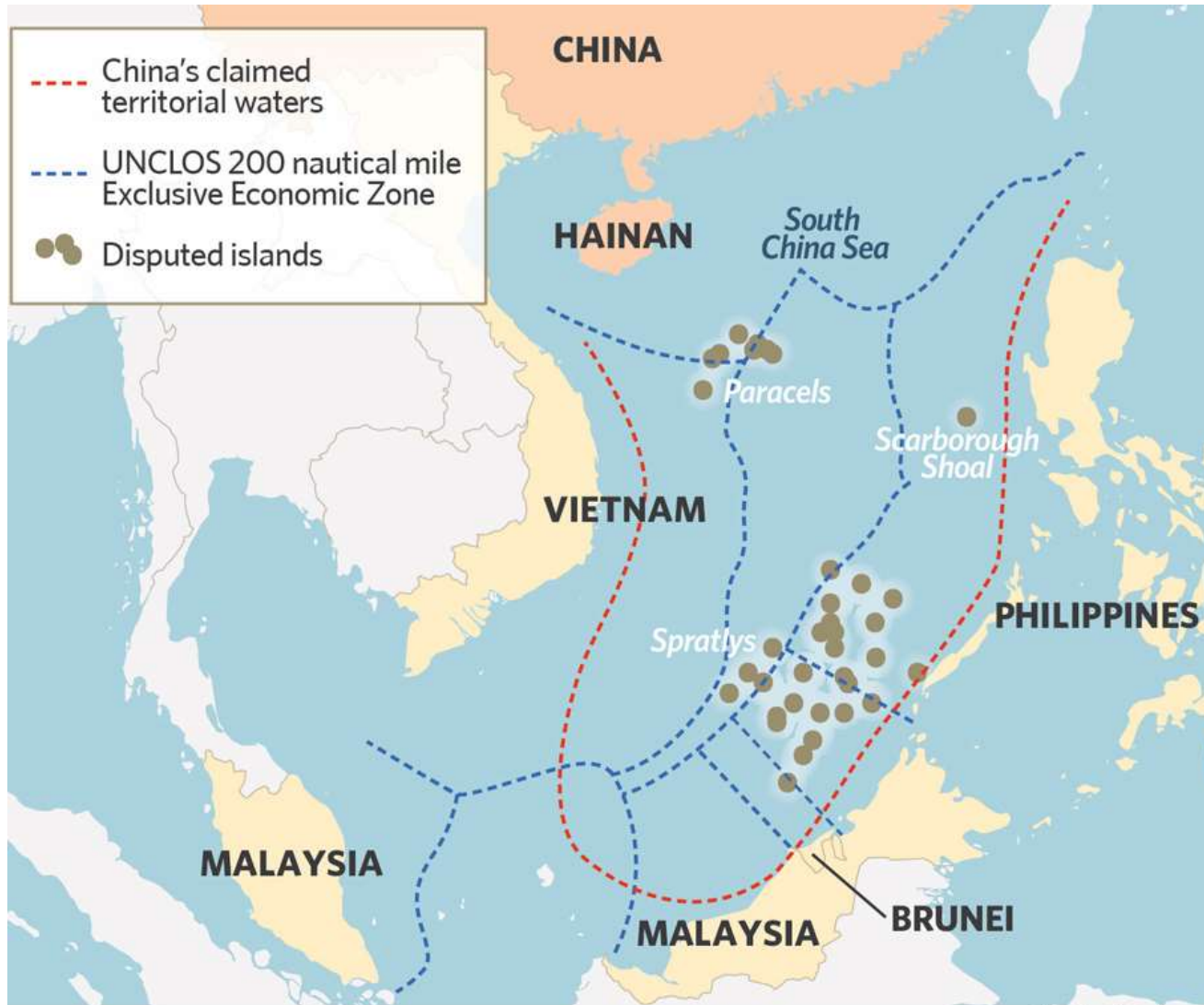
Japan's dependence on imports  
of energy (oil & natural gas) and  
food

# Geo-strategic stakes in the Indo-Pacific today...





**Oil:** Japan's largest import  
**80%** of Japan's oil comes from the Persian Gulf  
**90%** passes through the South China Sea



graphic by Lindsey I

China's so-called "historical rights" over the South China Sea

Japan's need to prevent China's control of the South China Sea and the waters around **Taiwan**

A photograph of Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping shaking hands in a formal setting. They are both wearing dark suits and ties. Behind them are the national flags of China and Russia. Several other men in suits are standing in the background. The room has ornate gold-colored wall decorations and chandeliers.

An emerging **Moscow-Beijing axis** against the U.S.



## Caught off guard

**China** appears to have been caught off guard by Russia's military offensive against Ukraine

### Several clues

1. Xi Jinping's silence on February 24 (busy preparing the annual session of Chinese parliament)
2. Xi Jinping only spoke to Putin

Chinese Foreign Affairs  
Minister **Wang Li**

A close-up portrait of Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister Wang Li. He is an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a blue patterned tie. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Caught off guard

3. In the days prior to February 24, Chinese media mocked Joe Biden's warnings about a Russian invasion

4. Short interventions at the UN Security Council of Chinese ambassador (likely no instructions from Beijing)

Chinese Foreign Affairs  
Minister **Wang Li**

Likely that Putin did not  
warn Xi Jinping in advance



## 4 January

Messages of Congratulations with  
Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky  
on the 30th Anniversary of the  
Establishment of China-Ukraine  
Diplomatic Relations

Xi Jinping indicated he attaches  
*“great importance to the  
development of **China-Ukraine  
strategic partnership**, and is ready  
to work with President Zelensky to  
take the 30th anniversary... as an  
opportunity to push for more results  
in China-Ukraine relations and  
bilateral cooperation in various  
fields”*





China's awkward position

The sacrosanct principles of  
“sovereignty” & “territorial  
integrity”


Chinese Foreign Affairs  
Minister **Wang Li**

Donbas region  
Line of conflict

100 km

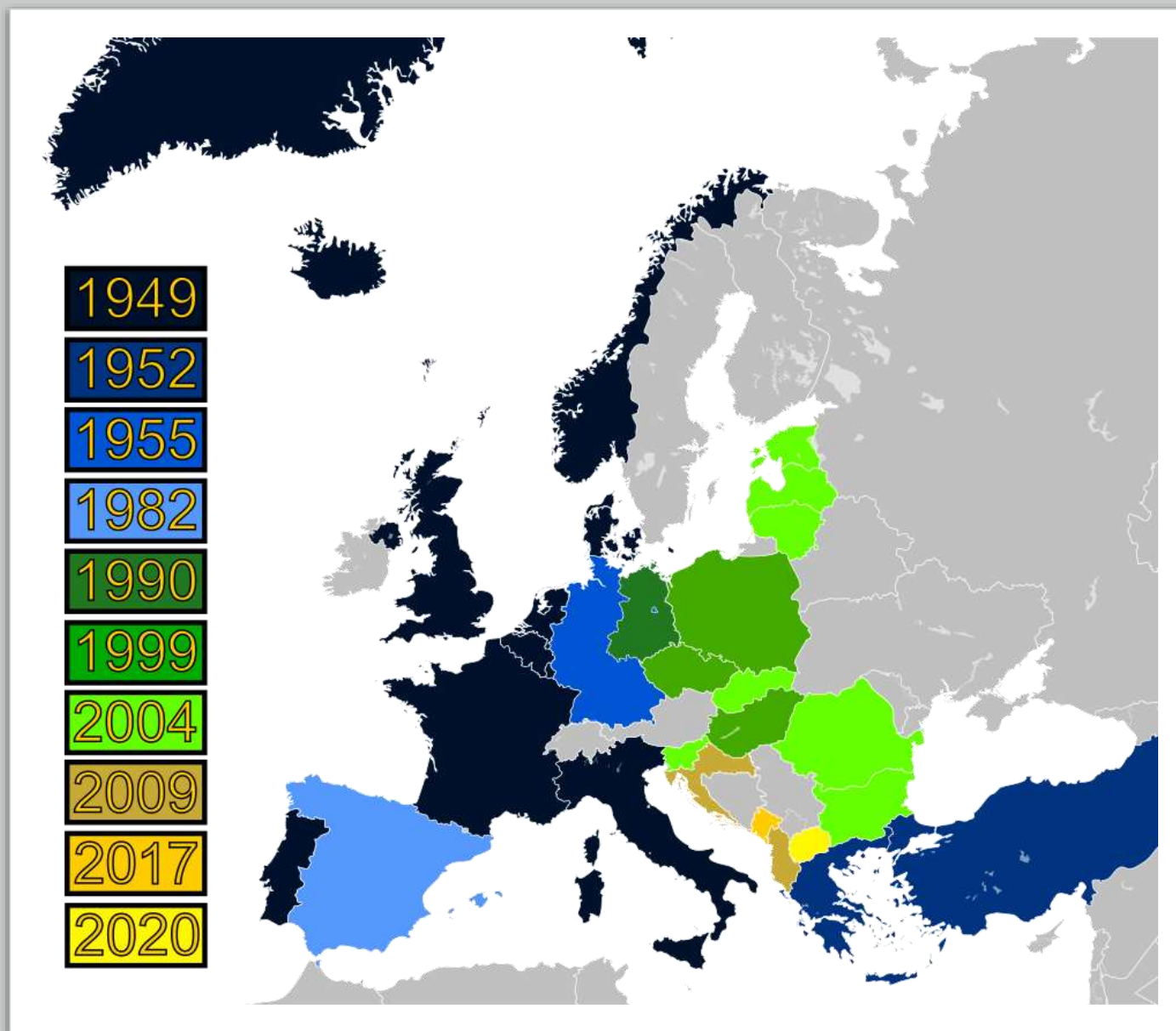


Putin violated the principle of  
"territorial integrity"

A photograph of two men in suits. The man on the right, wearing glasses and a dark suit with a red tie, is gesturing with his right hand while speaking. The man on the left, wearing a dark suit and a patterned tie, is listening. The background features a large wooden door and a blue and red flag.

*“On the one hand, we respect territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Ukraine, but on the other hand, we must consider the historical process of the situation where Russia has been pushed into a corner and forced to counterattack”*

*No “invasion”, but a “special military operation”*



**NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

China's criticism towards the enlargement of NATO (*"the extension of military blocs"*)

**NATO:** a source of concern for China

U.S. strategy of  
encirclement

Systems of alliances, concept of  
“*Indo-Pacific*” and **partnerships**  
to contain China’s power  
criticized

**BUT...**






January 2022: Russian military  
intervention in **Kazakhstan**

**China not consulted**



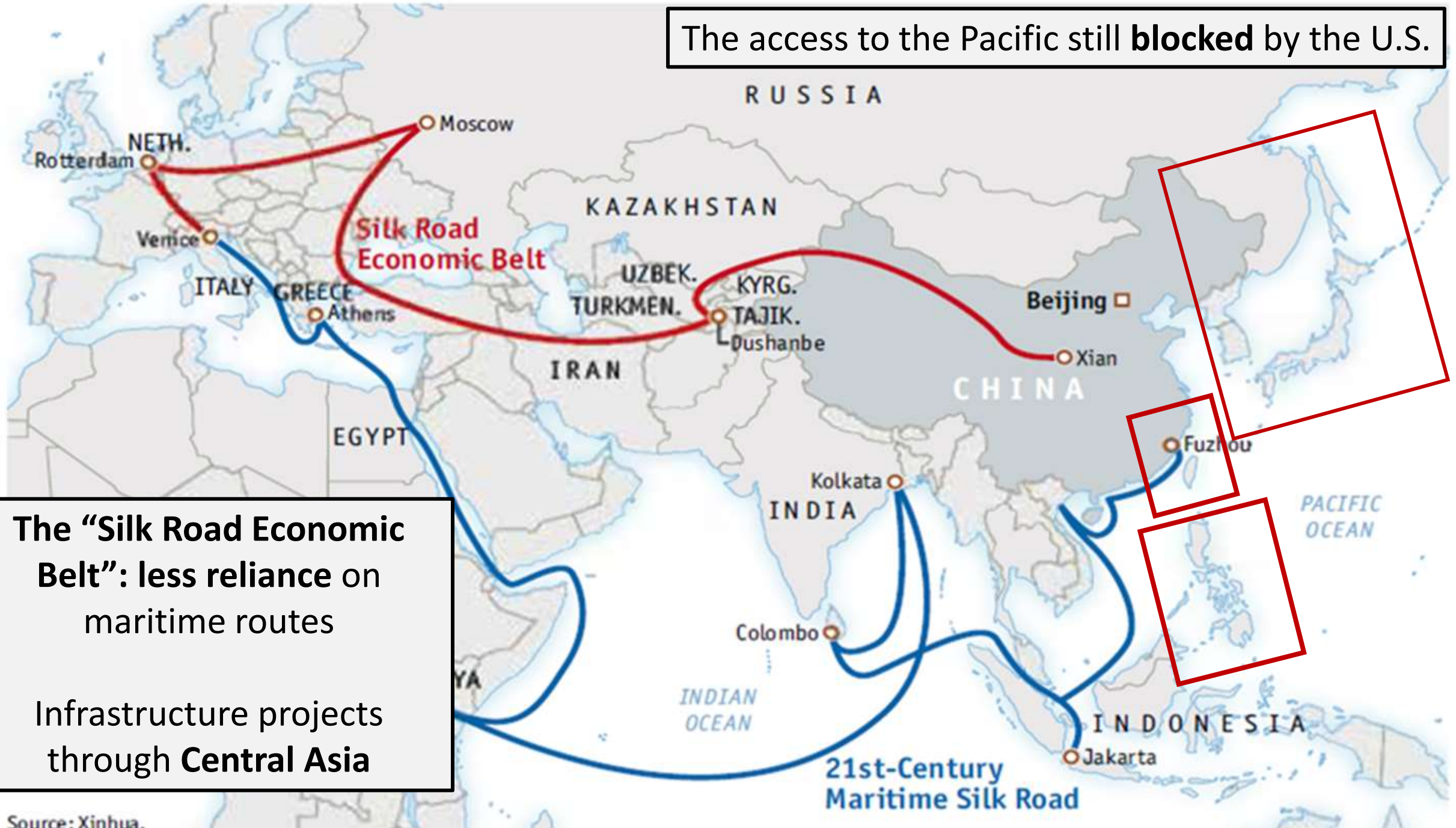


**Karim Massimov** (head of Kazakhstan's intelligence agency)

**Nursultan Nazarbayev** (president)

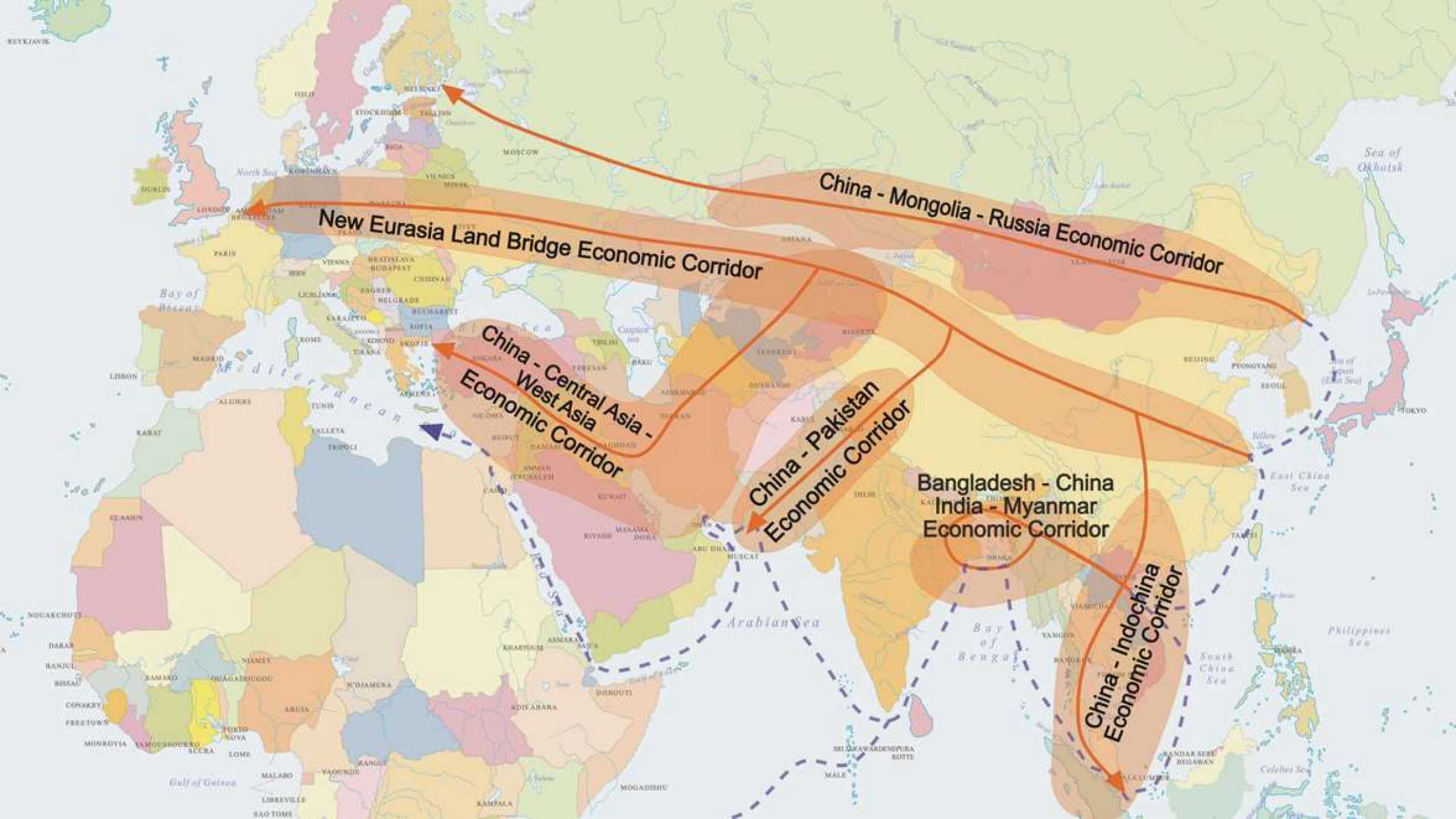
Massimov and Nazarbayev  
dismissed (supporters of the “new  
silk road”)

The access to the Pacific still **blocked** by the U.S.



The “Silk Road Economic Belt”: less reliance on maritime routes

Infrastructure projects through **Central Asia**



China - Mongolia - Russia Economic Corridor

New Eurasia Land Bridge Economic Corridor

China - Central Asia -  
West Asia -  
Economic Corridor

China - Pakistan  
Economic Corridor

Bangladesh - China  
India - Myanmar  
Economic Corridor

China - Indochina  
Economic Corridor

# CHINA-CENTRAL ASIA INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT





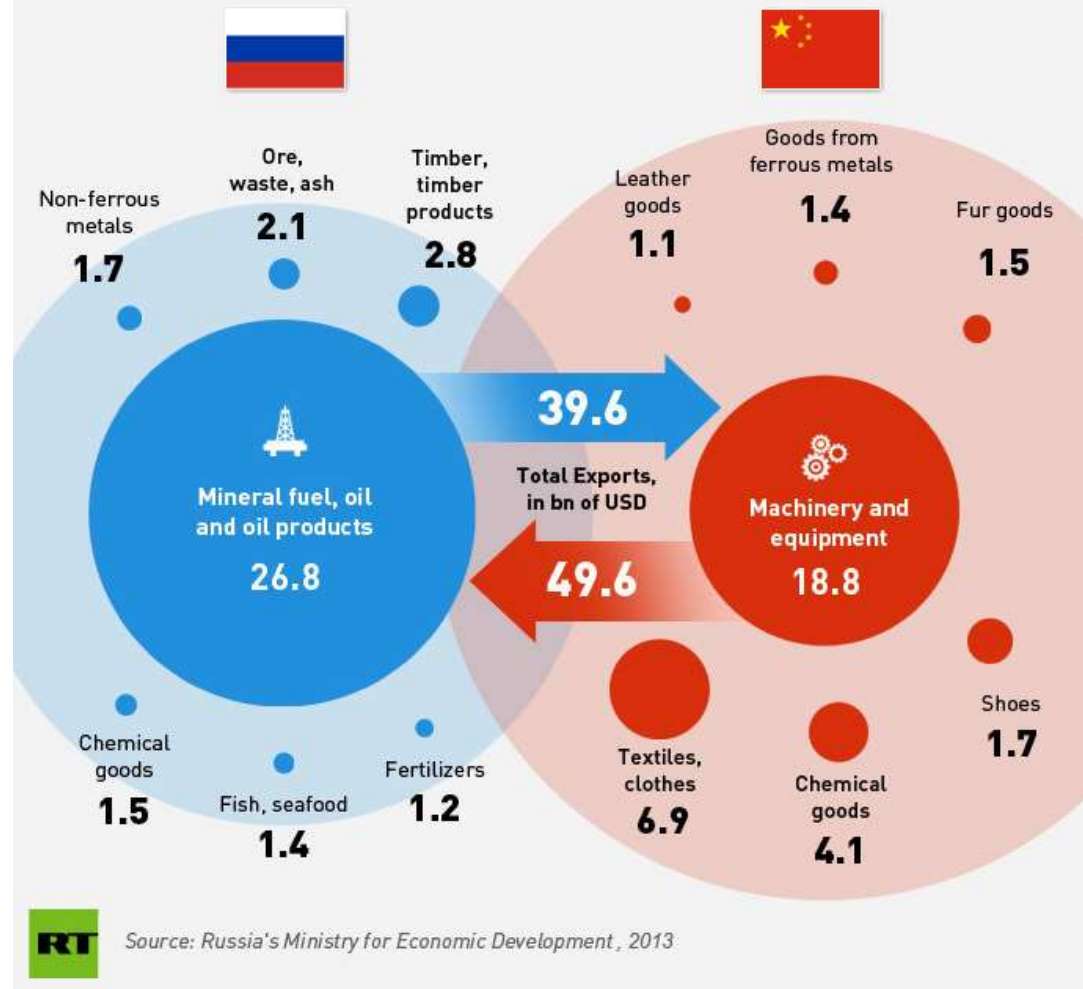
The **E40 route**

The **longest European route** connecting Kazakhstan to  
France

China ready to support Russia against Western sanctions  
BUT  
Russia is seen as a partner, not an ally



## Russia-China trade



## Economic balance of power favors China

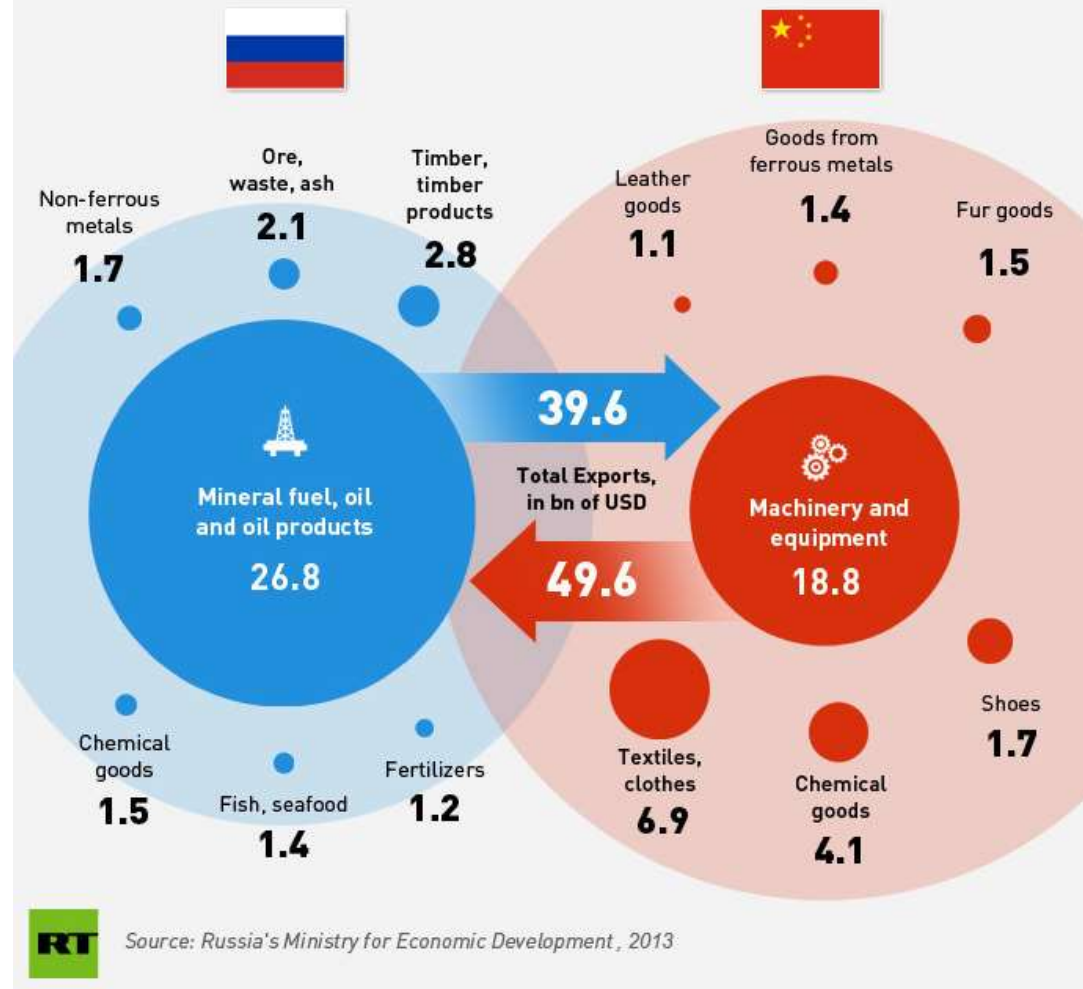
**2018: 76.19%** of Russian exports to China = oil & natural gas

Manufactured good: 5%

China's exports to Russia: machinery & equipment

Conflict in Ukraine + Western sanctions:  
**enhanced economic ties** between Russia & China  
BUT...

## Russia-China trade



**China can only soften the impact of sanctions on Russia**

**China is NOT** Russia's main economic partner (15% of Russia's exports & 20% of its imports)

Russia's number one economic partner: the EU

Trade Russia-EU pre-COVID crisis: two to three times more important than trade with China

## Pipeline Sila Sibiri ("*Power of Siberia*") since 2019

Construction decided in 2014  
shortly after Russia's annexation of  
Crimea

**2021:** Russia exported **16.5 billion cubic meters** of natural gas to China

**4 February:** China to buy an  
additional **10 billion cubic meters**  
per year (over a period of 30 years)



## Rosneft Oil Company

Long term **agreement** with China: 100 million tons of oil over 10 years (10 million per year)

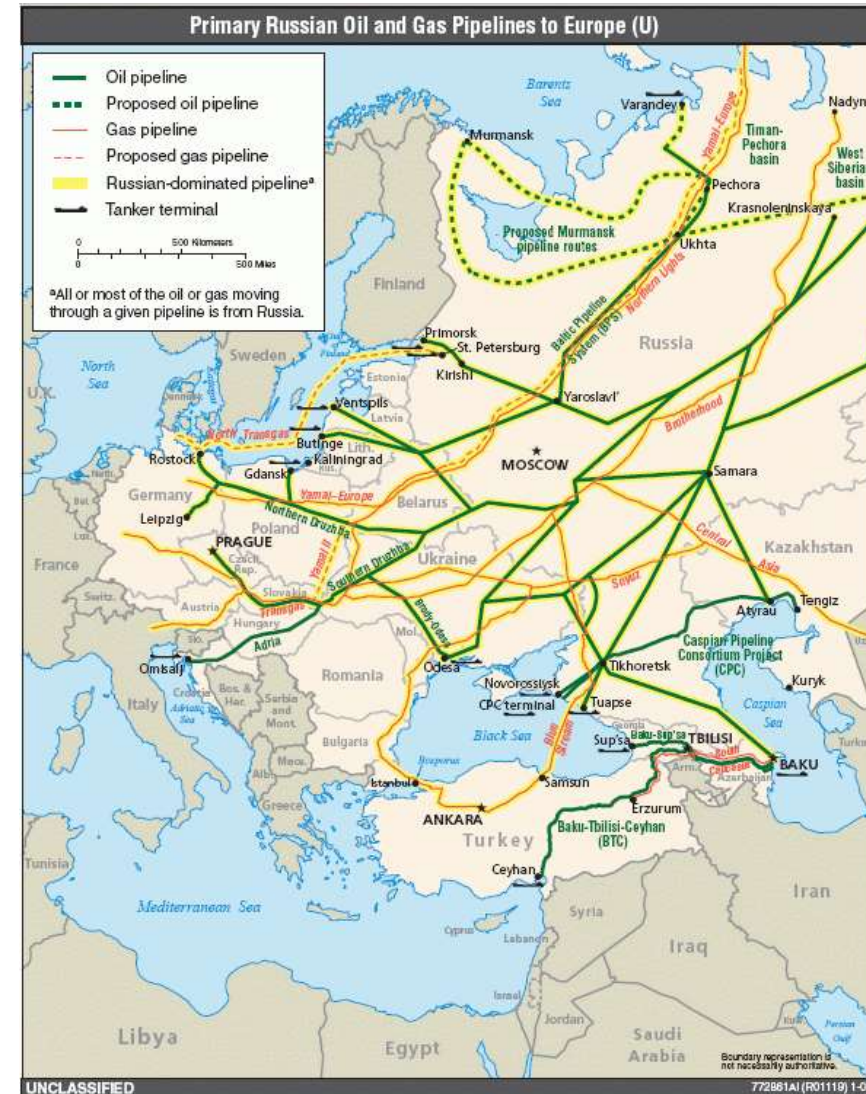


Russia exported **230 million tons** of oil in 2021

Partnership with China can help Russia diversify its exports in the medium term

BUT

Russia cannot switch quickly to Asian clients

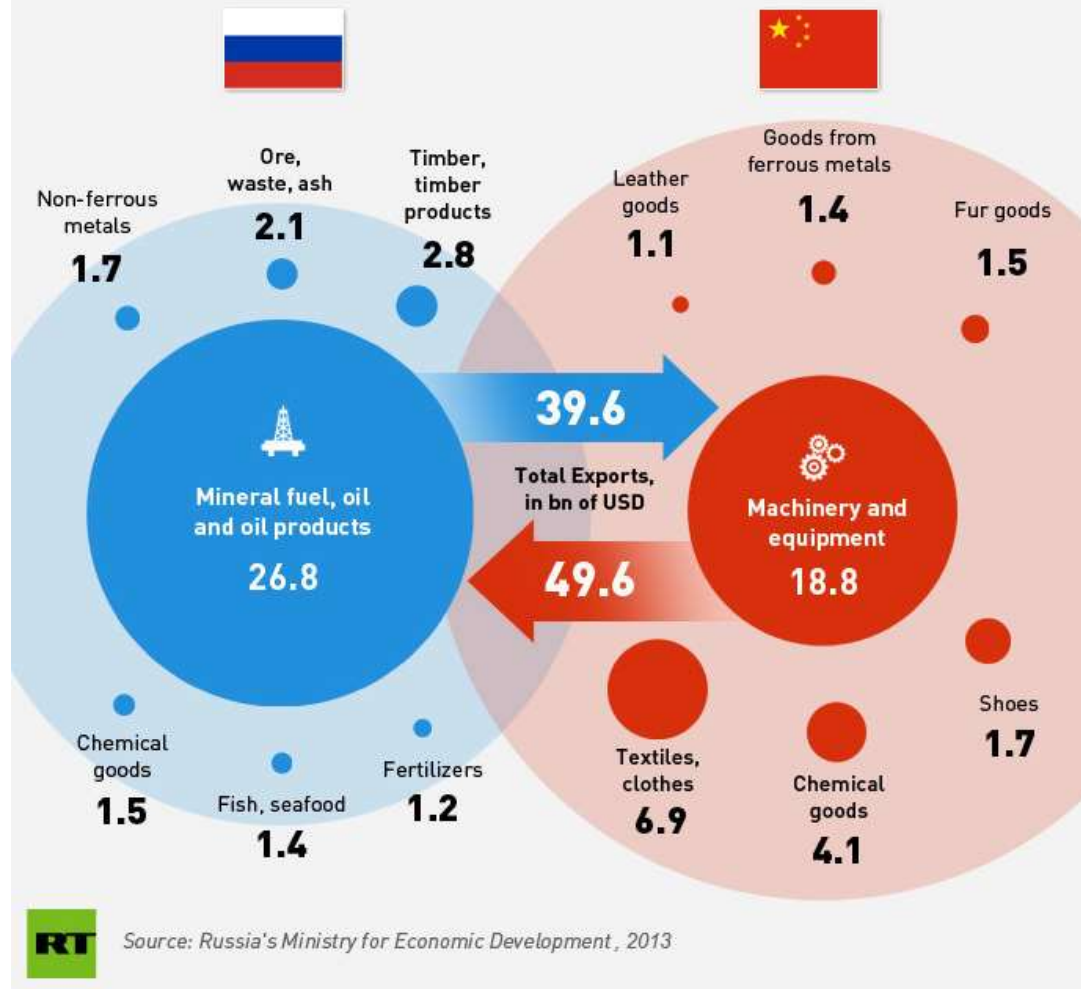


# Europe as a key client

## 83% of Russian natural gas sold to Europe in 2020



## Russia-China trade



Enhanced economic ties BUT...

**China cannot afford** to sacrifice its relationship with the West

Western sanctions against Russia: significant impact for many Chinese companies



The Ukrainian crisis:  
**geopolitical benefits for China**

The U.S. forced to focus on the  
Ukrainian crisis

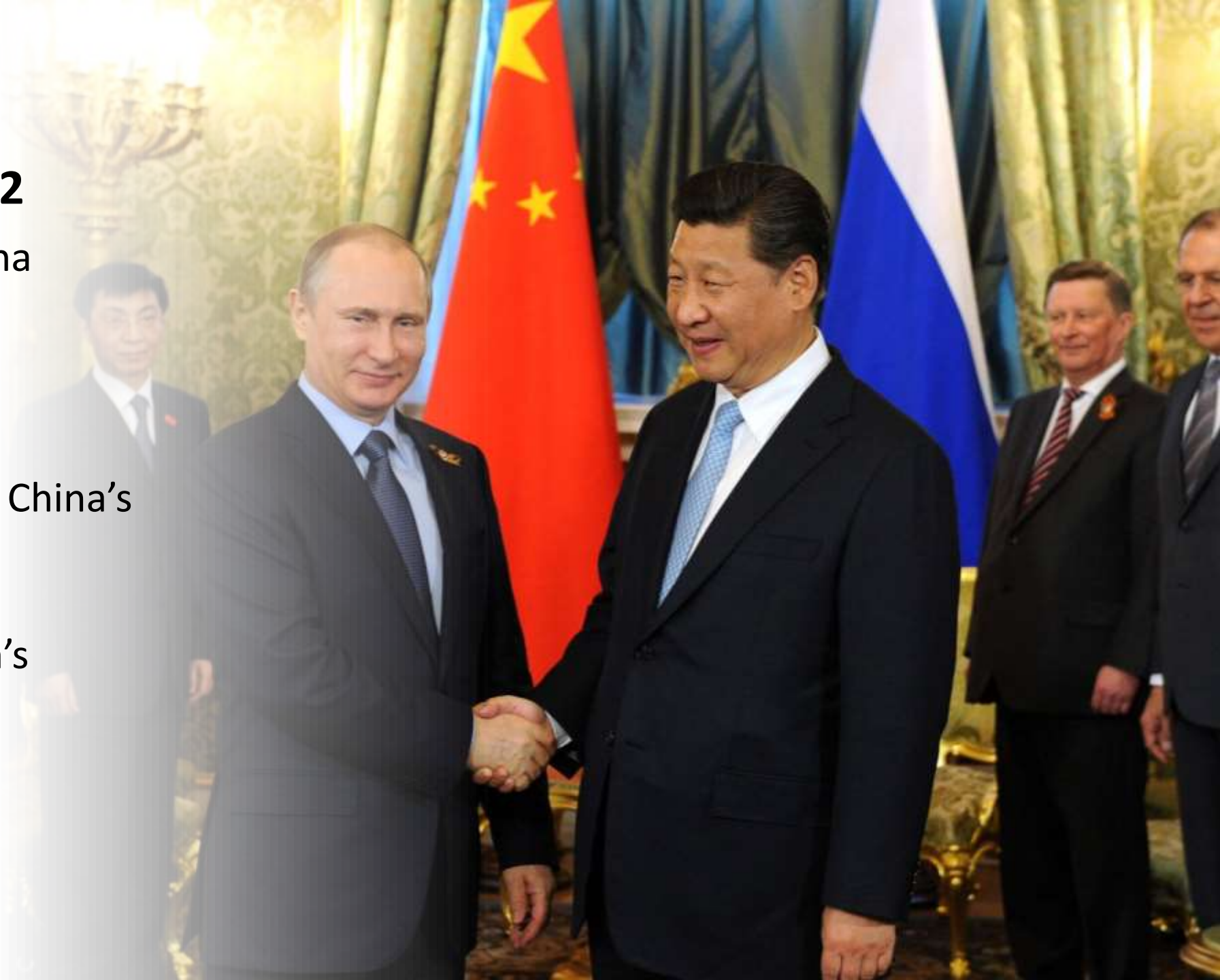
China: greater margin of action  
(South China Sea: **Taiwan**)

**4 February 2022**

Putin's visit to China

Moscow's full support to China's  
stance on Taiwan

Opposed to Taiwan's  
independence



The background of the slide features two flags flying against a blue sky with scattered white clouds. On the left is the Russian flag, with its characteristic horizontal stripes of white, blue, and red. On the right is the Chinese flag, which is red with five golden-yellow stars. The flags are positioned on tall, thin poles. A thin white vertical line is placed between the two flags, acting as a visual separator.

The Ukrainian crisis

**Monitored very closely by China**

What Western response?

How far will the West be willing to go to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and political independence?

Joe Biden

No U.S. or NATO forces in Ukraine

**Beijing's interpretation:** another proof that the democracies are weak & unwilling to defend their values

**Harsh Western sanctions** against Russia led by the EU

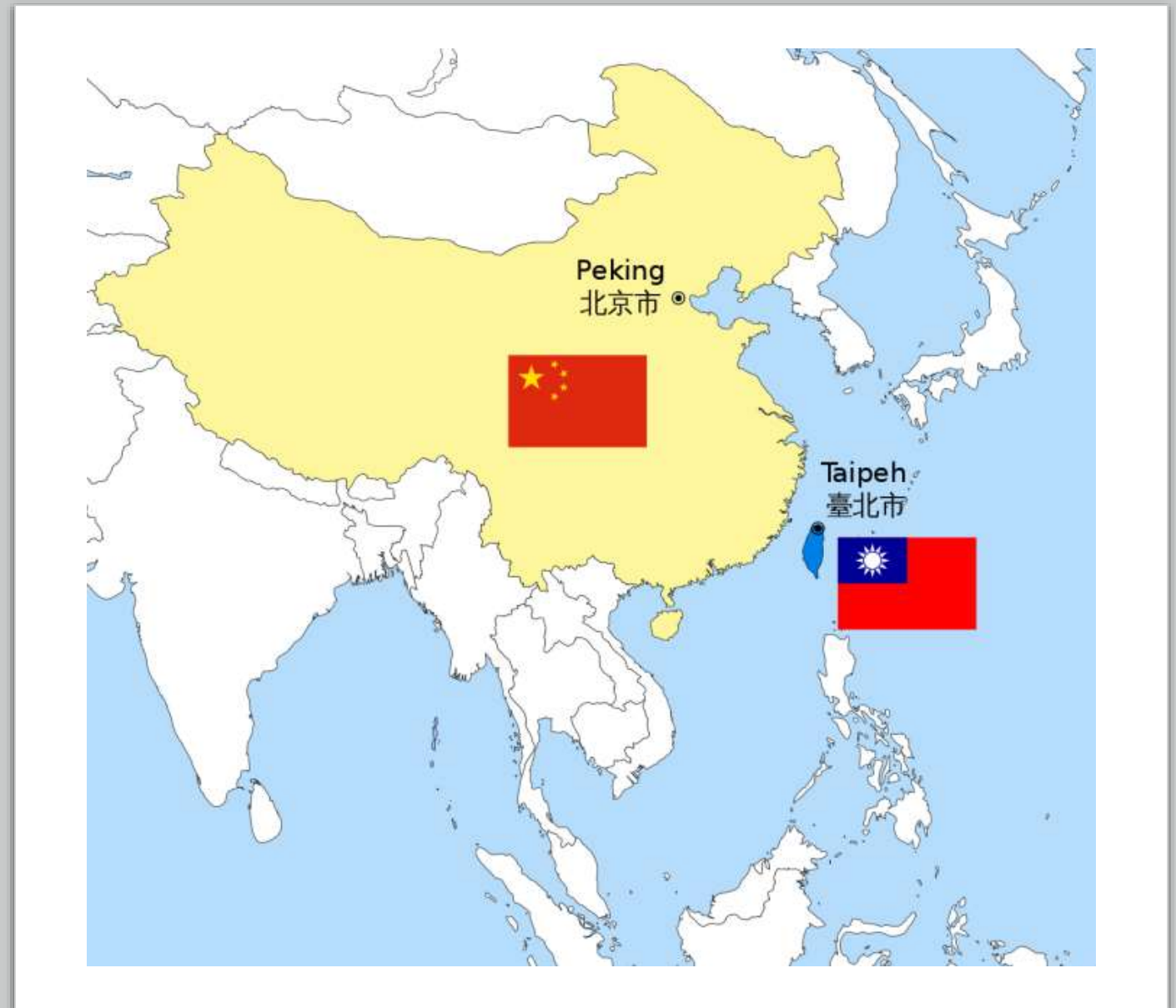


## Increased tensions in the strait of Taiwan

Way more dangerous than the  
previous three crises (1954-1955,  
1958 & 1996)

**China** as a major military power  
today

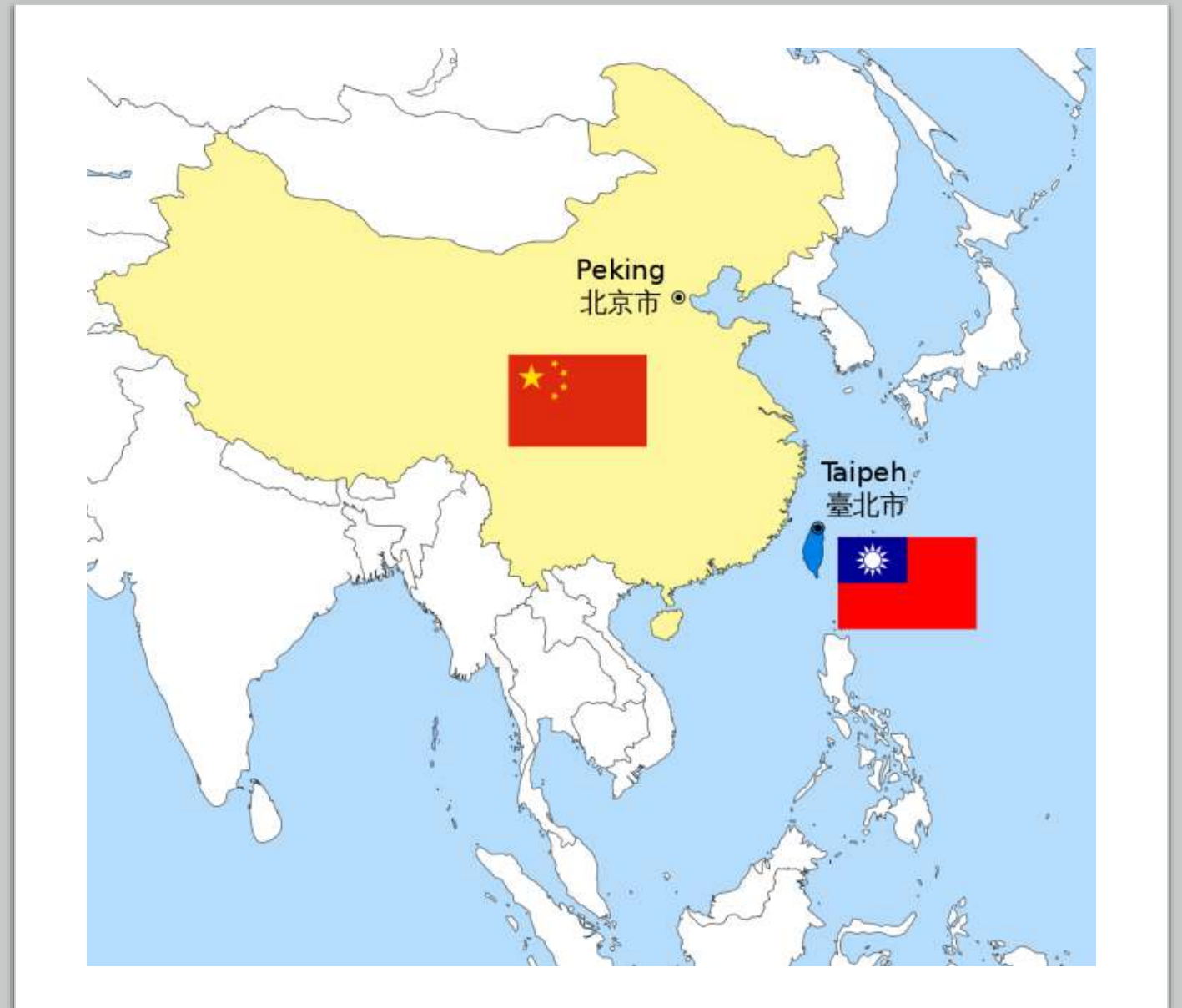
**A stronger economy** (that could  
sustain a costly war effort)



Balance of power  
increasingly favors China

A more aggressive stance since  
2013

*“Peaceful reunification if  
possible, by force if necessary”*






## Joe Biden & Taiwan

**Strategic ambiguity:** a possible U.S. military intervention to defend Taiwan?

Abandoning Taiwan unthinkable: far-reaching consequences for the U.S. (domino effect in Asia)



Renewed tensions over Taiwan  
since the outbreak of the  
COVID-19 pandemic



**20 January 2020**



Xi Jinping ordered the first  
Chinese bomber to fly over  
Taiwan's airspace

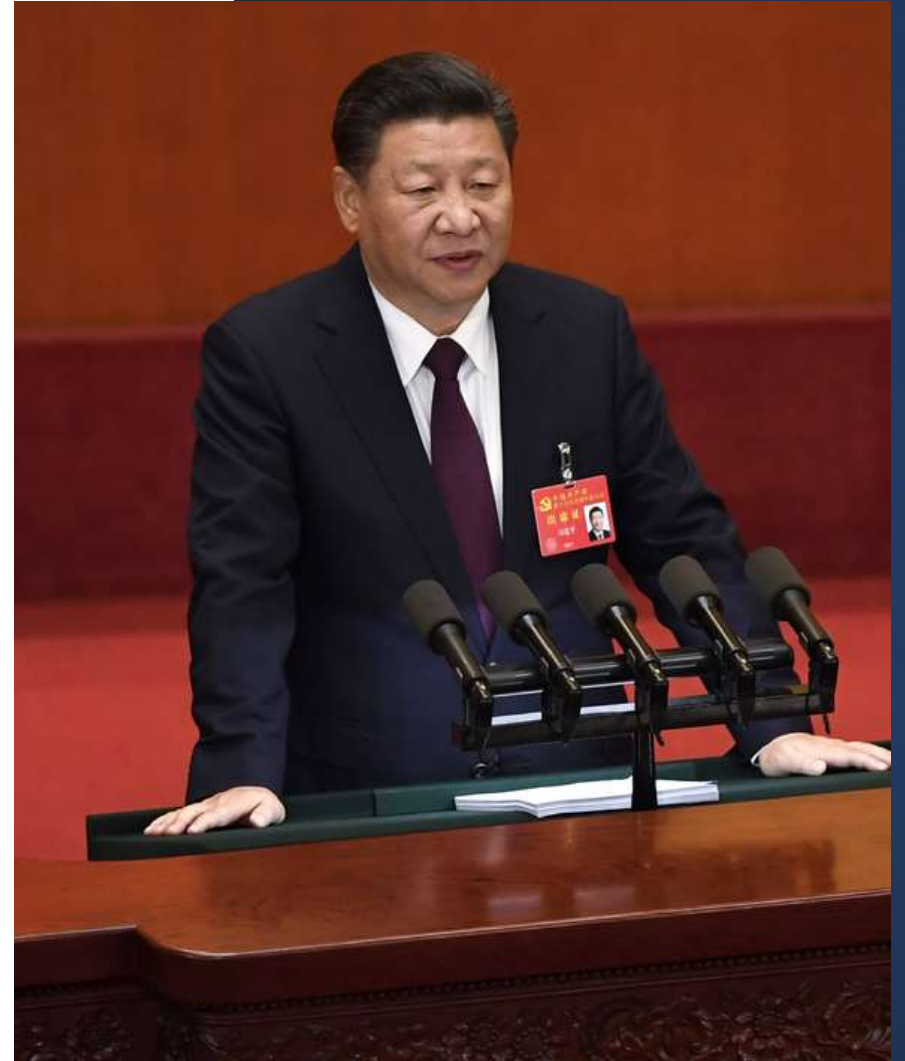
A clear message to Taiwan: do not  
try to take advantage of the  
health crisis


China: a much degraded image in  
the West

Revelations pertaining to labor camps in the  
Xinjiang province (Uighurs)

The end of civil & political liberties in Hong Kong

Disinformation pertaining to the COVID-19  
pandemic





4600 deaths due Covid-19

Covid-19 in China: can we trust the statistics?

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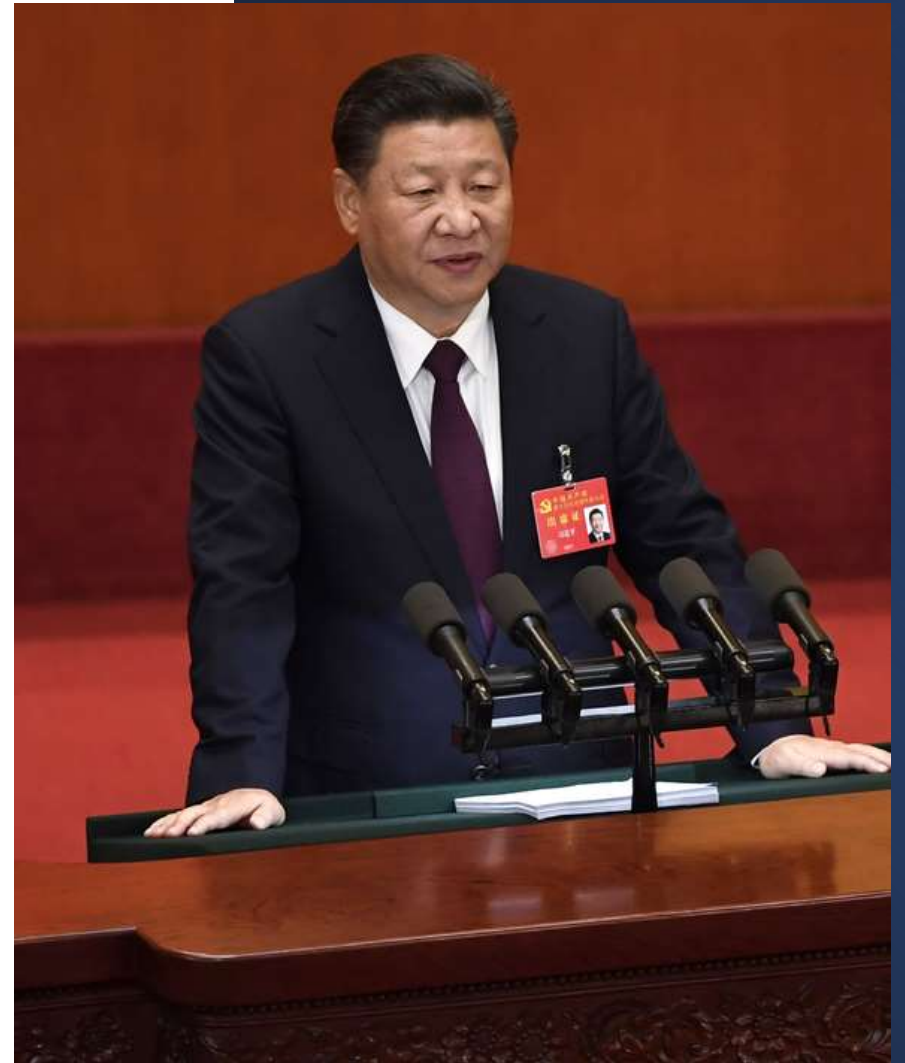
- Chinese statistics **unreliable**
- **Lack of transparency**: the nature of the political system: the regime controls the information (what comes in, what gets out) – **Severe censorship**
- **Topics** not to be covered by the press listed daily
- Statistics **politicized**

China: a much degraded image in  
the West

Ongoing tensions at the border with India  
(disputed territories)

Shows of force in the strait of Taiwan

**Reduced credibility and respectability**



## Improved relations U.S.- Taiwan

**Taiwan Travel Act (2017):** closer  
U.S.-Taiwan ties via official visits



Ground-breaking trip by U.S.  
Secretary of Health (Alex Azar)  
earlier this year: the highest-  
ranking U.S. official to visit Taiwan  
in 40 years

2020: no longer any restrictions to  
official visits by American political  
figures





Summer of 2020: presence of  
American military advisors in  
Taiwan made official

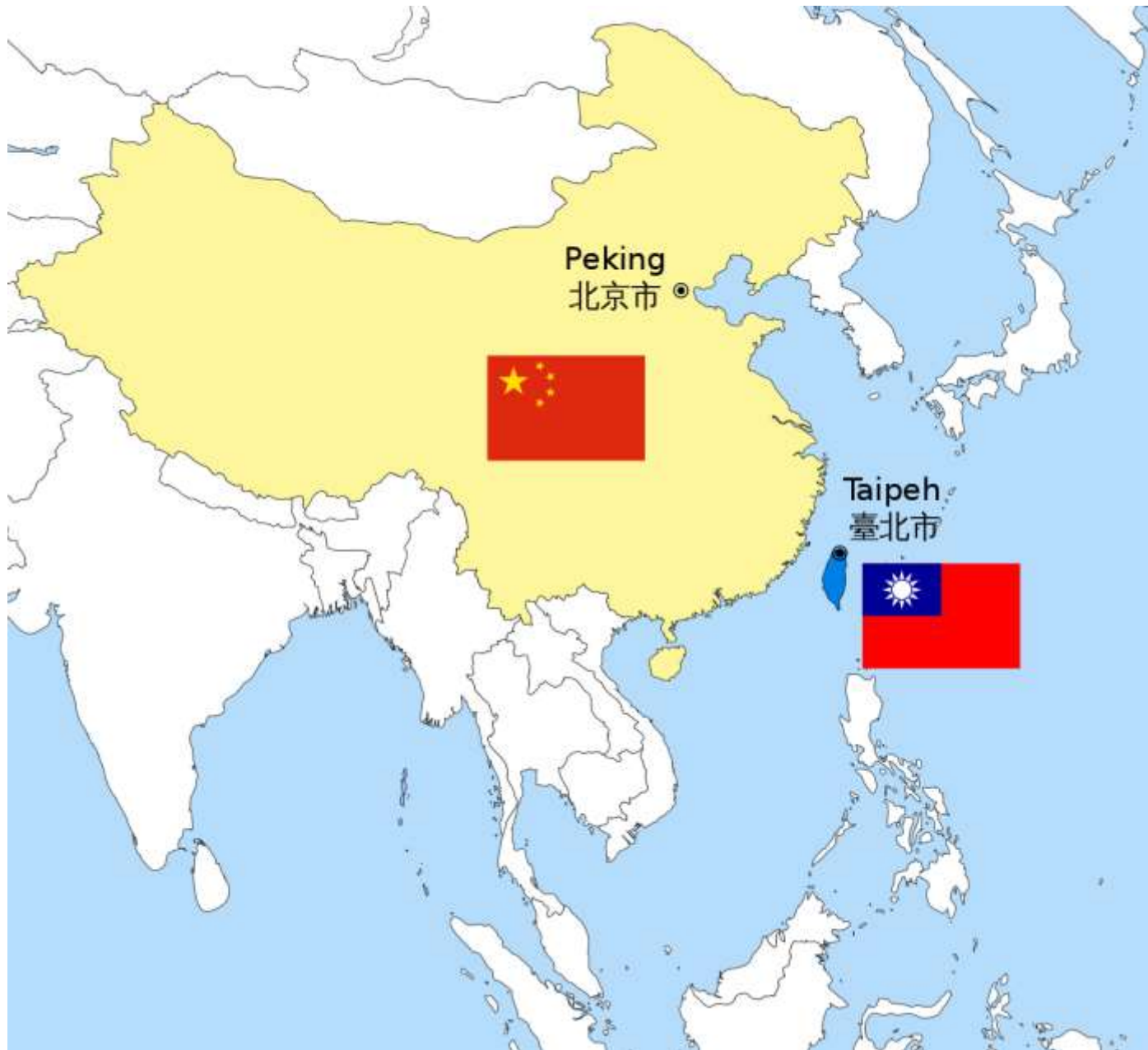
\$15 billion worth of weapons  
(drones, fighter jets and cruise  
missiles) sold to Taiwan since  
2017



American  
disappointment

**February 1972:** Nixon's visit to China – Open dialogue  
with China

The purpose: to divide the communist camp



Taiwan's international status  
dramatically changed

1971: the People's Republic of China  
obtained China's seat at the UN

Transfer of the U.S. embassy in  
Peking (1979)



## Deng Xiaoping in the U.S.

28 January – 5 February 1979

A new **beginning**: the establishment of **formal diplomatic relations** between the U.S. & the People's Republic of China



The U.S. did not completely abandon Taiwan  
1979: Congress voted the **Taiwan Relations Act**

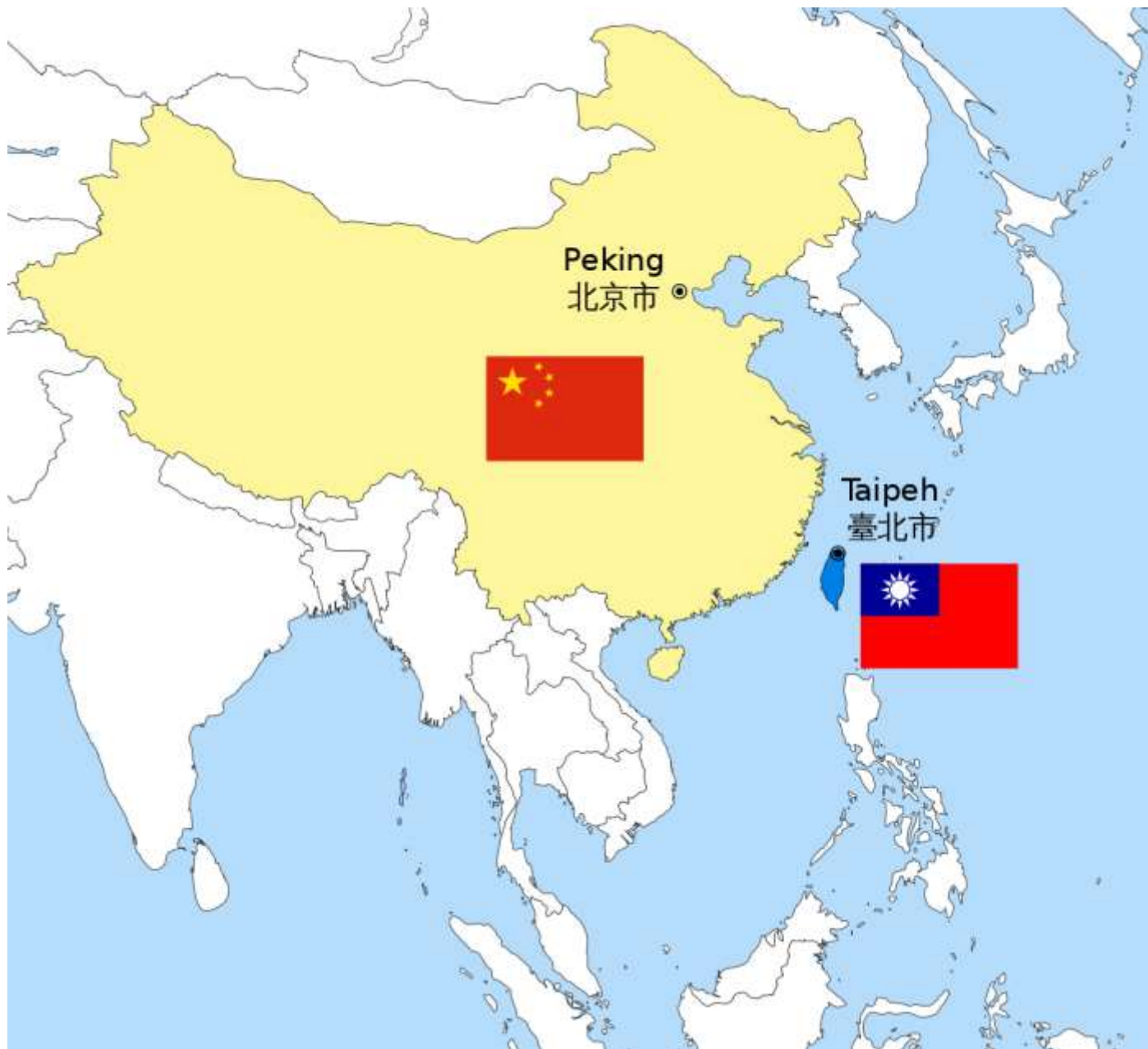


**December 2001**

China as a member of the WTO  
Perceived as a way to help China  
liberalize its economy

An **American failure**: economic  
reforms but no political  
liberalization

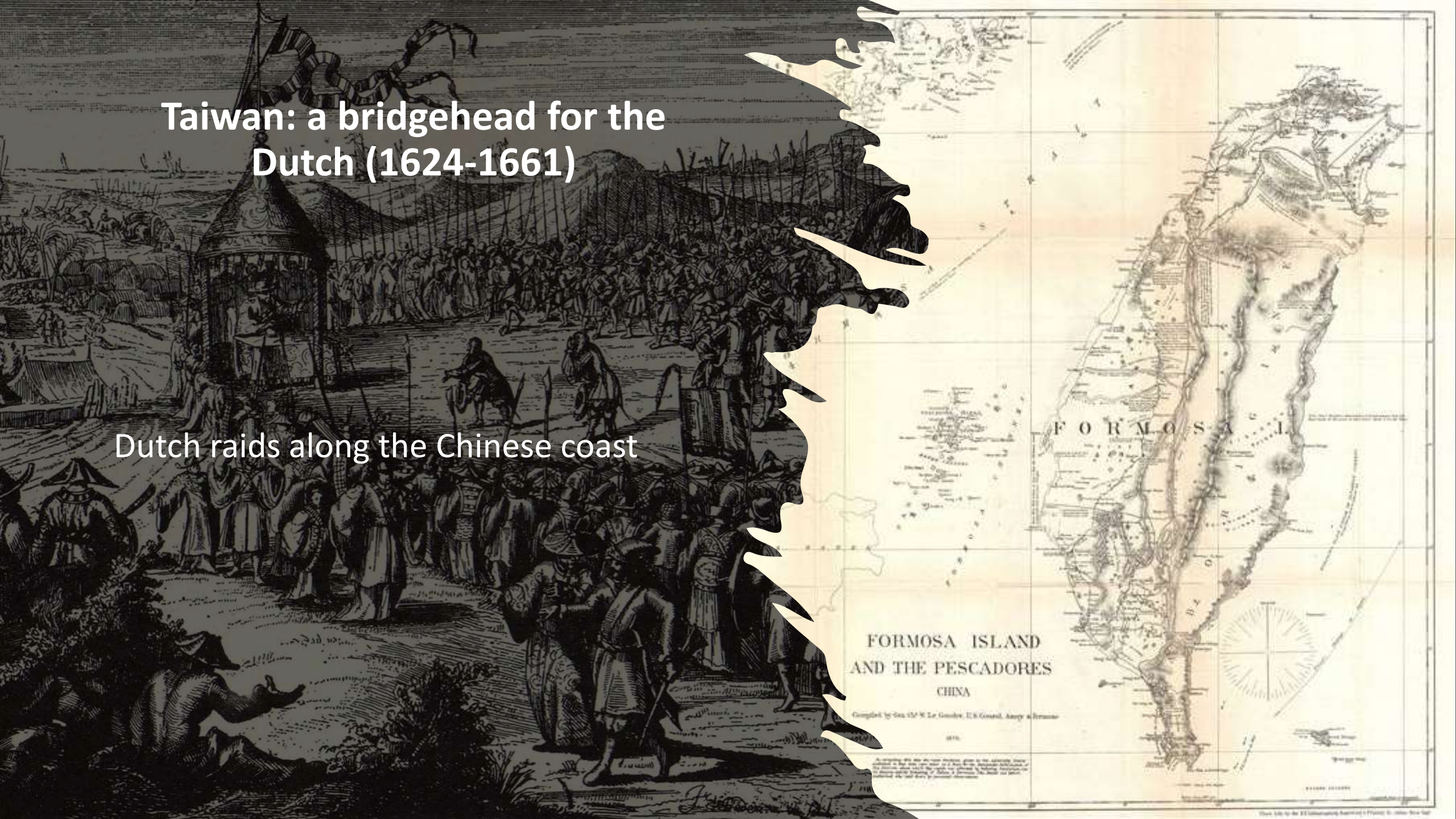
Strong state control over the  
economy



Taiwan: a geopolitical key in Asia

# Taiwan: a bridgehead for the Dutch (1624-1661)

Dutch raids along the Chinese coast

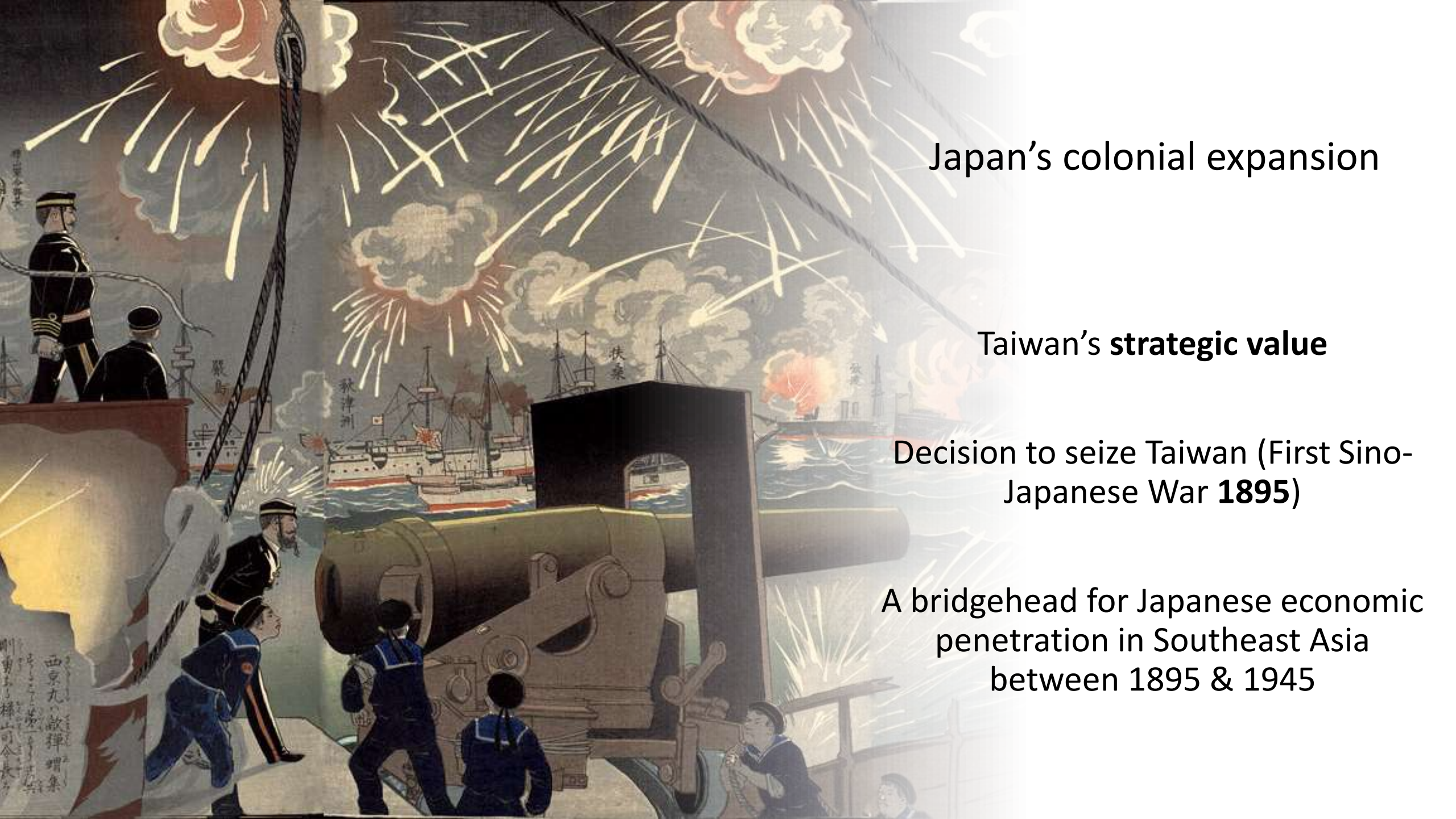


The Ming dynasty replaced by the **Qing dynasty** (1644)

Taiwan: a safe haven for those who refused the change of dynasty

Taiwan transformed into a base against the new Qing dynasty (1661-1684)





Japan's colonial expansion

Taiwan's **strategic value**

Decision to seize Taiwan (First Sino-Japanese War **1895**)

A bridgehead for Japanese economic penetration in Southeast Asia between 1895 & 1945



A **fallback base** for Chiang Kai-shek (1949-1975)

Taiwan today: the last obstacle to China's access to the Pacific Ocean

Taiwan: becoming a global **geopolitical pivot**

A **frontier** between the West (democratic values) & authoritarian regimes led by China



**1975:** the death of Chiang Kai-shek  
The end of an era

Taiwan to reinvent itself

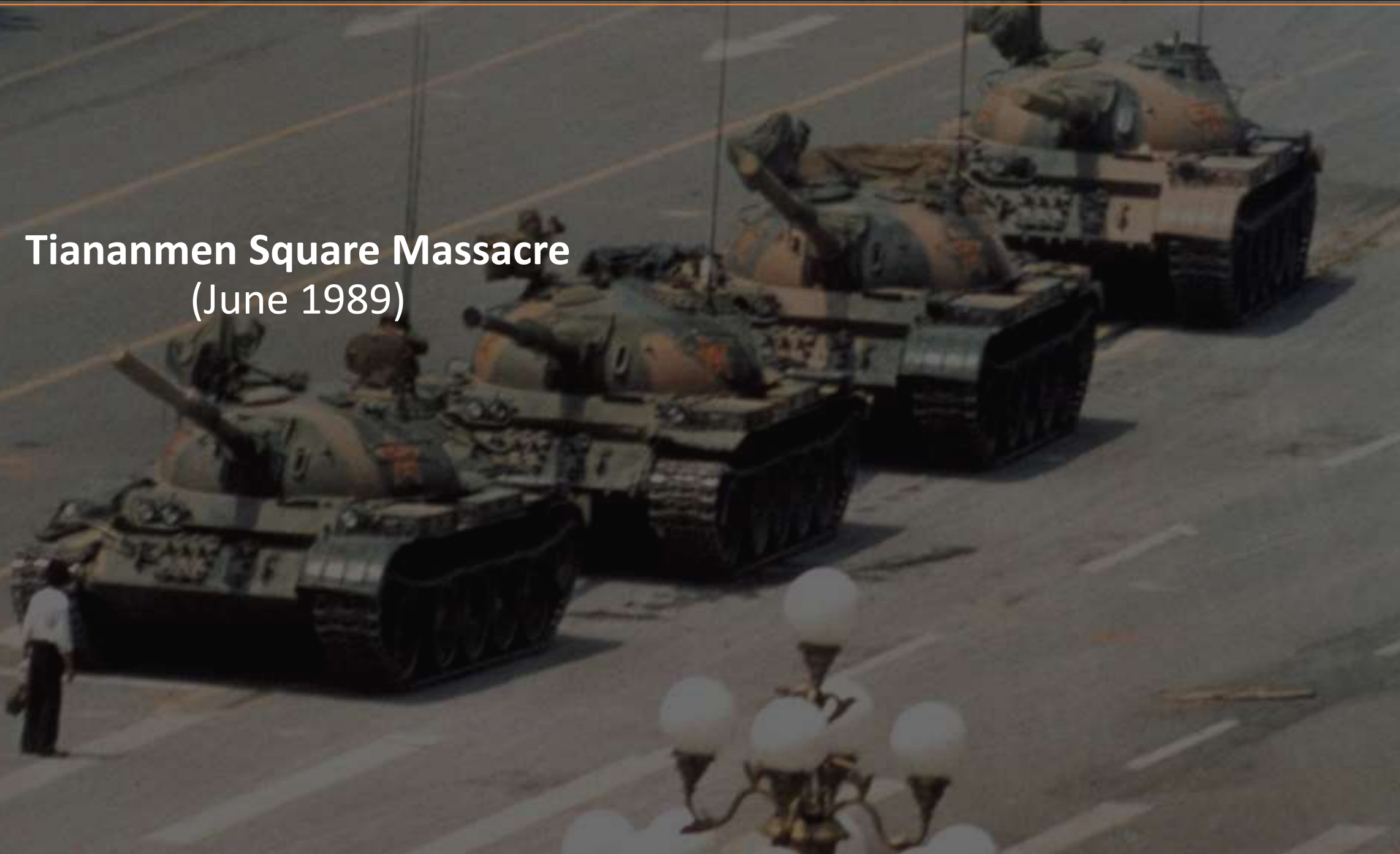
Political reforms introduced  
by Chiang Ching-kuo: a true  
democracy

The reconquest of mainland China  
abandoned

Growing **gap** China-Taiwan



# Tiananmen Square Massacre (June 1989)



Taiwan: one of China's  
counter-example in Asia

A mature democracy

**Key obstacle** to a reunification



AP / \

# 中国共产党第十八次全国代表大会

A Chinese invasion of Taiwan  
in the **near future**?

**Unlikely**

The **legitimacy of China's ruling party** (and its leaders) The  
outcome of a war always  
unpredictable

No war unless the CCP is certain of  
winning it



# 中国共产党第十八次全国代表大会

A Chinese invasion of Taiwan  
in the **near future**?

The far-reaching consequences of  
a failure to reunite Taiwan to the  
*“mother country”*

Too high a risk at this stage



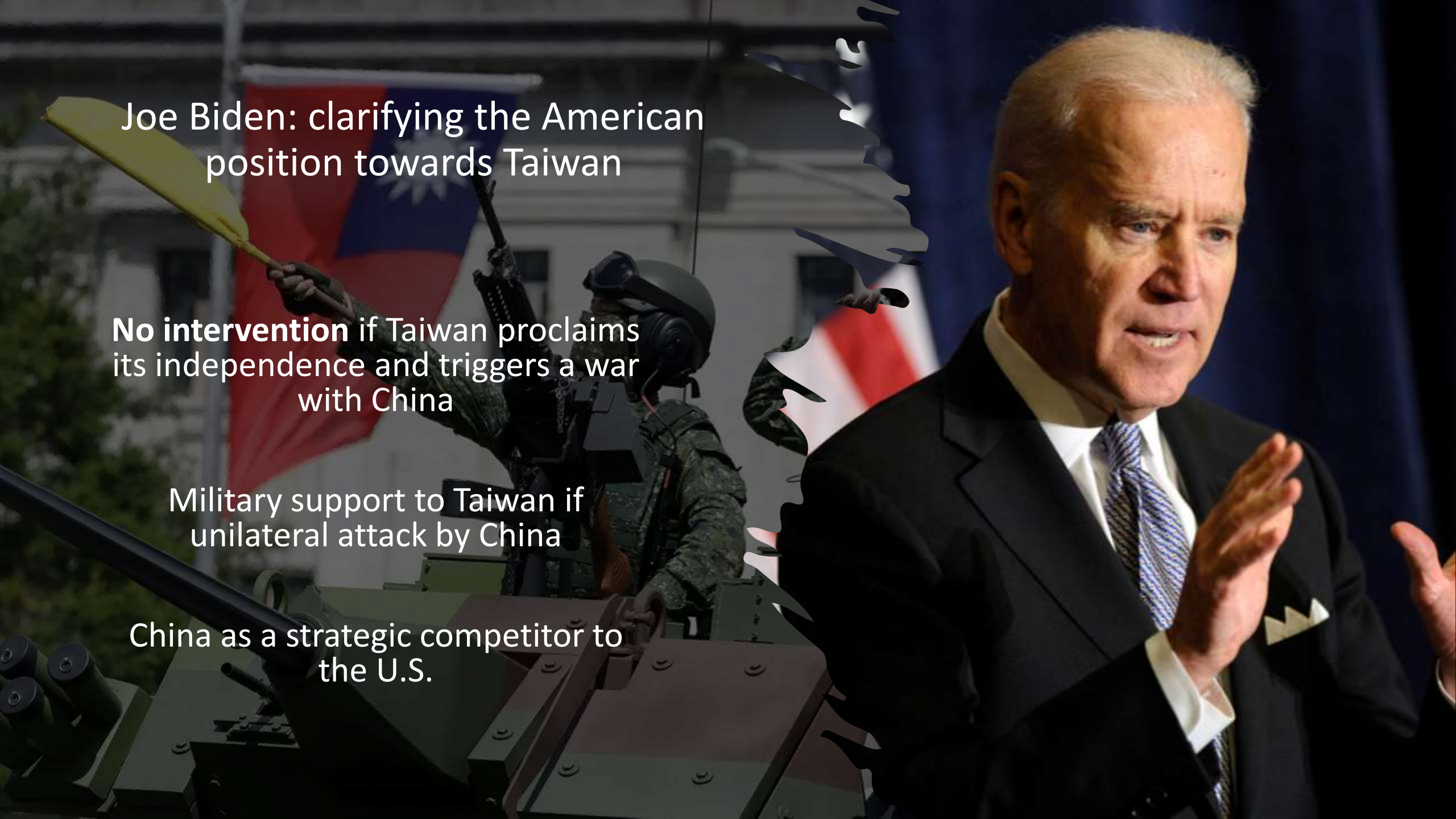
What could trigger a war?

Taiwan proclaiming unilaterally its independence

2005: China introduced the **Anti-Secession Law**

The U.S. **opposed** to secession  
Taiwan's independence **NOT** on  
the agenda





Joe Biden: clarifying the American position towards Taiwan

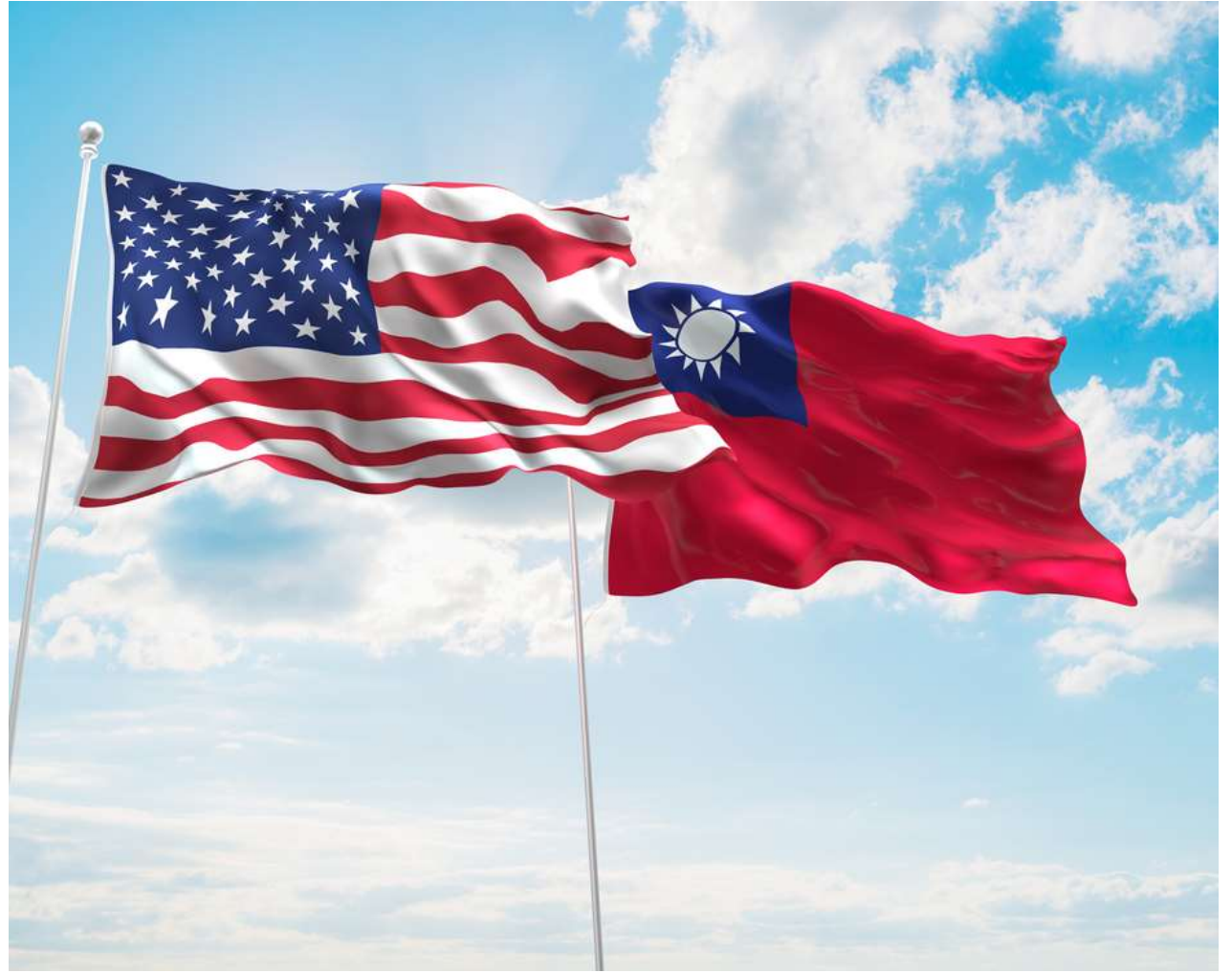
**No intervention** if Taiwan proclaims its independence and triggers a war with China

Military support to Taiwan if unilateral attack by China

China as a strategic competitor to the U.S.

Should we be worried about  
China's aggressive posturing?

As long as the West (and the  
U.S.) keep supporting Taiwan, a  
Chinese invasion is **not likely**



A high-level U.S bipartisan  
delegation to Taiwan

The message: the U.S. is there  
for Taiwan

A quick Russian victory in  
Ukraine could have prompted  
China to act



**4 February 2022**

Putin's visit to China

A “new era” of cooperation

*“Friendship between the two States has no limits”*

*“The Russian side reaffirms its support for the One-China principle, confirms that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China, and opposes any forms of independence of Taiwan”*



**4 February 2022**

Putin's visit to China

China's support to Russia's proposals to  
create legally binding security guarantees  
in Europe



## Concerns in Taiwan

Joe Biden's decision not to send troops to Ukraine

Will the Americans be tempted to re-focus their foreign policy on Europe vs. The Indo-Pacific?

Taiwan joined Western sanctions against Russia



## 3 March: a message from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (« QUAD »)



*“One cannot authorize that what is happening in Ukraine could one day happen in the Indo-Pacific” (Australian PM, Scott Morrison)*



China: a 7% increase of  
its military budget  
announced

