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## Fujian's Role as the Nexus for "Integrated Cross-Strait Development"

By: I-wei Jennifer Chang

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During an inspection tour of the southeastern province of Fujian (福建) in March, Chinese President [Xi Jinping](#) (習近平) called on Fujian, the closest province to Taiwan, to do more to build links with the island democracy. [Xi](#) told Fujian provincial authorities to "be bold in exploring new paths for integrated cross-Strait development." He also urged Fujian to implement policies, namely economic incentives, that would [enhance Taiwanese people's livelihoods](#) as a means to promote economic and social integration on both sides of the Taiwan Strait—with the ultimate goal of achieving "[reunification \[sic\] of the motherland](#)." Indeed, Fujian Province is a front-line actor that promotes China's preferential policies targeting Taiwanese people. The Fujian government's "[soft power](#)" [tactics](#) to attract Taiwanese to live and work in the province, coupled with Beijing's [mega-infrastructure plans](#) to physically connect Fujian and Taiwan, pose challenges to Taipei's ability to manage China's multi-pronged strategy to foster pro-China support among the island's citizenry.

### ***Experimenting with Taiwan Policies at the Local Level***

Fujian has been a pioneer testing ground for the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) engagement strategies towards Taiwan. The province has close [linguistic and ancestral ties](#) to the native Taiwanese population, and also possesses geographical and economic advantages that have been utilized to attract Taiwanese investments. In the late 1970s, [Fujian](#) was selected as the first province to conduct economic exchanges with Taiwan. It was also the first Chinese province to expand imports of Taiwanese agricultural products, allow Taiwanese to set up private businesses, and engage with Taiwan on labor issues in the fishing industry, according to Fujian provincial officials. [1] In the 1990s, four Taiwan investment zones of Mawei (馬尾), Haicang (海滄), Xinglin (杏林), and Jimei (集美) were set up in Fujian to further promote cross-Strait economic cooperation. [2]

When Xi worked in the 1990s as [secretary](#) of the CCP's municipal committee in Fuzhou (福州), the capital city of Fujian, he also served as head of the Party Committee's [Leading Group for Taiwan Affairs](#) in the city. Scholars have argued that Xi's formulation in

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2016 of preferential policies for Taiwanese to study, work, and start businesses in China was influenced by his experience with [Fujian's Taiwan policies](#) during the 1990s. During Xi's term in Fujian, he initiated several [Taiwanese-funded projects](#). In addition, direct shipping routes were opened between Xiamen (廈門) and Kinmen (金門) and also between Mawei and the Matsu Islands (馬祖列島) as part of the "[Mini Three Links](#)" (小三通), a trial implementation and precursor to the "Three Links" (三通). Fujian Province's [economic outreach](#) to Taiwan, fueled by both local interest in economic growth and the central government's political objectives towards the island, was tested at the provincial level before becoming adopted as national-level policy.

In 2004, Fujian introduced the concept of the "[Western Taiwan Straits Economic Zone](#)" (WTSEZ, 海峽西岸經濟區). The PRC's [State Council](#) (國務院) soon recognized the WTSEZ as an "early and pilot zone for cross-strait exchanges and cooperation," and formally approved a development plan for the economic zone in 2011. The WTSEZ was later reformulated into the "[China \(Fujian\) Pilot Free Trade Zone](#)" [中國(福建)自由貿易試驗區] in 2015, an area spanning [45.57 square miles](#) and comprising the cities of Fuzhou, Xiamen, and Pingtan (平潭). The Fujian FTZ aims to create a [cross-strait cooperation mechanism](#) that liberalizes investment and trade and boosts exchanges of capital and personnel across the Taiwan Strait, with the goal of bringing Fujian and Taiwan economically closer together.

Some of the initiatives carried out in the [Fujian FTZ](#), including attracting Taiwanese talent to the area, providing employment opportunities, and granting equal treatment to Taiwanese enterprises, were later adopted into China's "[31 Measures](#)" (惠台31條措施) on enhancing cross-strait economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation, which was rolled out by the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office (國務院台灣事務辦公室) and other central government ministries on February 28, 2018. Around [60 places](#) throughout China's provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, including Fujian and Xiamen, have introduced specific implementation measures to further promote the "31 Measures." Xiamen launched its corollary "[Xiamen 60 Measures](#)" (廈門60條措施) and prominently spearheaded national efforts to provide Taiwanese people with a wide range of [benefits](#) and economic incentives.



*Image: An April 2021 photo taken at a vaccination center in Fuzhou, from a PRC state media article publicizing free COVID vaccinations for residents from Taiwan. (Source: [Sina English](#))*

### **Building Connectivity Between Fujian and Taiwan**

Just as he has pushed China's ambitious "[Belt and Road Initiative](#)" (BRI, formerly known as "One Belt, One Road," 一條一路) to forge connectivity, trade, and infrastructure links with more than one hundred countries around the world, Xi has also sought to incorporate Taiwan into the BRI. In his [2019 speech](#) on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "A Letter to Compatriots in Taiwan" ("告台灣同胞書"), the Chinese leader [said](#), "We on the two sides should promote connectivity wherever necessary, including trade and economic cooperation, infrastructure building, energy and resources development, and sharing industrial standards." He specifically mentioned moving forward with water, electricity, gas, and bridge [projects](#) between Kinmen and Matsu and the coastal areas of Fujian. The CCP also said late last year that it would help Taiwanese businesses join [BRI infrastructure projects](#) over the next five years.

In signature BRI fashion, Beijing has proposed cross-strait transportation routes that would link Fujian with Taiwan. In February of this year, the State Council unveiled its [2021-2035 transport expansion plan](#), which includes a rail link from Beijing, passing through Fuzhou and Pingtan, and connecting to Taiwan via construction of an [underwater tunnel](#) beneath the Taiwan Strait. The so-called "Beijing-Taipei High-Speed Railway" (京台高鐵) is envisioned to connect Pingtan Island to Taiwan's [Hsinchu](#) (新竹) City—constituting the [shortest, straight-line distance](#) between China and Taiwan—and then ultimately reaching Taipei. The construction of the Beijing-Fuzhou rail line and Fuzhou-Pingtan segment has been [completed](#); what remains is the construction of the Pingtan to Taiwan line and the proposed creation of

an [artificial island](#) located between Pingtan and the median line of the Taiwan Strait that will help in supporting an underwater vactrain (also known as vacuum tube train, 海底真空隧道列車), which could make a round trip between Fujian and Taipei in only [13 minutes](#). Chinese authorities do not appear to be waiting for Taipei's permission to begin construction of the underwater tunnel, which is slated to be finished by [2035](#).

In addition, China has envisioned the construction of three major highways connecting Fujian and Taiwan by 2035. The [Northern Route](#) (北線方案), which is the shortest route, would run from Fuqing (福清) to Pingtan Island and then to Hsinchu. The [Central Route](#) (中線方案) would start in Putian (莆田), traverse Nanri Island (南日島), and then reach Miaoli (苗栗) on Taiwan's side. Finally, the [Southern Route](#) (南線方案) would connect Xiamen to Kinmen and the Penghu Islands (澎湖群島) and then finally arrive in Chiayi (嘉義) in southwestern Taiwan. As a [Taiwanese analyst](#) pointed out, the construction of these transportation routes between Fujian and Taiwan has emerged as a main method used by Beijing to target Taiwan. [Taiwanese politicians and citizens](#) have criticized and pushed back against these unilateral Chinese proposals and broader attempts to encroach on the island's territory.

### ***Fujian's United Front Tactics***

Fujian has played a key role in [United Front activities](#) targeting Taiwan and is the site of numerous preferential policies aimed at encouraging Taiwanese to live, work, study, and do business in the province. Taiwanese newcomers to Fujian have received [government subsidies](#) to defray the costs of air tickets and lodging expenses, which has attracted young people from Taiwan. Xiamen's [talent programs](#) provide stipends to Taiwanese high-tech talents, while local businesses that hire Taiwanese receive government [subsidies](#). Xiamen also hires Taiwanese to serve as grassroots [community assistants](#) in local villages.

In addition, many [discounts](#) are provided to Taiwanese-financed enterprises and Taiwanese people, including [internship and monthly rent subsidies](#). Taiwanese arrivals to Xiamen are eligible to rent [public housing](#), often jumping the line ahead of local Xiamen residents who are on a long waiting list. Moreover, the provincial government has created incentives for engaging in cross-Strait [agricultural development and cooperation](#), [water supply projects](#), and [scientific and technological cooperation](#). Fujian has crafted

hefty benefits packages in hopes of becoming the "first home" for Taiwanese who go to China, according to the provincial Party Secretary [Yin Li](#) (尹力).

Amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, Taiwan is facing a [shortage of vaccine supplies](#), and China's vaccine diplomacy is kicking into high gear. After the [Japanese government](#) decided to send a batch of vaccines to Taiwan, local branches of the [Red Cross Society of China \(中國紅十字會\) in Fujian](#) offered to donate Chinese vaccines to Kinmen and Matsu, but were rejected by Taipei. Chinese media reported on [Taiwanese residents](#) in Fujian receiving free COVID-19 shots, thereby taking a political shot at Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) inability to procure sufficient vaccines for the Taiwanese population. In some areas in China, Taiwanese people have even been deemed a [priority group](#) for receiving Chinese vaccines.

When provinces and cities in China, notably Fujian and Xiamen, continue to offer various preferential treatment and financial incentives to Taiwanese to settle down and work in China over the long run, Taiwan will continue to feel the pressurizing effects of a serious brain drain. Taipei must strengthen [economic innovation and competitiveness](#) to retain talented people, particularly in the face of a looming [demographic crisis](#). If Taipei fails to counter the financial allure of places such as Fujian with its own economic, educational, and social policies, then it will likely continue to see more and more Taiwanese being lured to the other side of the Taiwan Strait.

**The main point:** Fujian has become a testing ground for experimenting on policy initiatives directed at Taiwan, and remains a front-line actor employing United Front tactics targeting the Taiwanese people.

[1] "China Focus: Right Time to Boost Taiwan-Fujian Cooperation, Says Governor," *Xinhua General News Service*, March 27, 2012, retrieved in Nexis Uni.

[2] "Fujian Provincial Chief Details Taiwan Economic Cooperation," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, November 25, 1998, retrieved in Nexis Uni.

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## The Important Symbolism of Japan's Vaccine Delivery to Taiwan

By: J. Michael Cole

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Taiwan and Japan made an important breakthrough in their relations on June 4, when a Japan Airlines flight landed at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport [carrying](#) 1.24 million doses of the AstraZeneca (AZ) COVID-19 vaccine as Taiwan grapples with a domestic outbreak. The need to quickly obtain vaccines gained more urgency with revelations of [new infection clusters, starting in mid-May](#) in Taipei and New Taipei, which by early June had spread to central and southern Taiwan.

Amid a global shortage in COVID-19 vaccines and new waves of the virus in various parts of the world, Taiwan has encountered some difficulties in procuring vaccines from abroad. Competing with countries where the outbreak is much more severe—and as a result of its highly successful handling of the pandemic since January 2020—it was natural that Taiwan would not be the top priority for receiving vaccines from foreign manufacturers. Taiwan has placed foreign orders [for approximately 30 million doses](#) so far, while two firms, Medigen Vaccine Biologics Corp (高 端疫苗) and United Biomedical Inc. (聯亞生技), are developing a domestic vaccine, with rollout expected as early as July. The Taiwanese government [intends](#) to purchase 5 million vaccine doses from each local firm, which could be raised to 10 million doses per manufacturer if necessary.

According to the Taiwanese government, [interference by the Chinese government](#) in August 2020 had also resulted in the cancellation of a deal between Taiwan's Center for Disease Control (CDC, 衛生福利部疾病管制署) and Germany-based BioNTech for the delivery of vaccines.

### **Vaccine Politics**

Japan's decision to export vaccines to Taiwan in its time of need was a clear demonstration of the goodwill that exists between the two societies. Besides the Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) predisposition to work with Taiwan, memories of Taiwan's [generous financial aid to Japan](#) following the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami and provision of [2 million medical masks to Japan](#) in April 2020 also motivated the Japanese government to return the favor. [An-](#)

[nouncing](#) the vaccine donation to Taiwan, Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said "At the time of the great east Japan earthquake 10 years ago, people in Taiwan sent us a lot of donations promptly. I believe that is etched vividly in the minds of Japanese people. Such an important partnership and friendship with Taiwan is reflected in this offer."

In late May, Japanese authorities [renegotiated their contract with AstraZeneca](#) so that Japan could donate 30 million doses worldwide. [Daiichi Sankyo Co.](#), AstraZeneca's partner in Japan, has a stockpile of approximately 30 million doses that are set to expire by September. The Japanese government has [contracted to buy](#) a total of 120 million doses from AstraZeneca, though it has not begun giving the shots due to fears over blood clotting side effects. Japan has also secured supplies of other vaccines for its entire population.

Initially, Japan had reportedly considered sending the vaccines to Taiwan via the World Health Organization's COVAX global initiative. However, it [decided](#) to send the vaccines directly instead, over fears that going through COVAX would take too long. It is also possible that Tokyo feared interference if it went through that channel. Such concerns were not unfounded: the moment Japan announced its intention to donate vaccines to Taiwan, the Chinese foreign ministry began threatening the effort. Taiwan's efforts to seek independence via vaccines, PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesman Zhao Lijian (趙立堅) [said](#) in a May 28 press conference, would not succeed. Channels for obtaining the vaccines "from the mainland," he added, were open. Wang Wenbin (汪文斌), another China foreign ministry spokesman, [accused](#) Japan of using the donation of vaccines to Taiwan as "a tool of political self-interest."

At around the same time, some members of the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) began pressuring Taipei to put its so-called "anti-Beijing ideology aside" and [purchase vaccines from China](#). Moreover, as Zhao was issuing his warnings in Beijing, Chang Ya-chung (張亞中), head of the Taipei-based Sun Yat-sen School (孫文學校), and Alex Tsai (蔡正元), a former KMT legislator, [announced](#) in a press conference that they had struck a deal—one without involvement by Taiwan's central government—with Zeng Nian (曾念), head of the so-called Beijing Cross-Strait Oriental Cultural Center (京兩岸東方文化中心), to procure 10 million doses via the center. Half of the vaccines were to come from the German BioNTech brand, supplied via the Chinese company Shanghai Fosun

Pharma (復星醫藥), while the other half was to be made of vaccines developed by Chinese developer Sinopharm's Beijing Institute of Biological Products (北京生物製劑研究所). Zeng, a grand nephew of former President Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), has been using his cultural center to promote "reunification." Chang and Tsai are also known to be very close to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Besides [doubts as to the reliability of the Chinese vaccine](#), Taipei has [serious reservations](#) about the possibility that Beijing would use the supply of vaccines to blackmail Taiwan, perhaps by imposing conditions for delivery. Moreover, almost three quarters (74.5 percent) of the Taiwanese population is highly or very highly opposed to allowing the Chinese vaccine into Taiwan, a [recent opinion poll shows](#).

As other individuals and non-governmental organizations announced initiatives to acquire vaccines from abroad, Taiwan's CDC emphasized that only the central government has the legal authority to negotiate contracts with foreign vaccine suppliers.

Meanwhile back in Tokyo, the Chinese embassy [reportedly demarched the Japanese Foreign Ministry](#) until the day of the vaccine doses' delivery to Taiwan, when it became clear that its attempts to derail Japan's plans had failed. After the vaccines were delivered, the Chinese government accused Japan of "interference in China's domestic affairs."



*Image: On June 4, a shipment of Astra-Zeneca COVID-19 vaccine is offloaded at Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport after arrival from Japan. (Source: [Forward Japan](#), June 7)*

### **Changing Times**

The symbolism of Japan's delivery of vaccines to Taiwan has not gone unnoticed, and comes amid [indications](#) that the ruling LDP is keen on Japan developing closer ties with its southern neighbor. The fact that Japan did not give in to political pressure from Bei-

jing is an important political development, one that raises the possibility that Beijing's ability to dictate how other countries engage with Taiwan—usually through coercion—is being eroded due to an ongoing reassessment of China's role within the international system, as well as the imperatives of dealing with the pandemic. Japan's move made it clear that its government would not allow Beijing to put politics above humanitarian considerations, which is an area where China often has scored points, as demonstrated by its continued ability to [prevent Taiwan's participation at multilateral fora such as the WHO's World Health Assembly](#). This defiance of Beijing by a country other than the United States will likely also have a positive impact on other countries' willingness to engage with Taiwan whenever a situation makes it clear that engagement is in everyone's interest—in other words, that it is not, as Beijing regards it, zero-sum.

Tellingly, Japan Airlines flight 809, which brought the vaccines to Taiwan, landed in Taiwan on June 4, coinciding with the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989. Although Japanese authorities maintain that this was purely coincidental, there is nevertheless reason to believe that, in the past, the Japanese government would have delayed the flight by a day or two so as to avoid delivery occurring on a date that is very sensitive for Beijing.

There is little doubt, as well, that US leadership on continued engagement with Taiwan by the Biden Administration—as [demonstrated](#) by Taiwan's inclusion in the list of countries to receive vaccines from the United States in the first tranche of a total of 80 million doses—has been necessary for other, less powerful countries to be willing to take risks by reaching out to Taiwan. During a three-hour visit to Taiwan on June 6, US Senators Tammy Duckworth, Dan Sullivan, and Christopher Coons [confirmed](#) that Taiwan is set to receive 750,000 doses from the United States. Senator Duckworth, whose family on her mother's side fled China for Thailand during the Communist revolution, [said of US assistance to Taiwan](#), "For me, it is particularly important to support another democracy in the [Asia] region. My family and I know the price of freedom. I am here to tell you that the United States will not let you stand alone. We will be by your side to make sure that the people of Taiwan have what they need to get to the other side of this pandemic and beyond."

Such developments constitute perhaps a promising first step in the consolidation of an alliance of democracies that will over time tighten cooperation

among like-minded countries; and which, by the sheer weight of its members, can afford to challenge the Chinese authorities when the situation calls for it—as a global pandemic most assuredly does.

Tokyo's willingness to defy Beijing over Taiwan has not been limited to vaccines. This started with the [Biden-Suga joint statement](#) of April 16, in which a Japanese prime minister specifically mentioned Taiwan for the first time in more than half a century. Then, on June 9, the foreign and defense ministries of Japan and Australia issued a [2+2 statement](#) following bilateral talks that also affirmed, for the first time, the two countries' agreement on the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and the need for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues. Two days later, the Diet, Japan's legislature, [voted unanimously](#) to support Taiwan's participation at the WHO. All this, furthermore, occurred while the ruling LDP has also [called](#) on the government to establish closer relations with Taiwan and prepare for contingencies in the Taiwan Strait. From all this, we can conclude that while the donation of 1.24 million vaccine doses to Taiwan represented a new high in Japan-Taiwan relations, such a move did not occur in a political vacuum. In other words, the context has been changing as well, and Beijing is unlikely to like it.

**The main point:** Withstanding pressure from the Chinese government, Tokyo's decision to proceed with the donation of 1.24 million vaccine doses to Taiwan suggests that Beijing's ability to dictate how countries interact with Taiwan is eroding.

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## Lessons from the Korean War: The US Will Not Be Able to Abandon Taiwan

By: Ben Lowsen

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In recent months, scholars and strategists have questioned whether the United States would, could, or even should help Taiwan defend itself against an attack by the People's Republic of China. The Cato Institute's Doug Bandow [claims](#) that Taiwan is “not

a serious security interest for America.” Bloomberg columnist Max Hastings [insists](#) that the “best chance of deflecting a Chinese assault [on Taiwan] is surely not military. [...] The goal should be deterrence, with a focus on economic incentives for improved Chinese relations with the US.” Charles Glaser in *Foreign Affairs* [suggests](#) that “letting go of Taiwan” (among other retrenchments) may be needed to “reduce the odds of going to war.” As the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the start of the Korean War in 1950 approaches, there are important lessons from the “Forgotten War” that have current relevance.

Of course, the PRC would prefer to absorb Taiwan [using methods short of war](#) if possible. Its subjugation of Hong Kong and intensifying attempts to bully the island democracy, however, have backfired and hardened Taiwanese resistance to unification (e.g., [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). For some time to come, China's only chance of incorporating Taiwan will be through military conquest. Yet in the face of Beijing's escalating threats, suggestions of reduced US support for Taiwan echo the [mixed messages](#) American leaders gave the Communist world on South Korea more than 70 years ago. George F. Kennan's “strategic-political concept” represented this trend, premised on the idea that “the mainland of Asia was not strategically vital to the United States.” [1] Such calls for retrenchment may stem from a desire for peace and stability, but as the Korean War demonstrated, they can be highly provocative in practice.

After World War II, the United States wished to shift responsibility for South Korea's defense to its own government in Seoul and almost completely withdrew from the peninsula. At the time, the South was a hotbed of Communist activity and tolerated the US troop presence grudgingly at best. Once the situation stabilized under the non-Communist government of Syngman Rhee, withdrawal no doubt seemed like a welcome option. [2] Yet when North Korea attacked the South on June 25, 1950, President Truman and his cabinet found they [could not simply submit](#) to Communist aggression. This withdrawal had fundamentally misaligned American actions and intent, giving the appearance of abandoning a government the United States actually meant to support. Although North Korea always intended to attack, abandoning Seoul as Pyongyang built up its forces gave North Korea a green light to initiate the Korean War, costing millions of lives and harming countless others. US retrenchment had in effect telegraphed a lack of commitment. Not only did this error weaken the US mor-



al position, it also cost the United States far more in the end than a modicum of support ever would have.

Of course, primary responsibility for the war lies with North Korea and its PRC and Soviet enablers (despite Beijing's [historical revisionism](#)), but as we discuss US support for Taiwan, we must relearn this lesson today: there is no substitute for firm, pragmatic commitment. As much as we may wish to set our responsibilities aside, we must not let a democratic US partner like Taiwan fall under PRC dictatorship. Shying away from such commitments, far from promoting peace, actually encourages war. At the time of the Korean War, some political figures placed special blame on US Secretary of State Dean Acheson's less-than-supportive statements in his [January 1950 speech](#) to the National Press Club. More recently, Michael Green has suggested that it was a bipartisan lack of commitment in both word and deed that paved the way for the invasion by the North. [3]

In retrospect, and in full fairness to the benefits of retrenchment, pulling some forces back could have been an effective way to conserve American resources. Another way would have been to replace expensive military forces with more cost-effective means. Instances of such cost-saving measures have included: (1) The US [transfer of one brigade](#) out of South Korea in 2004, sending the unit where it was most needed while maintaining deterrence against the North; (2) the idea over the past decade or more of transitioning US efforts in Afghanistan [from counter-insurgency to counterterrorism](#); and (3) the US [first offset strategy](#) of the 1950s, using nuclear weapons to bolster deterrence against the Soviet Union in place of large, expensive-to-maintain conventional forces.

This need to conserve resources holds true more than ever in the Indo-Pacific region today, including East Asia and Afghanistan. The resources of the United States and its allies are significant, but far from unlimited. This is particularly true in the context of Beijing's prodigious and growing economy, which it uses to strengthen its military and other forces, as well as to maintain [large-scale internal repression](#).

Good stewardship is a constant priority, but that cannot be allowed to muddle messages of deterrence to adversaries and assurance to allies. When word and action contradict actual intent, one is working at crossed purposes. Pulling nearly all US forces out and excluding Korea from the US "defensive perimeter" before 1950 left the unfortunate and misleading im-

pression that the United States was less than willing to defend South Korea.

In the early 1950s, there was little to recommend the government in Seoul aside from its resistance to Communist rule. And yet, as social conditions changed and with the benefit of democratic influence, South Korea (like Germany and Japan before it) evolved into a strong, democratic ally. The democratic world benefitted immeasurably by supporting countries that at the time may have seemed less than promising. Unlike South Korea in 1950, Taiwan today is not a developing nation: it is a modern, prosperous democracy. While the United States has left the question of Taiwan's legal status to the Taiwanese people themselves, it has consistently and clearly opposed any effort by the PRC to coerce unification.

Experts point to the [difficulty](#) of defending Taiwan against PRC attack. Despite this, the United States and its allies still possess a wide array of flexible means to do so. Some question their willingness to use force. Others even question [whether Taiwan would defend itself](#). Of course, democratic societies are slow to anger, and the prospect of fighting a war absent an attack is unpopular.

Yet as we saw in the Korean War, this equation would change dramatically the moment the PRC seemed poised to destroy Taiwan's democracy. At that point, the decision would be out of American hands. The United States would very likely have no feasible option other than to defend Taiwan against PRC attack. Any dictatorship that believes Americans are now ready to tolerate increasingly hostile acts makes a grave (although hardly unprecedented) error.

None of this is to say that the US commitment is unlimited. A war between two nuclear powers is no easy matter. That said, simply capitulating to Xi's aggression is not an option either and US resistance is still inchoate. However, the democratic world is by no means alone or isolated. The injustice and gratuitousness of PRC actions invites opposition as countries small and large ask themselves whether Beijing would have any qualms about doing the same to them, one by one.

Has the American policy of strategic ambiguity then outlived its utility? Not necessarily. There is no need for any government to oppose (or support) Beijing's "One-China Principle" directly, nor is it generally necessary for Taiwan to display its de facto independence in new ways, such as a declaration of independence

or secession. But the United States must think twice before unilaterally weakening its commitments. No amount of propitiation can ever mollify Xi. It will only make him want more. Instead, Washington's message to Beijing should be that Xi's hostility is pushing Taiwan away and encouraging the rest of the world to resist him.

[Beijing's claims](#) that Taiwan's Tsai Administration favors "separatism" are a mere pretense. Taiwan's opposition is a direct result of Beijing's hostility. It cannot also be Beijing's excuse for more hostility. Taipei is simply resisting PRC attacks on its duly elected government. It is the responsibility of the hostile actor to mend its ways.

Indeed, the People's Republic, abusing the goodwill and support that the [democratic world has lent it](#), has under Xi remade itself into the greatest possible threat, both to Taiwan and to the world: a [genocidal, revanchist, totalitarian](#) state [bent on conquest](#). The appropriate response is for the world to decouple as thoroughly as possible—cutting off all trade and economic support for Xi's inhuman program—and to arm itself against the invasion and destruction he is [promising to unleash](#).

The democratic world poses no threat to China; quite the opposite, the PRC has [benefited more than any other nation](#) under its auspices. Some may believe that verbally cutting off Taiwan now will make conflict less likely, but the opposite is true. As we saw in the Korean War, it is a provocative act that incentivizes Beijing to strike. And by the time that happens, it will be too late to prevent a broader conflict. As Chamberlain learned at Munich, backing down from an enemy determined for war does not prevent conflict; it only prolongs it and makes it more horrible. Those who favor peace must now prepare to fight for it.

**The main point:** It is tempting for the US to back away from potentially difficult commitments like defending Taiwan, but as we learned in the Korean War, the US will have little choice if China attacks. It should therefore make itself as ready as possible.

[1] Paul J. Heer, *Mr. X and the Pacific: George F. Kennan and American Policy in East Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2018) p. 91.

[2] Ronald H. Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia* (New York: Random House, 2007), pp. 138-166.

[3] Michael Green, *By More Than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), p. 272-274 (Kindle edition).

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## Is an Invasion Coming?: China's Growing Threat to Taiwan

By: Michael Mazza

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How pressing is the Chinese threat to Taiwan? Is Beijing's eagerness to consume the democracy a long-term challenge to be managed, or a short-term challenge requiring an urgent response? My colleague Oriana Skylar Mastro, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, has crafted a valuable [contribution](#) to this ongoing debate, in which she argues that "although a Chinese invasion of Taiwan may not be imminent, for the first time in three decades, it is time to take seriously the possibility that China could soon use force to end its almost century-long civil war." Mastro effectively contends that the threat to Taiwan has grown more urgent, even if invasion is not in the immediate offing, but her analysis also raises questions requiring further study.

### ***A True Believer and His Mighty Military***

Mastro highlights two recent developments that should reshape the debate over whether to consider China's military threat to Taiwan as something that will manifest over a span of years or decades. First, she makes the case that Xi Jinping (习近平) is a true believer when it comes to the question of unification. Most tellingly, Xi has tied "Taiwan's future to his primary political platform," the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In 2019, Mastro notes, "he stated explicitly that unification is a requirement for achieving the so-called Chinese dream."

Along similar lines, Mastro points to official Chinese statements that are suggestive of greater willingness to use force against Taiwan. She recalls, for example, Xi's January 2019 speech in which he "called the current political arrangement 'the root cause of cross-strait instability.'" In that speech, she might have further noted, Xi offered a "one country, two systems" arrangement for China and Taiwan that was more



restrictive than previous formulations. What is more, he tacitly linked “one country, two systems” and the so-called “1992 Consensus,” prompting pushback from both the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民進黨) and the Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨) in Taiwan. That he did so after years in which Beijing had been slowly but consistently stripping away Hong Kong’s freedoms strongly suggests that Xi had already given up on peaceful unification—he must have known that Taiwan would not buy what he was selling.

Indeed, Mastro links developments in Hong Kong to views in Taiwan, describing the June 2020 enactment of the National Security law as “the death knell for peaceful unification.” She does not provide evidence that Xi, too, has concluded that peaceful unification has already seen its “death knell” come and go. He certainly has not said as much, at least in a public setting. But proof is in the pudding, and Beijing’s utter disinterest in winning hearts and minds in Taiwan says quite a bit.

The second important development Mastro highlights is the shifting cross-Strait and US-China balances of military power, fundamental changes from the turn of the century. China’s recent displays of force near Taiwan, Mastro argues, make plain that “Xi is no longer trying to avoid escalation at all costs now that his military is capable of contesting the US military presence in the region.” Contacts in Beijing, according to Mastro, “acknowledge that Xi is surrounded by military advisers who tell him with confidence that China can now regain Taiwan by force at an acceptable cost.” If these sources are to be believed, we have now reached a point at which the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is telling Xi, “yes, we can do this,” instead of “no, we cannot.” This represents a tide change, as Xi now has (or believes he has) viable military options that were not available to earlier leaders.

But how likely is Xi to resort to those options in the coming years? Mastro thinks the risk is significant. “Once China has the military capabilities to finally solve its Taiwan problem,” she writes, “Xi could find it politically untenable not to do so, given the heightened nationalism of both the CCP and the public.” This thought-provoking conclusion merits scrutiny. It assumes that, all else being equal, Xi will face significant domestic challenges if he opts not to launch a military campaign aimed at seizing Taiwan.

But such a campaign would entail substantial risks, even given PLA military superiority. As Richard Bush,

Bonnie Glaser, and Ryan Hass [argued](#) in April, “anything short of quick and absolute unification would risk undermining Chinese Communist Party legitimacy at home.” Nor do the risks stop there. “China’s use of force against Taiwan,” they contend, “also would poison China’s image in the region and the world, alert neighboring countries to the threat China poses to stability and lead to diversion of resources and focus from Xi’s pressing domestic priorities.” Bush *et al.* see Beijing as having “chosen a different path.” Rather than gearing up for military action, “China’s top priority now and in the foreseeable future is to deter Taiwan independence rather than compel unification.”

In their piece, Bush *et al.* do not consider what might prompt that calculus to change. But the “heightened nationalism” Mastro cites might not be sufficient in their eyes. Still, even if the threat to Taiwan is less urgent than Mastro suggests, one could be forgiven for approaching it with less sanguinity than do Bush *et al.*

Last March, as China was grappling with the aftermath of the novel coronavirus’ emergence, the director-general of Taiwan’s National Security Bureau was asked in a legislative hearing about the likelihood that China would use force against Taiwan “tomorrow” as a means of distracting from domestic challenges. His answer: 6 or 7 out of 10. Although he was wrong in the moment, that does not invalidate his concern. Next year, Xi Jinping will head into waters uncharted in recent decades as he likely seeks to secure a third term in office. The Chinese economy has arguably been stagnating for some time, making it difficult for him to deliver on promises of greater prosperity for all by mid-century. Results of the latest census—which [reveal](#) an “aging, slow-growing population”—will only make China’s continuing rise a more challenging proposition.

Could domestic political difficulties lead Xi Jinping to reassess his interests *vis-à-vis* Taiwan? M. Taylor Fravel has convincingly [made the case](#) that party unity is a necessary precondition for shifts in military strategy. Although Fravel was writing primarily about how and when the People’s Republic of China has made changes to military strategy, similar logic may well apply to elective external military action. (See Fravel’s excellent book, [Active Defense: China’s Military Strategy Since 1949](#), for a fuller explication of this argument). But if domestic difficulties for Xi Jinping do mount during the coming years, past may prove not to be prologue.

A key change from past decades, as Mastro notes, is the emergence of a highly capable and highly confident PLA. A second development has been Xi's efforts, as Joel Wuthnow and Phillip C. Saunders [put](#) it, "to revitalize Party control and discipline within the PLA,"—and more than that, to ensure the PLA's loyalty to Xi: "Central to restoring Party control was elevating Xi's own status and authority within the PLA."

What is more, as Xi has worked to modernize, reform, and exert his authority over the PLA, Beijing has also invested ever greater resources in the People's Armed Police (PAP). Over the nine-year period from 2010 to 2018, the PAP budget [averaged](#) 6.5 percent annual growth. During that timeframe, spending on the PAP more than doubled from 66.3 billion RMB to 141.4 billion RMB. From 2007 to 2017, according to [data](#) compiled by Adrian Zenz, Chinese spending on domestic security averaged 13.6 percent annual growth and has exceeded spending on external defense since 2010.

Taken together, these three developments—a modern, capable PLA; Xi's authority over the PLA; and a more robust domestic security apparatus—may contribute to a set of circumstances in which party disunity makes external action more appealing to Xi. The shift in the balance of military power gives him military options that would have been unavailable to his predecessors. The domestic security apparatus reduces the need to rely on the PLA for maintaining internal stability. And Xi's authority over the PLA—and its apparent [loyalty](#) to him—makes it a viable tool for him to use in the event of internal difficulties.

In such an eventuality, Xi could well foment a crisis in the Taiwan Strait *while* cracking down at home to secure his position atop the Chinese party-state. That Xi covets Taiwan and that the PLA is increasingly in a position to take it may not be sufficient to warrant significantly heightened concerns about the prospects for invasion, as Mastro posits. Rather, heightened concerns are merited because Xi covets Taiwan and the military balance is shifting *at a time when* China may face significant internal pressures.

### ***Can China Be Deterred?***

Given the growing threat, Mastro argues, the United States should take steps to better ensure it can deter Chinese aggression. She makes a number of constructive suggestions, but those suggestions raise even more questions about how best to head off the use of force.

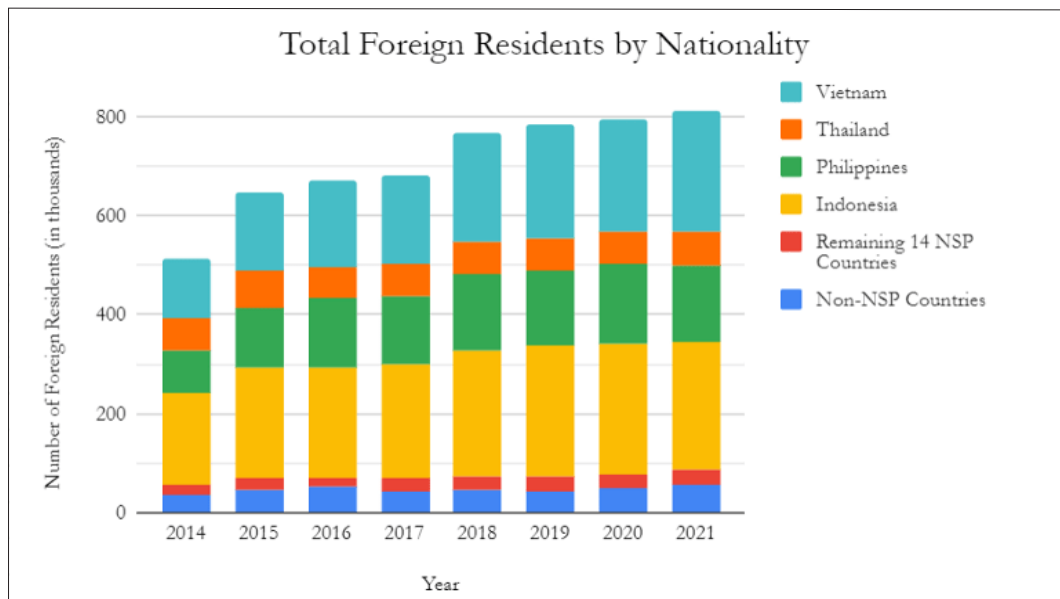
Mastro is not optimistic that Washington can or will find a way "to alter China's calculus on Taiwan." Mastro frets that "an enhanced US military and intelligence presence in the Indo-Pacific would be sufficient to deter most forms of armed unification, but it wouldn't prevent China from using force altogether." She worries that China could still use missile strikes, for example, "to convince Taiwan to bend to its will." This speaks to the importance of Taiwan's own efforts to invest in resiliency and self-defense, a question that Mastro leaves unaddressed.

Mastro does believe military tools can be used "to deter all Chinese military aggression," but that requires the United States "to be prepared to destroy China's missile batteries—which would involve U.S. strikes on the Chinese mainland." She worries about the United States "igniting a war by mistake" in response to Chinese military exercises, but an arguably greater concern is that retaliatory strikes on Chinese territory will lead to a general war between China and the United States in which escalation will be difficult to manage.

On the question of escalation, moreover, Mastro eschews a discussion of nuclear dynamics. Do nuclear weapons play a role in deterring China from attacking Taiwan (or deterring the United States from intervening in a cross-strait conflict)? Should they? What role do nuclear weapons play in bounding (or not) conventional operations? How likely is nuclear use in the event of a conflict? As strategists and analysts think through how to maintain the peace in the Taiwan Strait, these questions will require far more consideration.

Finally, Mastro contends, "the most effective way to deter Chinese leaders from attacking Taiwan is also the most difficult: to convince them that armed unification would cost China its rejuvenation." Unfortunately, many potential partners simply will not "risk their economic prospects, let alone a major-power war, in order to defend a small democratic island."

In this, Mastro may be right. Although some US allies are growing concerned about stability in the Taiwan Strait—notably Japan, Australia, and South Korea, but also, to a lesser extent, countries in Europe—they are far from ready to participate in an effort to sever economic and other ties to Beijing, let alone threaten to do so. For the Biden administration and its successors, solving that puzzle should be as much of a priority as righting the balance of military power in the Pacific.



Graphic: The growing population of migrant workers in Taiwan, as well as their countries of origin. (Source: [Taiwan Ministry of the Interior](#))

**The main point:** The PRC threat to Taiwan is growing more urgent because Xi covets Taiwan and the military balance is shifting in China’s favor at a time when China may face significant internal pressures. Unfortunately, deterring Chinese aggression is only getting harder.

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## COVID-19, Migrant Workers, and the Fight for Equality in Taiwan

By: Annabel Uhlman

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, while Taiwanese citizens and foreigners have had the option of undergoing a mandatory 14-day quarantine in their residence or in a subsidized [quarantine hotel](#), migrant workers who entered the country have had to quarantine at centralized quarantine stations and secure one of just [600 beds](#). This has led to a restriction in the number of foreign workers allowed to enter the borders. Migrant workers already in Taiwan, despite having access to National Health Insurance, face language, legal, and other [obstacles](#) to obtaining adequate health care, including needing [employer approval](#) for certain procedures. As a result of economic globalization, an aging population, and a shrinking domestic workforce, Taiwan’s economy depends upon [migrant](#)

[labor](#). Yet, the Taiwanese government has consistently neglected to protect the rights of migrant workers. Taipei must mitigate the exploitative effects of its current system—including the broker program—as well as expand the right of migrant workers to legal protections and access to societal programs.

### Background

Taiwan has often overlooked migrant workers in favor of “talented immigration” from Western countries or foreigners with specialized skills. In her 2020 inaugural address, President Tsai Ing-Wen (蔡英文) reaffirmed the Democratic Progressive Party’s (DPP, 民進黨) commitment to improving economic globalization through increasing immigration, [promising](#) to focus on attracting international talent to “globalize Taiwan’s workforce.” In her speech, she made no mention of the 713,454 migrant workers [currently in Taiwan](#) or their struggle for equality.

In 2016, Taiwan [adopted](#) the New Southbound Policy (NSP, 新南向政策), an initiative aimed at strengthening Taiwan’s relationships with 18 countries in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific. The NSP concept places particular focus on [areas](#) to include global exchange, economic relationships, NGO cooperation, city partnerships, and visas. Ninety percent of foreigners arriving in Taiwan are from these countries, as shown in the graph below; and roughly [ninety percent](#) of those are from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, with numbers increasing dramatically before the COVID-19 pandemic.



### ***Immigration and Legal Policy***

Historically, changes in immigration policy in Taiwan have emerged as [responses](#) to domestic issues such as labor shortages, an aging population needing domestic care, and lack of brides for Taiwanese men. Beginning in the 1960s, the Taiwanese government designed [immigration policy](#) with the “population quality” (人口素質) in mind, ensuring the maintenance of a “good quality” population that is “uncontaminated” by less-educated immigrants. [1] Article 46 of the [Employment and Services Act](#) (就業服務法) defines two types of foreign workers: the first category includes specialized workers—those with technical skills, such as businessmen, teachers, and artists—while the second includes fishermen, domestic care workers, nurses, and construction workers. Those in the first category enjoy full protections provided by the [Immigration Act](#) (入出國及移民法) and [Labor Standards Act](#) (勞動基準法), including permanent residency, access to the minimum wage, a 40-hour workweek with overtime pay, ability to re-apply for visas, and other basic labor rights. Migrant workers may only receive these basic labor rights if their employers are in a business unit covered by the Labor Standards Act, such as those in agriculture, forestry, fishery, mining and quarrying, and construction. Key professions not covered by the act are domestic workers or caretakers, who [comprise](#) about 36 percent of all migrant workers in Taiwan.

However, due to the [broker system](#) used by employers to hire foreign labor, migrant workers often do not receive these basic labor rights. Migrant workers must find work through Taiwanese brokers, who handle all logistics and paperwork, albeit at a steep monthly price. [Brokers](#) often take a portion of workers’ wages, charge exorbitant fees, and maintain possession of their passports. Since many migrant workers are escaping poor economic situations in their home countries, this often requires taking out loans from the broker, creating what Joe Henley, journalist and author of the book [Migrante](#), calls “a continuous cycle made to bleed the worker financially dry.” [2]

### ***Discrimination***

Upon arriving in Taiwan, migrant workers not only face long hours, language barriers, and harsh working conditions in certain industries, but are also subject to discriminatory attitudes from some segments of a largely [homogeneous](#) Taiwanese society. A 2019 [survey](#) conducted by Professor Timothy S. Rich of

Western Kentucky University and National Chengchi University asked Taiwanese citizens to share their opinions on skilled versus unskilled immigrants from Southeast Asia. [Results](#) found that Taiwanese are in support of skilled labor immigration, but not of broader immigration from Southeast Asia: 76 percent of respondents agreed that Taiwan should encourage skilled immigration, but only 8.4 percent agreed on encouraging Southeast Asian immigration to Taiwan more generally.

Accusations of discrimination have emerged regarding the issue of banning public gatherings or even sitting in the main hall of [Taipei Main Station](#), a common gathering space for migrant workers. Each year, many Indonesian migrant workers gather in the main hall of the station to celebrate the holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha—which in the past has prompted [complaints](#) from some commuters, and has long been a subject of public [debate](#). In May of 2020, a week before the Eid al-Fitr holiday that marks the traditional end of Ramadan fasting, Taiwan Railways [banned](#) any sitting in the hall of the station, citing the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to an outcry from immigrants, especially after the company announced plans to [extend](#) this policy permanently.



*Image: Worshippers praying at an Eid-al-Fitr ceremony outside the Taipei Main Station in 2020. (Source: [Taiwan Central News Agency](#))*

However, these complaints are not reflective of the whole population and many Taiwanese consider the station to be a reflection of the island’s growing diversity. Accordingly, the policy resulted in [protests](#) and accusations of an unfair [attack](#) on migrant workers, and the ban was [revoked](#). The issue was revived in May 2021, when an Eid al-Fitr celebration sponsored by the Global Workers’ Organization (臺灣外籍工作者發展協會, GWO) planned for the morning of May 13 was [cancelled](#), with the organizers deciding to call off the event to due to continuing fears of COVID-19

transmission.

This type of discrimination has even come from some politicians in Taiwan. On March 7, 2019, while running for president, Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu (韓國瑜) used a derogatory term for Filipina immigrants, [asking](#) rhetorically, “How did that Maria become a teacher?” Though he later tried to [explain](#) that it was a “metaphor,” he did not acknowledge the racist connotation of his statement. In another [interview](#) later that year, while discussing Taiwan’s brain drain, Han referred to migrant workers as “chickens,” saying that “phoenixes [fly] away and a bunch of chickens [are] flying in” (鳳凰都飛走了, 進來一大堆雞). A few days later, he [apologized](#) for his “example,” but again did not address the racist elements of his remarks.

Beyond social discrimination, migrant workers often face poor working conditions and exploitative programs. In October 2019, the Nanfang’ao Harbor [bridge collapse](#) killed six Filipino and one Indonesian fishermen, as well as injuring 12 more and making 19 homeless. Other migrants have fallen victim to dangerous [work-study programs](#), such as Filipino students at the Yu Da University of Science and Technology (育達科技大學), who were forced to work in a tile factory when they were supposed to be earning a graduate degree. These programs, a [new feature](#) of the New Southbound Policy, allow employment agencies to place foreign students at universities in Taiwan under “internship programs,” but then make them work for tuition in factories or other forms of heavy labor.

Earlier in the pandemic, a group of 140 fishermen were [stranded](#) off the Port of Kaohsiung (高雄港). Prevented from coming on shore due to COVID-19 restrictions, they were stranded for a month before eventually labeled illegal immigrants and deported. This spring, spikes in COVID-19 cases led the Taiwanese government to place a [ban on the entry](#) of all migrant workers starting May 19, leaving 5,000 Filipino migrant workers [stranded](#), and remaining migrant workers already in Taiwan still [struggling](#) for adequate medical coverage. With high transmission rates in factories and manufacturing centers, Taoyuan mayor Cheng Wen-tsan (鄭文燦) announced a [comprehensive plan](#) consisting of rapid testing, sanitization, and reduced capacity procedures to manage the outbreak. The government is similarly conducting [assessments](#) of the conditions of roughly 1,200 companies that employ migrant workers, but [activists](#) are hoping for more long term reforms.

### ***International Attention***

Not only has Taiwan’s treatment of migrant workers been covered by international [media](#), neighboring countries that send domestic workers to Taiwan have also called attention to these issues. Following Han Kuo-yu’s racist remarks, Angelito Banayo, representative of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) of the Philippines, wrote an [open letter](#) to Han objecting to his remarks. In early November 2020, a [letter](#) from the Indonesian Economic and Trade Office stated that Taiwanese employers must cover the costs for logistics (plane tickets, visa fees, and broker payments) incurred by migrant workers. Minister of Labor Hsu Ming-Chun (許銘春) [responded](#) that Taiwan “cannot accept this,” and that Taiwan might look elsewhere for labor. In December 2020, Taiwan placed an indefinite [entry ban](#) on Indonesian migrant workers. Talks between the two countries are still ongoing but have the potential to sour relations if no agreement is reached.

The US Department of State has also cited [violations](#) of human rights in Taiwan for multiple years now. The [2019 report](#) on human rights practices in Taiwan, issued in March, showed that though progress is being made—such as the establishment of a workers’ protection task force, foreign-worker hotlines, requirements to report mistreatment of foreign workers, and a new minimum wage of NTD 150 (USD \$4.86) per hour—these measures are not enough. [Fines](#) placed on companies for repressing union activities are too low to deter future violations, making union movements or strikes a hopeless strategy. In 2018, [six Taiwanese brokers](#) were convicted of illegal activities, yet no legal stipulations prevented them from simply opening up another business. The [report](#) acknowledged that the law does not provide adequate inspections or deterrents for “labor law violations and unsafe working conditions.” The 2021 annual religious freedom report [raises concerns](#) for domestic service workers and caretakers who are not protected under the Labor Standards Act, and are thus not guaranteed a weekly rest day and cannot attend religious services. Similarly, the US Department of Labor [labeled](#) fish caught by Taiwanese vessels products of forced labor, which Control Yuan member Wang Yuling (王幼玲) [said](#) the government has known about since 2019.

### ***Activism***

Recent progress toward rectifying these issues has been due to activism organized by local NGOs, in-

cluding [OneForty](#), [the Awakening Foundation](#), the [Migrant Forum in Asia](#), the [Yilan Migrant Fishermen Union](#), and the [Taiwan International Workers Association](#). These groups offer a variety of services, from organizing [demonstrations](#) and helping with [casework](#) to [creating](#) labor unions and offering language and culture [classes](#). These organizations are instrumental in raising awareness, but are restricted by low levels of funding and support. The Taiwan International Workers Association has used recent high transmission rates at factories to get the government to conduct in-depth [assessments](#) of working conditions and safety protections for migrant workers.

There are few legislators in Taiwan who are willing to speak up about migrant workers. One of the most prominent is [Lin Li-Chan](#) (林麗蟬), who, after emigrating from Cambodia to Taiwan, was the first immigrant elected to the Legislative Yuan in 2016. Lin addressed then-Kaohsiung Mayor Han Kuo-yu's policy to create exclusive leisure areas for migrant workers in an interview panel, [saying](#), "Taiwan's familiarity and understanding of migrant workers is still insufficient, and there needs to be an improvement in friendliness towards them." She called for a [policy](#) that would specifically protect migrant workers, citing their "great contributions to our society."

The government needs to take several key actions to strengthen migrant workers' rights in Taiwan. First, it should reform the Labor Standards Act to provide explicit protections for migrant workers equal to those of Taiwanese and other foreign workers. Second, Taipei should expand programs run by local NGOs that have a proven track record of providing direct assistance and tangible skills to workers. Third, the government should abolish the broker system and make the system of direct hire more accessible to Taiwanese employers. These changes will be necessary to ensure that all workers in Taiwan have full protections under the law, and politically uphold the DPP's self-image as the protector of working people. If Taiwan wants to be considered a full democracy valuing human rights, and ensure the success of the NSP, it must address this serious issue.

**The main point:** The poor treatment of migrant workers in Taiwan is a severe, long-standing issue that must be addressed and speaks to broader issues of discrimination in Taiwanese society. These conditions and human rights violations have the potential to undermine the success of the New Southbound Policy and harm Taiwan's international reputation.

[1] Hong-Zen Wang, "Immigration Trends and Policy Changes in Taiwan," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 20, no. 2 (2011): 169–94.

[2] Conversation with Joe Henley, November 2020.