

## **Abstract**

This dissertation focuses on U.S.-Taiwan relations in the context of U.S.-China relations. It examines the development of mutual ties since the end of the 1980s when Taiwan started its transition towards democracy, which changed the dynamics of the relationship among Washington, Beijing, and Taipei. The dissertation also analyzes which events and issues impacted the development of mutual relations and examines U.S. reaction to such phenomena. These include, for example, the Beijing Massacre of 1989, Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995-1996, or the rise of China, which influenced the position, politics, and international space of Taiwan and with which the United States has to cope. The dissertation particularly focuses on the following questions: What motivates the United States to continue its support of Taiwan? How does Beijing react to such support and how does this impact the U.S.-China relations? The analysis concludes that the United States continuing support for Taiwan is motivated by ideological and strategic goals. Using the analytical frame of “pivotal deterrence”, the dissertation shows that the United States takes a pivotal position and by its careful balancing between the PRC and Taiwan, Washington supports the existing status quo, as it can guarantee stability and peace in the Taiwan Strait and in the region of Asia Pacific. Washington skilfully uses the tool of strategic ambiguity to pursue this goal. For Beijing that claims that Taiwan is a part of China, the status quo is unsatisfactory since reunification of Taiwan with the Mainland is one of the key priorities of the Chinese leadership. U.S. support for Taiwan therefore represents an obstacle to achieving the goal of reunification. Last but not least, the dissertation also examines the key actors who have been involved in the process of making the U.S. foreign policy towards China and Taiwan. This increasingly involves the U.S. Congress and a broad range of lobbying organizations. The analysis however concludes that while these actors may try to push the policy one way or the other (to be either more favorable to Taipei or Beijing), the president is the ultimate decision-maker and U.S. foreign policy towards Taiwan and China is primarily driven from the White House.