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By: Russell Hsiao

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The Russian invasion of Ukraine has become a global geopolitical event affecting governments and general populations alike. Appalled by Moscow’s unjustified and unprovoked aggression, the international community—with notable exceptions—has broadly condemned the invasion. These public reactions in turn are spurring changes in the policies of many countries. In Germany, for instance, the invasion has convinced Berlin to finally commit more resources to its national defense. Similar outcries in other countries are also shaping public opinions on hotly debated policy changes. While the response in Europe has understandably been strongest given the proximate effects of the war, the [reactions in Asia](#) have not been insignificant. In Taiwan, the changing perceptions of the general public may increasingly weigh in on important domestic debates about critical national defense issues. This preliminary assessment examines several recent public opinions polls on Taiwanese perceptions of the Ukraine War and its correlated effects on defense-related matters.

Will to Fight

In recent years, analysts studying Taiwan’s defense have devoted increased attention to the [resolve of the people of Taiwan](#) to fight in the event of a cross-Strait military conflict. This is an issue that is critical to an [effective defense of Taiwan](#) and has been an [area of concern](#) in the past. According to the pan-Blue-leaning media outlet TVBS Polling Center (TVBS民調中心), which released [a survey](#) from March that polled respondents on this question, 62 percent of respondents expressed their willingness to go to war to defend Taiwan, whereas only 26 percent of the people were not willing to fight and 11 percent expressed no opinion. Diving further into the results, the survey found that 72 percent of

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people aged 40-49 were willing to go to war, a sentiment shared by more than 60 percent of those aged between 20-29, 30-39, and 50-59, as well as 54 percent of those over the age of 60.

The TVBS poll is consistent with a survey taken by another pan-Blue-leaning organization, the Taiwan International Strategic Study Society (TISS, 台灣國際戰略學會), a think tank headed by Wong Ming-hsien (翁明賢). In a [poll it released in March](#), TISS found that 70.2 percent of respondents were willing to defend Taiwan if China took military action against the country. As a point of comparison, this represented an increase of 29.9 points from the 40.3 percent who said they would fight in a poll conducted in [December 2021](#), months before the war in Ukraine.

Mandatory Military Service and Reserve Training

The issues that have perhaps seen the most dramatic change as a result of the invasion of Ukraine are Taiwanese public perceptions towards [mandatory military service and reserve training](#). These hard defense issues have been hotly debated in recent years, both within Taiwan's defense establishment and the public, as a result of increasing concerns about the threat facing Taiwan. Since the country began its transition to an all-volunteer military force in the mid-2010s, it has been largely [unsuccessful in meeting recruitment quotas](#). In turn, this has compounded concerns about the psychological resiliency and combat readiness of the military and the general population.

According to the [TISS poll](#) from March, 69.6 percent now support an extension of the country's four-month compulsory military service. Similarly, 70.4 percent support the new [14-day reservist training program](#) designed to improve the country's combat readiness, with only 19.1 percent disapproving of the initiative. These results echo the findings of an [April 26 poll](#) taken by the pan-Green-leaning Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation (TPOF, 台灣民意基金會), which asked respondents whether the current requirement of four months of compulsory military service is reasonable in light of the threats facing Taiwan. The survey found that 76.8 percent thought it was unreasonable for current draftees to only serve 4 months, while 15 percent thought it was reasonable. Delving deeper, [the poll](#) asked whether it would be reasonable to extend the

service to at least one year. In response, 43.6 percent stated that they "strongly agree"; 32.3 percent "somewhat agree"; 10.3 percent "disagree slightly"; 7.5 percent "strongly disagree"; and 6.4 percent either have no opinion, do not know, or refuse to answer.

Threat of Military Invasion

One of the most surveyed issues by pollsters focused on Taiwan is the threat perception of its people. [Outside observers](#) have long been confounded by the general lack of a sense of urgency within Taiwan regarding the military threat it faces. On this issue, the [public opinion poll conducted by TPOF](#) in April found that 38.6 percent of the respondents either thought it was "somewhat likely" or "very likely" that China could suddenly start a war with Taiwan, whereas 50.6 percent thought that it was either "somewhat unlikely" or "not likely at all." While the overall balance between the two perspectives has not changed, these results represent a sizeable increase of 12 points from 26.6 percent, and a decrease of 12.3 points from 62.9 percent, respectively, from February (before Russia invaded Ukraine). The TPOF poll is consistent with another poll conducted by [My Formosa Weekly](#) (美麗島電子報)—a pan-Green-leaning organization—which found that 37.4 percent of the respondents thought that China's use of military force against Taiwan was "likely" under the current cross-strait situation, while 55 percent thought that it was "unlikely."



Graphic: The results of TPOF's April 26 public opinion poll on the threat of military invasion. (Graphic Source: [Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation](#))

Due to the hyper-partisan nature of Taiwanese politics, there can be significant differences in how the public responds to public policy polls conducted by pan-Green- or pan-Blue-leaning organizations. It is therefore noteworthy to highlight how the results of these two polls—conducted by green-leaning organizations—are seemingly consistent with the findings of a major blue-leaning media outlet. According to the [TVBS Polling Center](#) survey released in late March, 57 percent of the public stated that they were not worried about whether China would take advantage of this opportunity to attack Taiwan, with 37 percent saying that they were worried and the other 6 percent expressing no opinion.

These results show that while the Ukraine War has heightened the public's concern about the possibility of a military invasion of Taiwan, the majority of the people of Taiwan still think that a Chinese invasion of the island is unlikely.

Independence versus Unification

The debate over the people's preference for independence or unification has long been one of the core issues of division within Taiwan. According to the [TVBS poll](#) from March, 59 percent prefer to maintain the status quo, whereas 23 percent prefer independence, only 5 percent prefer unification, and 13 percent have no opinion. By contrast, the survey conducted by TPOF found that 52.8 percent preferred Taiwan independence (with 26 percent indicating that they “agree” with Taiwan independence but will not “insist” on it, and 26.8 percent indicating they “insist” on Taiwan independence), only 22.4 percent preferred maintaining the status quo, and 11 percent supported cross-Strait unification. [1] While nuanced, long-term academic polling surveys indicate that the overwhelming majority still prefer to maintain *some form* of the “status quo,” there are indeed variations within people's preferences for the status quo that signal a tilt towards favoring independence. [2]

Although it is difficult to determine with certainty the degree to which the war in Ukraine has impacted public perceptions on this issue, it is worth noting that the TPOF poll found a noticeable increase in those who favor asserting independence from the December 2021 data to the April 2022 data. Specifically, the survey

found that the percentage of respondents “insisting” on Taiwan independence increased by 7.5 points (from 19.3 percent to 26.8 percent); while the percentage of respondents who agree but do not insist on Taiwan independence decreased by 7.4 points (from 33.4 percent to 26 percent). Meanwhile, the percentage of respondents who wish to maintain the status quo also increased by 5.5 points, from 16.9 percent to 22.4 percent. Finally, the percentage of people who agree with unification but will not insist on it and those insisting unification decreased to 9 percent (from 13.5 percent) and 2 percent (from 2.5 percent).



Graphic: The results of TPOF's April 26 public opinion poll on independence versus unification. (Graphic Source: [Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation](#))

Arms Sales

Another relevant matter for Taiwan's defense that is less well-understood outside of the island is the people's perceptions toward US arms sales and the country's defense budget, both of which are critical to the security relationship between the United States and Taiwan. It should be noted upfront that since polling data on this question has not been released since the start of the war in Ukraine, there is no basis to objectively assess the impact of the war on people's attitudes on this issue. The point of this section is to address existing public opinion data on the matter to provide an available reference point when further data becomes available.

To be sure, US government and defense analysts have long implored Taiwan to [spend more on its defense](#). On

the specific question of whether Taiwan should spend more and purchase more arms, a 2020 poll conducted by [ETtoday](#) (*ETtoday* 新聞雲) found that 42.1 percent of respondents supported the government expending large sums to purchase weapons from the United States, whereas 51.5 percent do not support doing so. In another poll released in September 2020 by [Global View Magazine](#) (遠見雜誌), 39.1 percent of respondents supported purchasing more defense weapons to prepare for war (representing an increase of 11 percent from September 2019). However, the poll also indicated that 51.6 percent believed that good relations should be maintained across the Taiwan Strait, and that resources should be saved for investments elsewhere (representing a decrease of 11.1 percent from the previous year). [Other polls](#) have revealed differing attitudes toward arms sales on a partisan basis.

These polls clearly reflect the conflicted opinions within Taiwan toward arms sales from the United States. These attitudes may be attributed in part to [public concerns](#) or “myths” about the fairness of US arms sales, or beliefs that Washington is not selling the type of arms that Taipei wants or needs.

Conclusion

As the survey data collected in this article show, the Ukraine War has had a noticeable impact on Taiwanese perceptions related to defense matters. The significant and ostensibly bipartisan resolve to defend Taiwan—as reflected in the polling data from both pan-Blue- and pan-Green-leaning organizations—as well as changing attitudes toward longer and tougher military service and reserve training, are indicators of this trend.

Although the Ukraine War has not yet had a clear impact on public preferences toward independence versus unification, the proximate and subtle variations in terms of people’s particular preferences suggest that there is a strong correlation between the war in Ukraine and these shifts in Taiwanese perceptions. While the data on the impact of the Ukraine war on people’s views toward arms sales is currently unavailable, a cursory review of the past data suggests the need for greater clarity and more consistency in US messaging about its policies and objectives for its security assistance policy toward Taiwan.

It is clear from these polling data that the general pop-

ulation in Taiwan does not think that a war is imminent as a result of the Ukraine War, but there does seem to be a greater sense of urgency within Taiwan about the need to prepare its defense. As Taiwan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs [Joseph Wu](#) (吳釗燮) recently stated: “It is not just the Taiwanese government that has learned the lesson, it is also the Taiwanese people. The people here in Taiwan are more determined to defend ourselves than ever before.” Whether this will lead to concrete policy changes remain to be seen.

The main point: The perceptions of the Taiwanese public on many defense issues are shifting as a result of the Ukraine War. This in turn could influence critical ongoing defense policy debates within the country.

[1] The difference in the two results could be explained in part by how the polls present the preferences differently. By not permitting variations of the status quo such as status quo independence later or unification later and also offering the option to agree with a position but not insist on a preference, TPOF has adopted a more limited definition of the status quo and also broader interpretation of independence, respectively.

[2] It should be noted that even among those preferring to maintain the status quo, the move towards favoring independence in this poll has increased considerably since 2018, increasing from 15.1 to 25.1 (by 10 points). (<https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7801&id=6963>)

The Legacy of 228: Historical Memory, Taiwanese Identity, and Cross-Strait Relations

By: David Calhoun

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February 28 is remembered in Taiwan for the 228 Massacre in 1947 (also known as the 228 Incident, 二二八事件), when thousands of civilians were killed by the Chinese Nationalist government following widespread protests that erupted on the island. In 2022, the somber [marches](#) in Taipei, former President Ma Ying-jeou’s (馬英九) [appearance](#) at 228 Peace Memorial Park (二二八和平紀念公園), and President Tsai Ing-wen’s (蔡

英文) [speech](#) in Keelung on the incident's 75th anniversary all highlight the event's continued relevance in contemporary Taiwanese politics and for the nation's future. Since the end of martial law in 1987, once-censored historical memories have manifested themselves in the political consciousness of the people, solidifying 228 as a central part of the nation's historical memory and transforming its identity. This phenomenon is not just important for understanding Taiwan's internal politics but also has significant implications for the evolution of cross-Strait relations.



Image left: Demonstrators march in Tainan on the 40th anniversary of 228 (1987, the last year of martial law). Image right: Demonstrators commemorate the lives lost during 228 in a march that started at the Tianma Tea House (天馬茶房, where the first death of 228 occurred) and ended in front of the Executive Yuan. (Image Sources: [Taipei Times/CNA](#))

Questions Regarding Taiwanese Identity

In exploring the role of Taiwan's historical memory in the steady growth of a distinct [Taiwanese identity](#)—as opposed to a Chinese identity or a blend of Taiwanese and Chinese identities—it is important to dissect the causes for this shift. Points of emphasis have included the formative influence of [Taiwan's democratization](#); the [solidification of a distinct Taiwanese culture](#); the social distinctions between [benshengren](#) (本省人, those with ancestors who lived in Taiwan before the start of Japanese rule in 1895) and [waishengren](#) (外省人, those with ancestors who moved from China to Taiwan between 1945-1950); and [distrust of the People's Republic of China's \(PRC\) political system](#).

Although the issue of identity is complex, there is a consensus among scholars that the Taiwanese identification captured by the polls is, broadly speaking, a reflection of Taiwan's national "[civic identity](#)." This civic identity [comprises](#) Taiwan's acquired appreciation for

its democratic institutions and approach to historical memory. For Taiwan, its collective memory of 228 has played this unifying role. As University of Miami Professor and GTI Advisor [June Teufel Dreyer](#) summarizes: "This traumatic event left searing memories in the consciousness of Taiwan residents, and what came to be known as the 'February 28 incident' was perhaps the first marker in the development of a Taiwanese identity in the twentieth century."

228 as an Experience of "Shared Suffering"

Part of why 228 has become such a significant part of Taiwanese national identity may be attributed to its role as a "shared suffering." French Orientalist Ernest Renan's 1882 speech, "[What is a Nation?](#)" includes a helpful description of how shared sufferings affect national identity:

"Having suffered, rejoiced, and hoped together is worth more than common taxes or frontiers that conform to strategic ideas and is independent of racial or linguistic considerations. 'Suffered together,' I said, for shared suffering unites more than does joy. In fact, periods of mourning are worth more to national memory than triumphs because they impose duties and require a common effort."

For the people of Taiwan, the "imposed duties" and "common effort" required by the shared sufferings from 228 and the subsequent "[White Terror](#)" (白色恐怖) (1947-1987) are particularly present in activists' efforts to communicate the truth about the injustices of the authoritarian era to the next generation. This "duty" is especially important for Taiwanese national identity because it communicates the wrongs done by the previous authoritarian government while emphasizing the distinguishing characteristics of the new Taiwan. For decades, this memory was maintained through [oral history](#) due to government censorship. Yet, the end of martial law offered the opening to formally communicate the historical memory of 228 in Taiwan's schools.

The Emergence of Taiwanese Historical Memory in Textbooks

Before democratization, one of the defining attributes of the authoritarian government was its efforts to "Si-

nicize” Taiwan following Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945) through the education system. This was most evident on the covers of Ministry of Education workbooks issued during the period, which encouraged students “to be an active student, to be a righteous Chinese” (做個活活潑潑的好學生/做個堂堂正正中國人). [1] In that vein, the 5,000-year legacy of Chinese culture was emphasized, with the Republic of China—Taiwan’s official name—acting as the inheritor of Chinese civilization’s long history in contrast to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The inherently Chinese attributes of Taiwan were discussed alongside the “excellence and exquisiteness of Chinese culture.” [2]

Yet, as the democratization of Taiwan began to change the political environment, popular demand for curriculum guidelines that more accurately communicated Taiwan’s historical memory led to alterations to the textbooks. Some of the key changes included 228 being mentioned for the first time in [1989](#), and the introduction of the “Getting to Know Taiwan” (認識台灣) textbook in 1997. [3] “Getting to Know Taiwan” was a significant departure from the previous textbooks. Instead of focusing on Chinese national history, it focused on telling the story of Taiwan first, then China, and then the rest of the world. Its introduction was the fulfillment of public demand for textbooks that communicated historical memory in a Taiwan-centric way. [4]

The changes did not come without dissension, as some in the pan-Blue camp saw these efforts as whitewashing the abuses from the Japanese colonial period and diminishing the special status of the Republic of China. This division became, in essence, a clash between Taiwan’s “[Chinese nationalism and Taiwanese nationalism](#).” When it came to telling the story of 228, the debate was whether it was an ethnic conflict between the Chinese authorities and the local Taiwanese, or just another example of the broader turmoil that engulfed postwar China.

Historical Memory in China and the Impact on Cross-Strait Relations

Just as Taiwan has recognized the importance of historical memory, so too has the People’s Republic of China (PRC), where a multitude of museums, landmarks, novels, and textbooks are devoted to communicating

the history of China’s “Century of Humiliation” (百年國恥). Chinese propaganda seeks to shape each generation to venerate the CCP and its role as the vanguard of the Chinese people. For decades, this propaganda has helped solidify the CCP’s grip on power, with Wang Zheng, a professor at Seton Hall University, [identifying](#) the PRC’s greater emphasis on the ‘Century of Humiliation’ narrative in 1991 as a pivotal event in reversing the liberalization trends that contributed to the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations.

The CCP’s emphasis in education as a means of controlling public attitudes helps explain why it attempted to implement “[Patriotic Education](#)” (愛國主義教育) reforms in Hong Kong during 2012 and successfully revisited the issue in 2019-2020. The [growth of a distinct Hongkonger identity](#), protests against the proposed education reforms in [2012](#), the [2014](#) Umbrella Revolution, prominent Tiananmen [vigils](#), and the 2019 anti-extradition protests all became pivotal moments in Hong Kong’s post-handover relationship with China. Along with cracking down on these forms of dissent through the landmark National Security Law (香港國家安全法), the CCP has implemented education reforms to prevent similar protest movements from materializing in the next generation. In support of the education reforms, the state-run *China Daily* [wrote](#): “The wish for Western-style liberal democracy is a malignant virus that infects places with weakened ideological immune systems [...] Without addressing this weakness, Hong Kong will face similar, perhaps even worse, problems in the future.”

Clearly, the freedom provided for by Hong Kong’s Basic Law, which allowed for its approach to historical memory, was seen as an obstacle to the CCP’s goal of a harmonious unity between Hong Kong and China that needed to be overcome, regardless of the costs to the PRC’s global image. Therefore, the CCP is displeased with Taiwan’s sovereignty over its historical memory, due to its potential to strengthen Taiwan’s opposition to unification.

What Does this Mean for Taiwan?

The PRC would still prefer peaceful unification with Taiwan, but, for that to happen, Taiwanese people’s attitudes towards China would need to soften significantly. Unlike in Hong Kong, where the CCP was able

to institute both coercive measures and education reforms to combat a burgeoning civic identity, Taiwan maintains sovereignty over its historical memory. This memory's existence stands in marked contrast to the CCP's own historical narratives.

Taiwan's historical memory of the 228 Massacre shares some parallels with the May Fourth Movement (五四運動), which became a [watershed moment](#) in China's 20th-century intellectual and political history, and a key event in the development of a modern Chinese identity. However, while democratic Taiwan continues to debate the legacy of 228, in China the CCP has sought to [co-opt the legacy of May 4th](#) to buttress its own authoritarian rule.

By contrast, the Taiwanese national identity that grew out of 228 and the subsequent martial law period emphasizes democracy and freedom as necessary protections against such abuses from happening again. Barring any unforeseen changes to the PRC's system of government, Taiwan's historical memory—and related sense of identity—will limit the effectiveness of the PRC's efforts to sway Taiwanese public opinion towards its objectives.

For Taiwan, the people's memory of 228 as a shared suffering eventually manifested itself in the form of embracing democracy as a bulwark against authoritarian abuses of power from happening again. As Cheng Chu-mei (鄭竹梅), the daughter of the late freedom of speech activist Cheng Nan-jung (鄭南榕) who self-immolated in protest of KMT authoritarian rule, [stated](#): “We remember the past, not to pass on hatred, but to look toward the future.” Indeed, Taiwan has grown its appreciation for democracy by exercising sovereignty over its historical memory. With the CCP upholding an authoritarian regime in China, unification under the current conditions directly contradicts a core aspect of Taiwan's 228-influenced national identity. So long as this contradiction endures in tandem with Taiwan's sovereignty over its historical memory, the CCP's plans for unification will continue to be frustrated.

The main point: Taiwan's historical memory has played a large role in shaping its national identity. 228's prominent place in that memory has contributed to Taiwan's deep appreciation for democracy, which is seen as a means to prevent the authoritarian era's abuses of

power from ever happening again. With Taiwan in control of its historical memory, the PRC's authoritarian system will struggle to meaningfully diminish Taiwanese contentment with the status quo, thereby complicating its pursuit of peaceful unification.

[1] Yu-Chih Li, “Negotiating Imagined Community in National Curriculum: The Taiwanese Case,” *The International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives* 46, no. 1 (2019): 84, <https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/IEJ/article/view/13358>.

[2] Ibid. 85.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

What Does Beijing Mean by Its “Initiative in Resolving the Taiwan Problem”?

By: John Dotson

John Dotson is the deputy director of the Global Taiwan Institute and associate editor of the Global Taiwan Brief.

On March 11, concurrent with the [closing of the 2022 session of the National People's Congress](#) (NPC, 全國人民代表大會), the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP, 中國共產黨) official mouthpiece *People's Daily* (人民日報) published a [nominal op-ed](#) that purported to express the views of five delegates to the NPC. Among these five individuals was Huang Zhixian (黃志賢), who serves as both the CCP party secretary and president of the “All China Taiwanese Association” (中華全國臺灣同胞聯誼會), or *Tailian*. The *Tailian*, a “[multi-ethnic Taiwan compatriots patriotic mass organization](#)” formed in Beijing in 1981, is one of the most prominent of the multiple [front groups for Taiwan affairs](#) maintained by the CCP. Huang was the [designated leader](#) of the CCP's stage-managed “Taiwan delegation” (台灣代表團) at this year's NPC, as well as a focal point for Taiwan-related propaganda during the proceedings.

The section of the [op-ed](#) that appeared under Huang's name (almost certainly ghost-written by functionaries within the CCP propaganda bureaucracy) was titled “Extensively Assemble and Promote Strong Energy for

National Unification” (廣泛彙聚促進祖國統一的強大正能量). The text predictably parroted CCP boilerplate regarding Taiwan, but it included an easily overlooked sentence that was very revealing. Following from an assertion that “the many uncertainties and instabilities [surrounding] the Taiwan situation are increasing,” the article stated that “We must recognize the inevitable historical trend that the motherland must and will be unified, and deeply understand [that] the right to take the initiative and the lead in resolving the Taiwan problem is completely in the grasp of this side, the ancestral mainland” (我們要看清祖國必須統一也必然統一的歷史大勢，深刻認識解決臺灣問題的主動權主導權始終掌握在祖國大陸這一邊).

On its own, this striking statement—which appears to deny the people of Taiwan any agency in determining their own future—could be dismissed as a casual statement made by a relatively minor functionary of the CCP’s united front bureaucracy, lacking in any authoritative status. However, statements such as this do not emerge from the CCP propaganda apparatus by accident. Furthermore, this is not the first time that this phrasing, or close variations of it, have appeared in recent CCP discourse. Amid [informed speculation](#) as to how the upcoming 20th CCP Party Congress might affect the PRC’s Taiwan policy, it is worth asking: When the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) asserts its “right to take the initiative and the lead in resolving the Taiwan problem,” what exactly does this mean—and what does it portend for cross-strait relations and the status of Taiwan?

The CCP’s Recent History of Asserting Its “Initiative” in Controlling Cross-Strait Relations

This particular thematic language regarding Beijing’s sole authority over cross-strait relations and “inevitable” unification dates back at least to 2019. In December 2019, the website of *People’s Daily* employed such language in summarizing the [comments of four “Taiwan problem experts”](#) at a conference hosted by the National Society of Taiwan Studies (NSTS, 全國臺灣研究會), a state think tank that serves as one of the most influential institutions within the CCP policy bureaucracy for Taiwan-related issues (see [here](#) and [here](#)). Per this commentary, the four “experts”—executive deputy director of the NSTS Wang Sheng (王昇), director of Xiamen University Taiwan Studies Research Institute Li



Image: Huang Zhixian, president of the Tailian, speaking during the March 2022 proceedings of the National People’s Congress in Beijing. Huang acted as the designated leader of the “Taiwan delegation” at the event, and as the nominal author of a commentary on the CCP’s “initiative” in managing cross-strait affairs. (Image source: [Tailian](#))

Peng (李鵬), Shanghai Institute of International Studies research fellow Zhou Zhihui (周志懷), and China Academy of Social Sciences Taiwan Studies Institute deputy director Zhu Weidong (朱衛東)—all agreed that “the initiative for developing cross-strait relations is completely held in the hand of the mainland” (兩岸關係發展的主導權始終牢牢掌握在大陸手中).

A similar recitation of this language, by a more authoritative figure, was observed in July 2021. Speaking at the “Fourth Cross-Strait Youth Development Forum” (第四屆海峽兩岸青年發展論壇) in Hangzhou, Wang Yang (汪洋)—the Politburo Standing Committee member with primary responsibility for the united front policy portfolio—was [cited in state press](#) as saying that, although the current situation surrounding Taiwan was “complicated and severe” (複雜嚴峻), circumstances were on Beijing’s side and “the right to take the lead and the initiative in resolving the Taiwan problem is completely in the grasp of this side, the ancestral mainland” (解決臺灣問題的主導權主動權始終掌握在祖國大陸這一邊).

Wang Yang further reiterated the “initiative” theme at a [party conference on Taiwan affairs](#) (對台工作會議) convened in Beijing on January 25 of this year. Alongside the standard assertions of resolute will to defeat “Taiwan independence provocations and interference

by foreign forces” (台獨挑釁和外部勢力干涉), Wang was cited once again as asserting that the PRC “firmly grasped the leading initiative in cross-strait relations” (牢牢把握兩岸關係主導權主動權), and that “[regarding] the complete unification of the motherland, time and circumstances are ultimately on our side” (祖國完全統一的時和勢始終在我們這一邊). [1]

From all of this, it can be seen that the Huang Zhixian op-ed released at the end of the NPC was simply providing a near-verbatim recitation of messages and phrasing attributed to Wang Yang since at least the summer of last year. Such phrasing might be dismissed as empty boilerplate, but it is indicative of an attitude that bodes ill for any prospect of meaningful negotiations between the PRC and Taiwan.

What Does Beijing Mean by Its “Initiative” in Taiwan Affairs?

Employing its own English language media outlets, the official interpretation offered by the PRC to international audiences is that all of this messaging is an expression of confidence and strategic patience. Following a November 15 phone call between CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping (習近平) and US President Joe Biden, a [state media readout](#) of Xi’s comments quoted the PRC’s supreme leader as saying that “We have patience and will strive for the prospect of peaceful reunification [sic] with utmost sincerity and efforts.” In an apparent sign of coordinated messaging, the [PRC-influenced South China Morning Post reported](#) later that same week that an unnamed government “adviser on Taiwan affairs” had indicated the view of the CCP leadership that it had “the situation under control and sees no reason to rush towards unification.” Similarly, a [state media commentary](#) published December 30 indicated that, due to the “mainland holding initiative,” “the unification of the motherland is on track” (祖國統一在路上). And, after Wang Yang met on March 9 with the “Taiwan delegation” to the NPC, the [PRC state news outlet CGTN](#) cited Wang to assert that there was “increasing uncertainty and instability in the Taiwan Straits, but the mainland has the comprehensive strength and confidence to cope with all kinds of complex situations.”

Despite such soothing reassurances, there are elements of the textual language surrounding the PRC’s

declared “initiative” that are revealing of Beijing’s attitudes, and that present serious concerns for Taiwan’s sovereignty and future security. The terms *zhudongquan* (主動權) and *zhudaoquan* (主導權) are frequently paired together in PRC discourse, but the conveyed meaning of the combination is stronger than that of the English word “initiative.” The latter term, *zhudaoquan*, carries an emphasis that is arguably closer to “controlling position” or “dominance.” This places the CCP’s language about “initiative” in a different light: rather than representing a simple statement of confidence about the direction of the CCP’s Taiwan policy, it is an assertion of the superior position of the PRC, and a clearly implied denial of Taiwan’s legitimacy or its right to engage in dialogue on anything approaching an equal footing.

Conclusions

All of this raises doubts in turn about the sincerity of the PRC’s position on matters such as the so-called “[1992 Consensus](#)” (九二共識), the term given to the tacit agreement between Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨) and CCP negotiators in the early 1990s that the two sides were both part of “one China,” but with differing interpretations as to what that means (一中各表). Senior PRC officials have consistently [invoked the “1992 Consensus”](#) as a necessary starting point for cross-strait negotiations, and the CCP propaganda system has [repeatedly attacked “Democratic Progressive Party authorities”](#) (民進黨當局) in Taiwan for their refusal to accept the framework. However, the “1992 Consensus” carries with it an implication of parity between the two sides—a position negated by the PRC’s assertion of its dominance, and of its sole right to determine the course of Taiwan’s future.

The PRC narratives surrounding its asserted “initiative” for “resolving the Taiwan problem” provide further illustration that Beijing, far from being prepared to engage in sincere dialogue, is seeking to deny Taiwan any legitimacy or agency over its own affairs. Instead, Beijing posits itself astride a position of dominance in cross-strait relations; there is an “inevitable historical trend” of unification with Taiwan; and Taiwan’s populace must accept this and bow to the PRC’s superior power and authority. Underlying the seemingly benign expressions of confidence and patience expressed by PRC officials in their assertions of “initiative” in cross-

Strait policy, there is a darker message indicative of the CCP's imperial attitude towards Taiwan.

The main point: The CCP propaganda system has adopted a consistent theme of emphasizing the PRC's "initiative" in Taiwan policy. Messages to international audiences stress that this indicates Beijing's patience and confidence in ultimate unification—but the actual language employed reveals Beijing's imperial attitude towards Taiwan, and its intent to deny Taiwan's people any agency over their own future.

[1] There may be differing interpretations regarding the translation of this sentence: the character 勢 has multiple meanings, to include "power," "configuration," "circumstances," or "momentum." An official PRC English-language media translation uses the latter meaning, translating Wang's assertion as: "The time and momentum for realizing China's complete reunification are always on our side." (See: "Wang Yang Stresses Maintaining Initiative, Ability to Steer Cross-Straits Relations," *Xinhua News Service*, January 26, 2022, http://en.cppcc.gov.cn/2022-01/26/c_702941.htm.)

Facing Beijing's Coercion, Sweden Strengthens Ties with Taiwan

By: Huynh Tam-Sang

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Amidst growing Chinese pressure, a bipartisan group of Swedish parliamentarians has called on the government to [support](#) Taiwan the same way they have supported Ukraine since February. Boriana Åberg, head of the Swedish-Taiwanese Parliamentarian Association, [said](#) that Taiwan's outstanding performance with regard to freedom, democracy, and human rights has inspired the world. She also [underlined](#) that democracies must unite to support Taiwan's values of freedom and democracy. The recent Swedish parliamentary delegation to Taiwan has helped to underline Stockholm's determination to strengthen ties with Taipei, enhance Taiwan's status, and put Taiwan in the spotlight in both

Europe and the Indo-Pacific region.

With Swedish lawmakers' [active engagement](#) in filing a motion towards changing the name of Sweden's representative office in Taiwan to "House of Sweden," the Swedish parliament [approved](#) the proposal in late April, indicating the will of Sweden to elevate the relationship with Taiwan to a higher level. The potential name change could help expand Stockholm's ties with Taipei beyond economic linkages. According to Sweden Democrats Member of Parliament Markus Wiechel, the name change could denote that Taiwan should be seen as a [nation](#), rather than a province of China.

At their cores, Sweden and Taiwan share democratic values and the desire to uphold fundamental principles of democracy and human rights. Sweden has long been rated as a "full democracy" and has regularly been featured among the top five democracies in the world. As for Taiwan, the archipelago has been ranked as the top "full democracy" in Asia and the eighth globally, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's [2021 Democracy Index](#).



Image: Taiwan Deputy Foreign Minister Harry Tseng (曾厚仁) greets Swedish delegation members on April 10. (Source: [CNA](#))

The governments in both Stockholm and Taipei have framed democracy as the core and leading principle for maintaining social cohesion and conducting foreign policy. The Swedish government has [described](#) democracy as "the best foundation for a sustainable society," and has [committed](#) to provide "extensive support to democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide," while working to [promote democracy](#), espe-

cially through its “development aid policy.” Similarly, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) has [underlined](#) that Taiwan cherishes its “own hard-earned freedom and democracy” and “will not bow to pressure.”

Both nations have endured authoritarian intimidation throughout their histories. This has taken the form of [diplomatic pressure](#), [security threats](#), [disinformation campaigns](#), and [cognitive warfare](#). Given these shared challenges, Sweden and Taiwan possess a solid rationale for strengthening their bilateral relationship, especially when democracies worldwide are facing formidable challenges from non-democratic regimes.

Declining Sweden-China Relations

In recent years, Sweden has increasingly [voiced](#) concerns over the deterioration of democracy and human rights in China. To make the situation worse, China’s image in Sweden has declined precipitously, with nearly 60 percent of Swedes indicating that their general view of China worsened over the previous three years, according to a 2020 [survey](#) conducted by the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (SIIA-UI).

Sweden and China have locked horns over human rights since 2015, with the [detention](#) of Swedish bookseller Gui Minhai (桂敏海). The diplomatic deterioration escalated in a diplomatic spat in 2018 when [Chinese tourists](#) were thrown out of a hotel by Swedish police, a move that stirred up a tit-for-tat retaliation between Chinese and Swedish netizens. According to a [report](#) by SIIA-UI in April 2019, since the start of 2018 the Chinese government and its embassy in Stockholm have launched a number of intense campaigns against “Swedish media outlets, journalists, scholars, human rights activists, political parties and authorities” to coerce Swedish authorities and public opinion, and to “[shape] Swedish public discourse and policy in China’s favor.” With China’s intimidation, rather than attraction, towards Sweden, Beijing’s soft power in Stockholm has been [dwindling](#).

China’s diplomatic coercion has contributed significantly to the growing alienation between Stockholm and Beijing. Last year, the Chinese embassy in Sweden exhibited aggressive behavior by [threatening](#) a Swedish journalist for his coverage of Xinjiang; [engaged](#) in “wolf-warrior diplomacy” with Swedish politicians and think-tanks; and even vowed to [retaliate](#) against Swed-

ish telecom company Ericsson in an attempt to reverse Sweden’s ban on Huawei and ZTE in 5G contracts—a decision designed to [safeguard](#) Sweden’s national security. China’s former ambassador to Sweden, Gui Congyou (桂從友), also [criticized](#) Sweden over its support for Taiwan, going so far as to lecture Swedish journalists on how to “[correctly](#)” report on China. Swedish journalists “must renounce their prejudices and their preconceived agenda, and they must change their erroneous approach to reporting on China,” [stated](#) Gui.

Growing Sweden-Taiwan Ties

Chinese bullying has put Sweden and Taiwan on the same page, given their shared determination and refusal to succumb to Beijing’s pressure. Members of the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) have increasingly spoken in support of Taiwan’s democracy and human rights, and have emphasized that Taiwan has been a significant partner of Sweden in terms of trade and democracy. “Taiwan is an important defender of democracy in Asia,” Jörgen Warborn, a Swedish member of the European Parliament from the Moderate Party, [highlighted](#) in October 2021. Last year, Åberg [argued](#) that democracies worldwide should “stand with Taiwan” and support Taiwan’s inclusion in the World Health Organization.

During a foreign policy speech in February of this year, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde [highlighted](#) that “China’s international significance also affects Sweden and Swedish interests, not least in trade.” Swedish parliamentarians also [criticized](#) China’s incursions into Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), and called on Sweden’s government to enhance bilateral ties and exchanges with Taiwan while [supporting](#) Taiwan’s participation in international affairs. Sweden’s growing support for Taiwan has demonstrated that the Scandinavian country has embraced a values-based approach when coming to foreign policy, even as pressure from China has continued to mount.

Economic cooperation has been the core of Sweden-Taiwan ties, with both sides seeking to enhance bilateral trade. In 2021, Taiwan’s imports from Sweden [reached](#) USD \$824.7 million, representing an increase of 20.66 percent over the previous year, while Taiwan’s exports to Sweden amounted to USD \$769.8 million,

increasing 36.14 percent. According to statistics from the Customs Administration, an agency of Taiwan's Ministry of Finance, Sweden is Taiwan's [largest](#) trading partner in Northern Europe. Given Sweden's belief in "open trade" as the basis for the recovery of the global economy, Taiwan's growing [contributions](#) to the global supply chain make it a natural partner.

Sweden's economy is also gravitating towards Taiwan, as Swedish companies have been increasingly eager to enter the Taiwanese market. Sweden's investment activities in Taiwan have focused primarily on wholesale and retail, information and communication, machinery and equipment manufacturing, and manufacturing of electronic components. From January to September 2021, Sweden's cumulative investment in Taiwan [reached](#) USD \$575 million. Major Swedish investors in Taiwan include the home furnishing company IKEA, medical solution provider SHL, and AstraZeneca.

According to [Fredrik Boye](#), chief executive officer at Swedish Chamber of Commerce Taipei, "Swedish companies' employees are around 14,000 people in Taiwan, and the number is growing," adding that many companies in Sweden are becoming increasingly aware of Taiwan's open economy and investment potential. Additionally, Taiwan's economic environment has proven beneficial to foreign investors, with its "advanced R&D capability and government incentives" as [highlighted](#) in the US Department of State's [2021 Investment Climate Statements](#).

Economic ties between Sweden and Taiwan are likely to continue to grow, as more and more Swedish companies are choosing Taiwan as an ideal location to open their businesses. As Boye argued, Taiwan is "a fantastic place if you want to connect with the world," pointing to the potential of Taiwan as a locus for trade and investment in the Indo-Pacific. He further stated that the Taiwanese economy is dynamic and conducive to Swedish companies seeking a "positive" and "safe" destination for sustainable investment.

To cement economic ties, Stockholm and Taipei have [shared](#) their business platforms, [discussed](#) the possibility of forging bilateral cooperation on semiconductor supply chains, and [conducted](#) business-to-business (B2B) trade meetings. Both sides also [vowed](#) to seek cooperation on transparency of tax information, rec-

ognition of laboratory operating data, and promotion of green technology and renewable energy. While Sweden has long been a [leader](#) in promoting [renewable energy](#), President Tsai has also [pledged](#) to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Hence, Sweden and Taiwan could strengthen cooperation in energy transition and sustainable economic development in the post-pandemic future.

Yet, some underlying hurdles are there to stay. For instance, business processes in Taiwan are more rigid than in many western countries, thereby increasing approval times and complicating transactions. Overly complex or formal business procedures and paperwork could cause unpleasant experiences for foreign companies, including Swedish ones. Boye underlined that the economic environment of Taiwan has been "super-impressive," but argued that the Tsai Administration should work harder to encourage more investment from Swedish firms, potentially by "making legislation more transparent." In light of these issues, the two sides should work to reach harmonized standards and [build](#) a more business-friendly environment that could benefit both Swedish companies and Taiwan's local businesses.

Conclusions

In general, Sweden and Taiwan have ample space for collaboration. For instance, both sides could further collaborate to strengthen global health security, which has become among the top priorities of both the Swedish government and the Tsai government. Last year, Taiwan [shared](#) with Sweden a "big medical data platform," as well as its experience with telemedicine and health insurance. As smart healthcare has become increasingly crucial, Taiwan could benefit Sweden by sharing its experience of integrating big data with advanced medical treatments.

Taiwan and Sweden have been fully committed to "universal values of freedom and democracy" and have fostered relations in a wide range of fields, including climate change, gender equality, and countering disinformation. In doing so, the two countries could be seen as "like-minded partners," as President Tsai [said](#) during a videoconference in this month.

In advancing ties with Taipei, Stockholm has prioritized common interests, such as democratic values and com-

mitment to the rule of law. Under ongoing pressure from China, Sweden and Taiwan are expanding their diplomatic and economic ties, which will likely continue to flourish and form the core of an increasingly productive friendship. Sweden's efforts to strengthen ties with Taiwan could create a domino effect in Europe, providing a model for European nations seeking to lessen their economic reliance on China and to partner more closely with Taiwan.

The main point: Against a backdrop of Chinese intimidation and pressure, Sweden and Taiwan have greatly expanded their diplomatic and economic partnership. While significant hurdles remain, the relationship could continue to expand in the future.

Assessing Taiwan's Strategic Energy Stockpiles

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Energy policy is and will continue to be a contentious issue in [Taiwan's competitive politics](#). The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨), led by President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), has sought to implement a transformative energy plan to decrease the island's carbon emissions and phase out all nuclear power by 2025. The opposition Kuomintang (KMT, 中國國民黨) staunchly supports nuclear power and has been critical of Tsai's energy proposals. These debates are in no way a recent phenomenon. [1] Regardless of the domestic politics surrounding the future of Taiwan's energy and environmental outlook, it is of the utmost importance that the island maintains sufficient strategic oil and gas stockpiles that are insulated from political turns of fortune.

Such energy stockpiles are critical due to the increased threat of a blockade by the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the event of a cross-strait crisis. As the [Taiwan Ministry of National Defense's November 2021](#)

[report](#) outlined, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is capable of stopping the oil and gas imports that Taiwan relies on for both standard economic activity and national defense. This article will review Taiwan's existing framework for its strategic stockpiles, with a specific focus on oil—as well as provide a comparison with other similarly situated countries—in order to inform a more robust strategy for the island.

Taiwan's Strategic Stockpiles

Taiwan's strategic petroleum stockpile is regulated by the [Petroleum Administration Act](#) (石油管理法). Specifically, Article 24 of the Act states, "Oil refinery operators and importers are required to maintain an oil security stockpile of no less than sixty days of supply. The supply amount will be based on the average domestic sales and private consumption of the past twelve months"—with "oil" here referring to both crude oil and petroleum products, including gasoline, diesel oil, kerosene, naphtha, liquefied petroleum gas, jet fuel, and fuel oil. On top of the 60 days of supply maintained by industry, the law also requires the government to maintain an oil security stockpile of no less than 30 days.

To finance the storage of these volumes, the government makes use of the Petroleum Fund, paying more than NTD \$2 billion (USD \$72 million) annually to CPC Corporation (台灣中油股份有限公司) and Formosa Plastics Corporation (台灣塑膠公司) for the service. Although public information regarding the government's oversight of the storage process is scarce, past reporting has suggested that CPC and Formosa Plastics, rather than a government agency, have been responsible for the [relevant assessments and reviews](#). Only the finalized reports and assessments are transferred to the relevant supervisory authority at the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA).

Regarding response to a crisis, Article 21 of the petroleum law states, "In the event of an oil shortage or a great fluctuation in oil prices that might impact the steady supply of oil or national security, the central competent authority may institute measures on oil control, such as quotas, price controls, and security stockpile adjustments and utilization." The "central competent authority" refers to the MOEA at the national level, and municipal governments on more local

levels.

Additionally, in May 2020, President Tsai announced a plan to promote “[Six Core Strategic Industries](#)” on the island. Launched in response to the supply chain disruptions and vulnerabilities caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the initiative prompts Taiwan to strengthen [critical sectors](#), including the national defense and strategic stockpile industries. Specifically, crude oil was identified by the MOEA in 2021 as among the strategic stockpile industries around which “the government is making plans to ensure the country is well prepared for any sudden shortages caused by unexpected events,” [according to Wu Ming-huei](#) (吳明蕙), director of the MOEA’s Department of Economic Development. Moreover, under Tsai’s initiative, the National Development Council has been collating action plans to increase the capacity of the island’s liquified natural gas (LNG) terminals, which at the moment have the ability to store less than two weeks’ worth of reserve supply. Natural gas remains an [important source](#) of the island’s electricity generation.

In the Event of Conflict

The real threat of a PRC blockade of the island means Taiwan must, at a minimum, hold reserves capable of meeting wartime fuel requirements. In an April 2022 interview with the [South China Morning Post](#), Alexander Huang Chieh-cheng (黃介正), an associate professor of strategic studies at Tamkang University and a leading defense scholar on the island, expressed his skepticism regarding Taiwan’s ability to withstand such a scenario. According to Huang, the PLA would only need to restrict traffic off of Kaohsiung in southern Taiwan and Keelung in the north in order to significantly disrupt commercial shipping. He also argued that the Taiwan government must make contingency plans based on the assumption that “no one will help Taiwan.”

An [in-depth 2013 study](#) carried out by Rosemary Kelanic, now of the University of Notre Dame, analyzed the respective oil requirements for Taiwan and the PRC in the event of a cross-Strait air war. While the air war scenario is not certain to transpire in the event of a PRC blockade, the scenario remains relevant because the PRC would likely have to establish air superiority over the island before taking any direct military ac-

tion. The Kelanic study had two important takeaways that remain extremely relevant. First, the report found that military demand for petroleum products during wartime is much larger than commonly anticipated. This means that average domestic consumption—upheld as the reserve standard in the Petroleum Administration Act—may be far exceeded by wartime fuel requirements. Second, the report underscored the importance of anticipatory measures, specifically in terms of policies related to stockpiling and air defense. Clearly, potential fuel requirements from military demand would severely strain the government’s present reserve supplies.

Across the Taiwan Strait, the PRC has recently completed the institutionalization of its own strategic reserve program, making it better prepared for a potential cross-Strait crisis. According to a [study published](#) by the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies in 2021, the PRC’s drive to establish a strategic petroleum reserve has reached maturity. The report stated that “all stocks combined, China has now probably reached 90 days of forward cover.” In September 2020, China announced the first public release of its state crude oil reserve, a move that the Oxford report called “a test of mechanisms.” Furthermore, even as the United States and a few of its allies have banned imports of Russian oil due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, [China has maintained its energy trade with Russia](#). It is not difficult to imagine a conflict scenario involving Taiwan wherein the PRC could work with Russia to evade countermeasures from a US-led coalition to cut off China from oil imports.

Global Partnerships as a Way to Mitigate Risks

Two possibilities are immediately evident for enhancing Taiwan’s resilience in global energy supply chains. One possibility is for Taiwan to expand its participation with the International Energy Agency (IEA). A second and non-mutually exclusive possibility is for Taiwan to implement a version of the international joint stockpiling regimes found in South Korea and Japan. This would require Taiwan to improve its ties with key oil-producing countries, particularly in the Middle East, through diplomatic and/or economic measures. Both of these possibilities could be effective in addressing Taiwan’s current energy vulnerabilities. Inevitably, the effectiveness of these efforts will hinge upon Beijing’s

capacity to obstruct and deter them.

The IEA is an intergovernmental organization created in 1974 to help coordinate collective responses to major oil supply disruptions. It comprises [31 countries](#), all of which attain status through their membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Although Taiwan (officially the Republic of China) is not an OECD member, it is an observer on some OECD committees, including the steel, competition, and fisheries committees. Enhancing Taiwan's relationship with the IEA and adhering to IEA guidelines would add another level of accountability to Taiwan's energy security regime. Recently, [the IEA has played a visible role](#) in blunting the shock caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent exclusion of Russian energy resources from certain foreign markets, [aligning the efforts of its member states](#) to release barrels from their respective reserves. Compared with the controversy surrounding Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization (WHO) amidst the coronavirus pandemic, the IEA dynamics differ: although the PRC is a member of the WHO, it is only an affiliate of the IEA, albeit one with high stature. In 2017, [the IEA and the PRC's National Energy Administration expanded collaboration](#) in areas including oil emergency management and preparedness. Nevertheless, the IEA is among the few multilateral arenas in which PRC influence is less pronounced.

Besides seeking greater coordination with the IEA, Taiwan authorities should also closely study the stockpiling regimes in South Korea and Japan, two countries with comparable geopolitical situations. Not only do these countries have clear mechanisms in place for emergency management, but they also consistently maintain high levels of reserves way above the IEA's 90-day standard. South Korea and Japan are able to achieve this partly because of their international joint stockpiling programs, which Taiwan should also closely examine.

In 2006, South Korea became [the first Northeast Asian country to](#) complete a joint stockpiling agreement with an oil-producing country, Kuwait. The program gives Korea priority rights to purchase barrels of oil held within the country in the case of an emergency, an ingenious scheme that serves dual commercial and security purposes. Under Japan's "[New Internation-](#)

[al Resources Strategy](#)" launched in March 2020 by its Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), Japan has enhanced its diplomatic efforts toward building closer relationships with key oil-producing countries such as Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. While self-reliance is the appropriate watchword, forging agreements with key oil-producing nations would create additional resilience that would help safeguard Taiwan's strategic stockpiles, and at the same time protect Taiwan's self-determination.

The main point: To prepare for the possibility of a PRC blockade, Taiwan must set aside its polarized energy and environmental debates and build consensus around more robust strategic oil and gas stockpiles. Taiwan should learn from the examples of comparable countries and enhance both the codification and the visibility of its stockpile regime.

[1] As Global Taiwan Institute Executive Director Russell Hsiao wrote in 2018, "Taiwan's energy challenges are intertwined with the island's democratic politics and its active environmental movement." See: Russell Hsiao, "The Politics of Taiwan's Energy Challenge," *Global Taiwan Brief* 3, issue 20 (2018), <https://globaltaiwan.org/2018/10/vol-3-issue-20/#RussellHsiao10172018>.