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By: John Dotson

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

Following immediately on the heels of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's [arrival in Taiwan](#) on August 2 for a high-profile visit with senior Taiwan officials, the military forces of the People's Republic of China (PRC) conducted a series of provocative military exercises and operations intended to signal Beijing's displeasure, as well as deter both US and Taiwan officials from taking further steps to deepen US-Taiwan ties. Although the military activities tapered off rather than ceasing abruptly—and in some fundamental respects, these increased military activities are still ongoing—the most intensive phase of activity lasted for roughly one week, from August 3-10. Many of these activities by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) were unprecedented in nature, and significantly raised tensions in both the Taiwan Strait and the broader Indo-Pacific region.

The continuing nature of some of these activities may portend a “new normal” of substantially increased PLA operations closer to Taiwan, as a key component of Beijing's psychological warfare and coercive diplomacy directed at both government officials and public opinion on the island. Accordingly, the specific nature of the PLA's activities in the vicinity of Taiwan in early August bear closer examination. This article, the first of a two-part series, will review the closure areas declared about Taiwan from August 4-7, as well as the dramatic series of missile launches conducted around and over Taiwan on August 4. The second part, to be published in the following issue of the *Global Taiwan Brief*, will examine the aviation, naval, and ground force exercise activity conducted by the PLA during the same period.

### ***The PLA Declaration of Military Exercises on August 2***

Immediately after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's [arrival in Taiwan](#) on August 2, the PLA Eastern Theater Command (東部戰區) issued a [statement](#) that it would conduct a series of military operations around Taiwan. According to the statement:

*The Global Taiwan Brief is a bi-weekly publication released every other Wednesday and provides insight into the latest news on Taiwan.*

**Editor-in-Chief**  
Russell Hsiao  
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Global Taiwan Institute  
1836 Jefferson Place NW,  
Washington DC 20036  
[contact@globaltaiwan.org](mailto:contact@globaltaiwan.org)

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“[S]tarting on the evening of Aug. 2<sup>nd</sup>, the People’s Liberation Army Eastern Theater will conduct a series of joint military operations on the periphery of Taiwan island—naval and air exercises will be conducted in the sea areas to the north, southwest, and southeast of Taiwan island, [and] long-range firepower launches will be conducted in the Taiwan Strait, [and] guided firepower test launches will be conducted in the sea areas to the east of Taiwan island. These exercises are adopted as stern deterrence directed against America’s recent major negative escalations on the Taiwan problem, [and] are a serious warning directed at ‘Taiwan independence’ forces striving on the ‘independence’ path.”

Further PRC statements [announced six closure areas](#) around Taiwan for the purpose of military exercises and live-fire drills, to be in effect from noon Beijing time (Greenwich Mean Time +8) on August 4 until noon on August 7. The graphic below, produced by Taiwan’s official state news agency, shows the six closure areas (in pink) and their closest distance, in kilometers, to Taiwan’s coastline; as well as the three closure areas (in gray) declared by the PRC during the 1995-1996 Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.



Image: The six closure areas (in pink) declared by the PRC for live-fire exercises around Taiwan, August 4-7. (Image source: [Taiwan Central News Agency](#))

The closure areas were not identified as such in official PRC notices, but for purposes of this article the six areas—beginning with the designated area in the Taiwan Strait northwest of Taiwan, and proceeding clockwise—shall be referred to as follows:

- Box #1 (Taiwan Strait centerline)
- Box #2 (north of Taipei / Keelung)
- Box #3 (northeast of Taiwan)
- Box #4 (waters east of Taiwan)
- Box #5 (south of Lanyu Island / southern tip of Taiwan)
- Box #6 (south of Kaohsiung).

#### Ballistic Missile Launches on August 4

The announcement of the closure areas was followed by a [series of ballistic missile launches](#) conducted on the afternoon of August 4. There remains a discrepancy regarding the number of missiles fired: [Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense \(MND\) has indicated 11 missiles](#) (with no information regarding flight paths), while [Japan’s Ministry of Defense \(MoD\) identified nine missiles](#) fired during a 78-minute period centered on the 3 o’clock hour of mid-afternoon. Neither the PRC, Japanese, or Taiwan governments have officially identified the specific type (or types) of missiles fired. However, semi-official analysis by an MND-affiliated think tank (see [here](#) and [here](#)), as well as some [press reporting](#), has identified the launches—or at least most of them—as *Dongfeng-15B* (東風-15B飛彈) (DF-15B) missiles. The *Dongfeng-15* is a family of [short-range, road mobile ballistic missiles](#) assessed to be capable of carrying a 500-750 kilogram payload to a maximum range of 600-900 kilometers. The original DF-15A variant, which entered service in the early 1990s, employs an inertial guidance system and was employed in launches during the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1995-1996. The upgraded DF-15B, first noted publicly in 2009, possesses features for improved accuracy, including an active radar seeker and laser range finder. [2]

Per the [Japanese MoD analysis](#), the sequence of launches proceeded as follows:

1. 14:56: A launch from a location in Fujian Province, which flew approx. 350 km to impact in Box #3.
2. 14:56: A launch from an inland location (Jiangxi Province?), which flew approx. 700 km to impact in the eastern side of Box #6.
3. 15:14: A launch from an inland location (Jiangxi Province?), which flew approx. 550 km to impact in the western side of Box #6.
4. 15:57: A launch from a location in Zhejiang Province, which flew approx. 350 km to impact in Box #2.

5. 15:57: A launch from a location in Zhejiang Province, which flew approx. 650 km to impact in Box #4.
6. 16:05: A launch from a location in Fujian Province, which flew approx. 500 km (over Taiwan) to impact in Box #4.
7. 16:05: A launch from a location in Fujian Province, which flew approx. 550 km (over Taiwan) to impact in Box #4.
8. 16:08: A launch from a location in Fujian Province, which flew approx. 500 km (over Taiwan) to impact in Box #4.
9. 16:08: A launch from a location in Fujian Province, which flew approx. 550 km (over Taiwan) to impact in Box #4. [3]

In addition to the missile launches, PHL-16 truck-mounted multiple rocket launchers (MRLs) were [reportedly fired](#) from Pingtan Island (平潭島), off the coast of Fujian Province, into Box #1 in the Taiwan Strait.



(Image source: [Taiwan Central News Agency](#))

If this data about the launch sequences is accurate, then the firings commenced near simultaneously northeast-southwest; then an 18-minute pause, then southwest again; then a 33-minute delay before launches north and east; and then another brief pause of eight minutes, followed by the concluding barrage into the waters east of Taiwan. It is unknown whether this sequence was intended to have a political significance, or whether it was prompted by more prosaic operational planning. It is possible that the bracketing pattern, and attendant pauses, may have been related to the need of PLA Rocket Force (PLARF) technicians and command elements to analyze their own te-

lemetry data and make any required adjustments before subsequent launches. However, this is speculative, and if there is any significance to the sequence of initial launches, this has not been officially explained.

It is certainly not accidental, however, that the two most provocative aspects of the launch series came in the grand finale final salvo: first, that the five missiles reportedly landed in Box #4 south of Yonaguni Island, within Japan's economic exclusion zone; and second, that four of these missiles flew over Taiwan itself (albeit at very high, [possibly exoatmospheric](#), altitude). The former factor may have been intended as a geopolitical brush-back pitch for Japan, while the latter was almost certainly intended as a literal shot across the bow intended to intimidate Taiwan's government and population.

The PLA Eastern Theater Media Center (東部戰區融媒體中心) released a [propaganda video](#) the same day of the launches, which boasted that "the guided missiles all precisely hit their targets, demonstrating accurate attacks and regional denial capability" (導彈全部精準命中目標檢驗了精確打擊和區域拒止能力). Of note, the final section of the video consists of animation that depicts a total of 16 missiles landing in Boxes #3, #4, and #5, with the heaviest concentration in Box #4 (see accompanying graphic). It is unknown whether or not this animation was ever intended to be an accurate depiction of the actual numbers and target areas of the launches. One possible explanation for the discrepancy could be that the final sequence of launches on August 4 was changed, whether for operational or other reasons, from the original plan. However, this is also speculative.



*Images: Still images from a PLA propaganda video about the August 4 launches, almost certainly prepared prior to the actual launches. The number of launches and target areas depicted differed from assessments of the actual launches provided by the Taiwan and Japanese governments. (Image source: [PLA Eastern Theater Media Center](#))*

## Conclusions

The August 4 missile launches were arguably the single most

provocative aspect of the early August PLA military exercises around Taiwan. In the [Third Taiwan Strait Crisis](#) of 1995-1996, the PLA launched a total of 10 missiles (six in July 1995, and four more in March 1996), with missiles fired both to the north of Taiwan (offshore from Keelung) and southwest of Taiwan (offshore from Kaohsiung). By contrast, the shorter-but-more-intense, and much more provocative, series of launches on August 4 dropped either nine or 11 confirmed missiles in closure areas that surrounded the island. At least four missiles from the final salvo also took the unprecedented step of flying over northern Taiwan itself, albeit at very high altitude. This was almost certainly a psychological warfare measure intended to intimidate Taiwan's population—as well as to demonstrate the PLA's capabilities to conduct a joint strike and blockade campaign to cut Taiwan off from the outside world. The other components of the PLA's early August exercises—to include a review of air, naval, and ground activity—will be addressed in the second article in this series.

**The main point:** In the wake of Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, the PLA undertook an unprecedented campaign of military drills and missile launches in early August, which were intended to intimidate Taiwan's population and demonstrate the PLA's ability to conduct a blockade campaign against the island. The single most dramatic component of this effort was a series of missile launches on August 4, which landed in sea areas north, south, and east of Taiwan, as well as at least 4 missiles that flew over Taiwan itself.

[1] The coordinates of the closure areas were:

- 25°15'26"N, 120°29'20"E; 24°50'30"N, 120°05'45"E; 25°04'32"N, 119°51'22"E; 25°28'12"N, 120°14'30"E
- 26°07'00"N, 121°57'00"E; 25°30'00"N, 121°57'00"E; 25°30'00"N, 121°28'00"E; 26°07'00"N, 121°28'00"E
- 25°34'00"N, 122°50'00"E; 25°03'00"N, 122°50'00"E; 25°03'00"N, 122°11'00"E; 25°34'00"N, 122°11'00"E
- 22°56'00"N, 122°40'00"E; 23°38'00"N, 122°51'00"E; 23°38'00"N, 123°23'00"E; 22°56'00"N, 123°09'00"E.
- 21°14'00"N, 121°33'00"E; 21°33'00"N, 121°18'00"E; 21°07'00"N, 120°43'00"E; 20°48'00"N, 120°59'00"E
- 22°43'00"N, 119°14'00"E; 22°10'00"N, 119°06'00"E; 21°33'00"N, 120°29'00"E; 22°09'00"N, 120°32'00"E

[2] US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), [DF-15 \(Dongfeng 15\) Chinese Short-Range Ballistic Missile](#) (undated).

[3] Independent analysis of undetermined reliability, which has been [cited in Taiwan media](#), has identified the launches with

three brigades of the PLARF: northern site (Jinhua, Zhejiang), PLARF 617 Brigade; central site (Shangrao, Fujian), PLARF 613 Brigade; and southwest site (Ganzhou, Jiangxi), 616 Brigade. The Taiwan state media outlet *CNA* has cited Su Tzu-yun (蘇紫雲), an analyst with the Institute for National Defense and Security Research, an MND-associated think tank, to indicate that the [four missiles that flew over Taiwan](#) were launched from the PLA Rocket Force Number 61 Base in Anhui Province.

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## Observing Taiwan's Social Mood During China's Military Drills

By: Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao

*Dr. Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao is chairman of the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation, and chairman of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at National Chengchi University. He served as national policy advisor to the president of Taiwan between 1996 and 2006, and is currently senior advisor to the president of Taiwan.*

In comparison to the previous Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1995-1996, the recent military pressures from China between August 4-10 did not result in serious drops in stock value or evident emigration waves from Taiwan. On the contrary, the public in Taiwan appeared to be very calm and disciplined, and very little public panic was shown in most social circles. Similarly, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民進黨) administration was not criticized for its welcoming of US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and no attribution was openly made to Pelosi's visit for the occurrence of the military crisis.

Meanwhile, public confidence in the government remained stable and high, with no obvious inter-party political strife or controversies. Civil society and advocacy organizations and their leaders kept themselves calm, as they were aware that the sensitive situation required social consensus and solidarity behind the government and the military. From street interviews done by the media, most of the public seemed to be quite confident in Taiwan's military and its defense capability. "Our national forces (國軍) will protect us," many said. It is true that the current Taiwanese military and its capabilities have advanced a great deal since 1996. In other words, the Taiwanese might not have necessarily greeted Chinese intimidation with parties, but they have by and large kept their daily lives normal.

China's military drills around Taiwan were viewed by most Taiwanese as an overt reaction to Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, while

also being targeted to punish Taiwan and warn Japan. Pelosi, in her first public remarks following her visit, condemned Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Chairman Xi Jinping (習近平) for behaving “like a scared bully.” It is also evident that many Taiwanese citizens viewed both Russia and China as aggressors committed to the invasion of neighboring countries, an international crime. Moreover, as Taiwan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Jauhshieh Joseph Wu (吳釗燮) pointed out, China attempted to lay claim to the Taiwan Strait, one of the world’s busiest shipping routes. In doing so, Beijing threatened to interrupt the international community’s freedom of navigation by controlling the stretch of water linking the Yellow Sea and the South China Sea.

To Taiwanese, the military aggression as demonstrated by the large-scale exercises, missile launches, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and economic coercion are clear practice for an invasion. More than 65 percent of respondents supported extending compulsory military service to one year amid escalated military hostility, as the [most recent poll](#) conducted by the Foundation for the People has revealed. Asked whether Taiwan should bolster its military deterrence capabilities or diplomatic efforts in the face of the People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) military threats, 55.9 percent said that both were necessary, 24.7 percent maintained that only the latter was needed, 9.6 percent said that only the former was needed, and 6.6 percent expressed that neither was necessary. 77 percent of those interviewed believed that the government should notify the public if Chinese missiles fly over Taiwan, while 11.8 percent thought otherwise. On the other hand, the poll once again demonstrated the growing public preference for independence: with 23.1 percent favoring independence vs. 7.7% for unification, while a majority of 65.3 percent still preferred the “status quo.”

In Japan, over 80 percent of the [Japanese citizens surveyed by NHK](#) also expressed their grave concerns about China’s drills and missiles landing in Japan’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ), suggesting that Chinese actions have already affected Japan’s national security. This Japanese public reaction has clearly verified late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s assertion that “Taiwan’s emergency is also Japan’s emergency.”

On August 5, United Microelectronics Corporation (UMC, 聯華電子) founder and former Chairman Robert Tsao (曹興誠) surprised many by [pledging to donate](#) NTD 3 billion (USD \$100 million) to help Taiwan protect itself from CCP aggression. He severely criticized the PRC as a gangster regime, which bases its rule on cheating and lies. He suggested that the donations be used for national defense education, as well as efforts to counter CCP cognitive warfare, cyberattacks and hacking activ-

ities. Tsao’s promised action was encouraging and symbolically significant to many pro-Taiwan political groups and leaders, considering his background as a mainlander who had led sizable investments in China.

Moreover, to many Taiwanese citizens, the recent PRC military drills around Taiwan also provided precious experience and lessons for a potential future Chinese invasion. For the militaries in Taiwan, Japan, and the United States, it was an opportunity to gain familiarity with China’s future course of strategic moves and tactical actions.

Taiwanese political observers also took note with interest that the foreign ministers of the [United States, Japan, Australia](#), and the [G7](#) separately issued joint statements demanding that China not unilaterally change the status quo of the Taiwan Strait—while emphasizing that their respective “One-China policies” and stances toward Taiwan had not changed. However, they deliberately added “where applicable” after “One-China policy,” intending to inform China that their policies come with conditions. Of course, many Taiwanese citizens also very much welcomed the [proactive statement](#) issued by ASEAN, which demanded that China stop its aggressive and provocative military exercises, which it described as harming regional peace and stability. The foreign ministers of the United Kingdom, Germany, and Canada also criticized China for finding an excuse to stir up potential military conflicts in the Taiwan Strait. In addition, NATO Secretary General [Jens Stoltenberg](#) condemned China for overreacting to Pelosi’s visit and coercing Taiwan. According to [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) statistics, 40 nations’ executive branches, more than 300 parliamentarians from 50 nations, and the European Union have all voiced their support of Taiwan during the crisis. As a result of this international support, Taiwanese citizens deeply felt that they were not left alone this time.

Right after the conclusion of its military drills on August 11, China immediately issued its third [White Paper on the Taiwan Question and Chinese Unification](#), restating its “One China, Two Systems” (一國兩制) formula. It was viewed by the Taiwanese public as more empty and broken political propaganda without any substantive appeal. It is critical to note that in this new white paper, not only did Beijing not rule out unifying Taiwan by force, but it also canceled its previous promises not to send troops and administrators to Taiwan. With Hong Kong’s fatal experience and the ongoing military “blockades” of Taiwan, there is little reason for any Taiwanese citizen to accept China’s unification scheme. As President Tsai Ing-wen correctly pointed out, China issued its white paper based on wishful thinking, disregarding the reality of the cross-strait situation. The Taiwanese

would not cave in safeguarding their sovereignty, she added.

At the same time, many Taiwanese voters were upset about Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨) Vice Chairman Andrew Hsia (夏立言) leading a [delegation to China](#) on August 10 in the midst of China's intensive military drills against Taiwan. Hsia's unwise trip also sparked protests and anger among some local KMT councilors and younger party members, who started a petition called "Stop the Visit, Listen to Public Opinion." Most of the intra-party resentment focused on party elders, who were condemned for selling out the KMT's political future in Taiwan. The concerns of lower-level KMT figures are genuine, as the KMT being labelled a pro-China (or "red") party could cost their political careers in the coming November local elections. Many local political observers tend to believe that it was the CCP that pressured the KMT to make such trip to China, in order to demonstrate its political loyalty and to support the PRC's military drills and white paper. Given that backdrop, many [political critiques](#) have speculated as to why KMT decision-makers, especially Chairman Eric Chu (朱立倫), would dare to risk Taiwanese public distrust by seeming to follow CCP directives at this extremely sensitive juncture. President Tsai Ing-wen also [openly criticized](#) the KMT's trip to China, stating that it "not only disappointed Taiwanese, but also could send a wrong message to the international community."

It is also interesting to hear the creative suggestions coming from Taiwan's civil society in regards to deterring China's military aggression and cyberattacks. One of these includes a request that chip manufacturers halt or reduce their sales to China. The rationale behind this suggestion is that Taiwan controls more than half of China's chip imports. Such a move would certainly test the political beliefs and patriotic sentiment of Taiwan's chip-makers. Some even argue that at a time when China is prepared to invade Taiwan, there is no room for Taiwanese business tycoons to still think of money and profits.

In many Taiwanese citizens' eyes, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi (王毅) and his ambassadors have acted like gangsters in making irrational remarks, even as the international community calls for China's restraint so as to maintain regional peace. The Taiwanese public also did not understand why various PRC government spokespersons spoke with such fury, particularly with [statements](#) such as "those who play with fire will perish by it."

Taiwanese people also wonder why US officials have to keep saying "strategic ambiguity" when Taiwan is under attack by China, providing an unnecessary impression to the world that the United States is not really committed to defending its democratic ally when it is in need. Taiwanese citizens wonder about

the value of [repeated US promises](#) that its support for Taiwan is "rock solid."

Taiwanese citizens are pragmatic and realistic enough to understand it is Taiwan's main duty to defend itself, though we also need to receive all the support we can from our democratic allies in the world. Though the military drills are scaling down for now, China's threats of force are undiminished. As emphasized earlier, the military threats, unification propaganda, economic coercion, and cyberattacks will not press Taiwan's public to easily accept any cross-strait framework that was solely dictated by authoritarian China.

When President Joseph Biden announced his intention to postpone his original plan to adjust [US import tariffs](#) on Chinese products, local Taiwanese political observers and civil society groups believed that it was because China's military aggression has changed everything. The Taiwanese public also took a positive note toward US House Speaker Pelosi's statement in her first official news conference after her Asia trip, where she stated: "What we saw with China is that they were trying to establish a new normal, and we just can't let that happen." Many Taiwanese, of course, side with President Biden and Speaker Pelosi on this matter.

**The main point:** In spite of China's well-publicized displays of aggression following Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, the majority of Taiwanese citizens remain calm and pragmatic. Nevertheless, most recognize the need for international support against China's coercive measures.

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## China Initiates a New Integration Model with Taiwan, Starting with Gray Zone Tactics towards Kinmen

By: Cheng-fung Lu

*Cheng-fung Lu is an associate professor at the Department of International and Mainland China Affairs, National Quemoy University, Kinmen.*

Many Taiwanese people believe that Xi Jinping's "[new paths for cross-strait integration and development](#)" (探索海峽兩岸融合發展新路) is an attempt at exploring a new approach to cross-strait relations. But it is a different story for the residents of Kinmen (金門), an island situated roughly six kilometers opposite the city of Xiamen on China's southeastern coast. In spite of the growing support for Taiwan from international allies such as the

United States and Japan, Taiwan and its allies must also bear in mind and keep a close watch on China's new [gray zone tactics](#), including the "New Four Links" (新四通) (*see further below*). Increasingly, Beijing is undertaking a salami-slicing effort aimed at winning the hearts of Taiwanese people, starting with Kinmen.

Starting in mid-2018, strategic competition between the United States and China gradually escalated. Beijing has increased its gray zone operations toward Taiwan. Today, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) continues to scramble fighter jets to and from the middle line of the Taiwan Strait, while also sending flights into Taiwan's ADIZ (air defense identification zone) almost daily, often in the middle of the night and at the break of dawn. In light of these actions, Nicholas Kristof, a *New York Times* columnist, [expressed concern](#) that Beijing might invade the outlying islands of Kinmen or Dongsha (東沙島). Similarly, [Oriana Skylar Mastro](#), a Chinese military expert at Stanford University, has argued that the PLA always has the option to seize Matsu (馬祖), Dongsha Island, Taiping Island (太平島), or Kinmen as part of a phased invasion of Taiwan. The Atlantic Council published an article titled "[The Longer Telegram](#)" anonymously, also arguing that the chances of Taiwan—and Kinmen, Matsu and other outer islands—being invaded and attacked by the PLA are growing.

Recently, Beijing [publicly stated](#) that there was no middle line in the Taiwan Strait and emphasized that the Taiwan Strait is not part of international waters. The reality is, since Kinmen and Matsu are so geographically close to China, it is certainly a possibility for the PLA to take these two offshore islands. (Kinmen is only six kilometers away from Xiamen in China's Fujian Province, while Matsu is only 12 kilometers away from the mouth of the Minjiang River.) As Kinmen is on the Chinese side of the "middle line," and the PLA aircraft carrier Shandong recently sailed past the outskirts of Kinmen, it is highly likely that Kinmen will continue to face military threats from China.

### ***The "Mini Three Links": The COVID-19 Threat Versus Economic Considerations***

For the people of Kinmen, China's military threat does not seem to matter much, since Kinmen has historically experienced regular bombardment from China, which only ceased after the United States and China established formal diplomatic relations in 1979.

At the end of 2019, with the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China, the global pandemic spread rapidly. In just two months, almost 40 major cities in China were shut down. As a result, since mid-February 2020 the number of passengers traveling via the cross-Strait "[Mini Three Links](#)" (小三通)—that is, transporta-

tion between Kinmen and Xiamen (廈門), Kinmen and Quanzhou (泉州), and Matsu and Huangqi (馬祖—黃岐)—has also dropped sharply, while shipping companies have requested that the government temporarily [suspend flights](#) based on revenue considerations. The Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) Administration also suspended the "Mini Three Links" in an effort to control the pandemic spread, while also taking into consideration Taiwan's limited medical capacity should the situation escalate.

Despite the risk of COVID-19, Kinmen Magistrate Yang Chen-wu (楊鎮浚), Kuomintang Legislator Chen Yu-jen (陳玉珍), and Kinmen-born Chairman of the New Party Wu Cherng-dean (吳成典) have all continued to [urge the Tsai Administration](#) to resume personnel exchanges between Kinmen and Xiamen as soon as possible. Their appeal was largely based on economic considerations, echoing the positions of their constituents. Furthermore, before Taiwan successfully procured enough COVID-19 vaccines, these leaders also urged the government to open up flights so that Kinmen residents could obtain vaccinations in Xiamen instead.

Since their inception in 2001, the "[Mini Three Links](#)" have played a significant and positive role in the development of cross-Strait relations and stability. Over the course of more than 20 years of development, there have been 225,413 completed flights between Fujian and Taiwan's offshore islands, transporting more than 22.08 million passengers. Specifically, the Xiamen-Kinmen routes have transported a total of over 19.81 million passengers; the Quanzhou-Kinmen routes have exceeded 1.39 million passengers; the Mawei-Matsu routes have serviced nearly 660,000 passengers; and the Huangqi-Matsu routes have carried more than 190,000 passengers.

Since the establishment of the "[Big Three Links](#)" (大三通) across the strait in 2008—consisting of direct postal connections, commerce, and transportation (兩岸直接通郵、通商與通航)—the number of people coming and going from Taiwan, Kinmen, and Xiamen have continued to grow steadily, making the connection a vital indicator of cross-Strait relations, as well as cross-Strait personnel and non-governmental exchanges. All of the above passenger figures indicate the vital role that the "Mini Three Links" play in solidifying the stability of cross-Strait relations at a people-to-people level. For Kinmen, these linkages form an indispensable aspect of its economic development, bringing about many business opportunities. It must be noted that with the lack of official interactions between Taiwan and China, the continued people-to-people engagement through the "Mini Three Links" is also highly valued by the Taiwanese government, both from the political perspective as well as for

the sake of Kinmen's economic development.



Image: A view of Xiamen from "Little Kinmen" (小金門 / 烈嶼) Island in November 2021. (Image source: [Hong Kong Free Press](#))

### Xi's "New Four Links" Strategy towards Kinmen

For some time, Beijing's policy toward Taiwan has consisted of a mix of incentives and coercive measures, often implemented concurrently. Taiwan's senior security scholars generally believe that both the degree of coercion and amount of incentives being doled out by China's top leadership in response to Taiwan's democratic development has only intensified. Beijing is worried that Taiwan is drifting away, especially following polling indicating that the number of [Taiwanese people self-identifying as Chinese has also diminished considerably](#).

On January 2, 2019, during a speech at a meeting commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the issuance of the "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan," Xi stated: "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. We can start by supplying water, electricity, gas, and construction of sea-crossing bridges from coastal areas in Fujian province to Kinmen and Matsu in Taiwan."

This is one of the paths of cross-strait integration and development proposed by Xi, also known as the "[New Four Links](#)" (新四通)—consisting of water (通水), electricity (通電), oil (gas) (通油[氣]), and bridges (通橋)—between Fujian and Kinmen and Matsu. In March 2021, Xi emphasized during a visit to Fujian that the province should "take greater steps in exploring the new road of cross-strait integration and development" and "highlight the promotion of integration through communication and the benefits of mutual benefits." The 2022 Work Conference on Taiwan held in Beijing in January of this year also included proposals aimed at encouraging Fujian to explore new paths for cross-strait integration and development, including

the construction of a new demonstration zone.

Many Taiwanese people believe that these new paths are an attempt to explore a new tactic as cross-strait relations have entered a more contentious "deep water area," as contrasted with the unprecedented path towards integration during the Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) Administration. However, in light of Beijing's handling of COVID-19 and its crackdown in Hong Kong, China's attractiveness to the Taiwanese people is rapidly diminishing nationwide. Under the Tsai Administration, Xi's exploratory tactics are unlikely to have an immediate effect on cross-strait relations in general.

### Kinmen's Perspective on Cross-Strait Relations

However, it is a different story for the residents of Kinmen. From August to October, 2021, our research team conducted on-site questionnaire distribution and interviews in Kinmen. [1] The results showed that the residents of the Kinmen seem to be positive about the prospect of "integrated development in a broad sense." Based on the positive benefits of the "Mini Three Links" the residents of Kinmen have high expectations for integration, hoping that it could improve regional economic development and create job opportunities.

On the other hand, Kinmen residents have shifted in their sense of national identity. Middle- and senior-aged people still consider themselves Chinese, but younger people generally consider themselves Taiwanese. This shows that residents in Kinmen are growing immune to China's united front efforts. However, regardless of age, residents in Kinmen think that integration in terms of infrastructure is attractive. In spite of the shift away from the Chinese identity, it remains to be seen whether the people of Kinmen will turn towards a more Chinese-oriented identity as a result of future economic linkages with China. As such, Kinmen should be closely observed and considered an important part of the development of cross-strait relations. The Taiwan government should also continue to support Kinmen's local economy and societal development.

In response to one of our questions in the survey focused on "expectation[s] of future cross-strait relations," most Kinmen residents still prefer to maintain the status quo. This was followed by those who favor closer ties with China, with a third group favoring integration as soon as possible. As residents of offshore islands adjacent to China, maintaining the status quo is the most beneficial. Serving as a focal point between Taiwan and China, Kinmen can obtain the greatest benefit from both sides. Once the status quo cannot be maintained, it is obvious that the next best option is the economic integration of the two

sides of the Taiwan Strait. This is a geographical necessity, and it is also seemingly inevitable for residents of Kinmen.

### ***Kinmen as the New Battleground of Gray Zone Tactics***

As the strategic competition between the United States and China expands, the scope of is also expanding. While the global efforts against China have intensified, China's "wolf warrior" diplomacy and coercive efforts against Taiwan and neighboring countries have continued to rise as well. Even though the United States and other democracies have emphasized "the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," the United States will continue to conduct arms sales to Taiwan in order to express its support for the island and strengthen its asymmetric warfare capabilities.

On the other hand, China has built a [vast new international airport](#) on Dadeng Island (大嶝島) and Xiaodeng Island (小嶝島) less than four kilometers away from Kinmen, and it is attractive for Kinmen to jointly use this airport to facilitate entry, exit, and travel. [2] This is an alternative to the construction of a hypothetical bridge connecting Xiamen and Kinmen, and serves as a clear example of Beijing's aggressive attempts at gradual economic and infrastructure integration with Taiwan, starting with Kinmen. Despite the growing support for Taiwan from international allies, such as the United States and Japan, Taiwan and its allies must also bear in mind and keep a close watch on China's new gray zone tactics, including the "New Four Links," as Beijing continues its salami-slicing efforts aimed at winning the hearts of Taiwanese people, starting with Kinmen.

**The main point:** The Chinese government's "new way of integrated development" is promoting closer commercial and infrastructure links between Fujian Province and Taiwan's outlying islands. Opinion polling conducted on Kinmen in 2021 indicated that local residents are generally supportive of such links with China.

[1] There were three types of survey implementation methods: (1) Filling out the questionnaire during face-to-face interviews (about 70 percent of the total); (2) Distribution through relatives and friends (about 25 percent); and (3) Distribution through Google Forms (about five percent). From the first questionnaire on May 20 to the last questionnaire on October 31, a total of 508 valid responses were obtained. During this period, researchers (professors and research assistants) personally walked into commercial areas to interview businesses and take questionnaires. Since the general public had little concept of the so-called "new way of integrated development," the researchers provided a basic explanation. Some merchants could not an-

swer the questionnaire on the spot, so the researcher provided a Google form for them to fill in later.

[2] "Xiamen to Build New International Airport," *China Daily*, June 11, 2019; Dou Shicong, "Chinese City of Xiamen Starts Work on Second Airport Costing USD 9.7 Billion," Yicai.com, January 4, 2022.

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## **Opportunities for Increased Taiwanese Foreign Direct Investment in the European Union**

By: Marshall Reid

*Marshall Reid is a program manager at the Global Taiwan Institute.*

In December 2020, the European Commission [announced](#) that the European Union (EU) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) had agreed in principle on the long-awaited Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI). [Described](#) as "the most ambitious agreement that China has ever concluded with a third country," the CAI had been a key objective for both parties since its inception in 2013. In the year and a half that has followed, however, this dynamic has changed significantly. Following a series of increasingly visible diplomatic incidents, the PRC has seen its standing amongst EU states rapidly deteriorate, to the point that discussions of the CAI were [indefinitely suspended](#) in May 2021. While this remarkable shift should certainly raise concerns in Beijing, it could prove to be a windfall for Taiwan. Indeed, with its high-tech economy, thriving private enterprises, and unique political status, the island democracy could emerge as the greatest beneficiary of the EU-China estrangement, particularly in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI). [1]

### ***Cooling EU-China Investment Ties***

In the wake of the 2020 CAI announcement, many [commentators](#) were quick to frame the agreement as something of a foregone conclusion. Indeed, given long-term trends in the EU-China economic relationship, the deal had taken on an air of inevitability. Beginning in roughly 2008-2009—when the European debt crisis left EU states desperate for foreign capital—Beijing worked to [establish itself as a leading investor](#) on the continent. Leveraging its ascendant economy and powerful state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the PRC rapidly asserted itself as a key player in the European market, purchasing controlling stakes in a wide range of infrastructure projects, utility providers, and manufac-

turing firms. While these acquisitions were frequently met with significant controversy—as countless [contemporary op-eds](#) and [academic reports](#) can attest—such pushback did little to dampen EU states’ enthusiasm for Chinese capital.

While these efforts certainly included significant successes—perhaps most notably, the [addition of Italy](#) to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as “One Belt, One Road,” 一帶一路)—China’s investments in Europe have generally proven to be something of a mixed bag. As a [recent report](#) conducted by Rhodium Group and MERICS noted, Chinese investment in Europe has remained relatively limited in recent years, even as [EU-China bilateral trade](#) has steadily grown. In fact, after an initial [flurry of investments](#) led primarily by SOEs, overall Chinese investments in the continent have followed a “[multi-year downward trajectory](#).” While Chinese venture capital investment in Europe has increased in recent years, overall investment has grown increasingly anemic, with 2021 marking the second lowest level of overall investment in the EU since 2013, as well as the lowest level of SOE investment in two decades. Contrary to many [post-CAI projections](#), Beijing has proven largely unable to capitalize on its position and sustain its aggressive investment strategy on the continent. Indeed, as the Rhodium-MERICS report argues, “the era of massive Chinese investment in Europe seems over for now.”

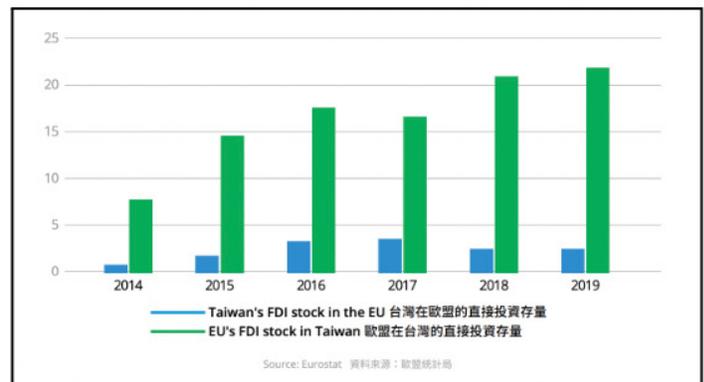
Ultimately, this decline in PRC investment in Europe is likely the result of a variety of factors. As several observers [have noted](#), the move is in keeping with broader trends in Chinese FDI. Rattled by domestic economic slowdowns and concerns about potential Western sanctions, many Chinese firms have increasingly cut back on overseas investment. As a result, overall Chinese FDI [effectively stagnated](#) in 2021, even as global investment surged. At the same time, European openness to Chinese investment has declined precipitously. Driven by a growing distrust of the PRC and rising awareness of the risks of foreign investment, EU states have increasingly sought to strengthen their investment screening mechanisms. As the [Rhodium-MERICS report](#) makes clear, these regulations “could impact market access for Chinese companies in Europe and diminish appetite for investment.”

### **Europe As a New Frontier for Taiwanese Investment**

Despite its recent, well-publicized [diplomatic victories](#) in Europe, Taiwan remains something of an outsider on the continent. Other than the Holy See, no European nation currently recognizes Taiwan as a sovereign country. Without any formal European partners, Taipei has long struggled to forge substantive partnerships with EU capitals. However, rising European skepticism to-

ward China—coupled with a growing European appreciation for Taiwan and its tenuous international position—could present Taiwan with unprecedented opportunities to strengthen its ties with Europe, particularly as it pertains to FDI.

While Europe and Taiwan have a wealth of similar interests, the investment relationship between the two has become decidedly lopsided in recent years. Led by the Netherlands—historically the [largest single source of FDI](#) in Taiwan—the EU has become the [foremost investor in Taiwan](#), accounting for [38.8 percent](#) of total FDI in Taiwan in 2020. By contrast, the EU “[plays a minor role](#)” in Taiwan’s overall foreign investment strategy. According to figures released by the [European External Action Service \(EEAS\)](#), Taiwan’s investment in the EU accounted for only 2.1 percent of its global FDI in 2020. Notably, this number lags far behind Taiwanese investment in the PRC, which accounted for a whopping 55 percent of its total investments in 2020. Furthermore, as the chart below illustrates, Taiwan’s investment in the EU has remained relatively stagnant in recent years, even as EU investment in Taiwan has steadily increased. For Taiwan—a nation sorely in need of investment partners—such meager investment in the EU represents a missed opportunity.



*Graphic: A comparison of FDI flows between the European Union and Taiwan. (Graphic source: [EEAS](#))*

Wary of incurring China’s wrath, the majority of EU nations have historically sought to avoid high-profile, state-to-state partnerships with Taiwan, a dynamic that has thwarted past attempts to negotiate an [EU-Taiwan free trade agreement](#) (FTA). However, FDI has often proven to be something of an exception to this rule. As [Ágnes Szunomár](#) has noted, Taiwanese firms have been able to make substantial investments in states across the EU, even in those considered to be staunchly pro-Beijing. Perhaps the best illustration of this phenomenon can be found in Hungary. Despite Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s strong support for the PRC, his nation emerged as the [second-largest recipient](#) of Taiwanese investment in 2020, accounting for 18.8 percent of total Taiwanese FDI in the EU. This dynamic is per-

haps best summarized by [Szunomár](#), who stated that for many EU nations, “political relations do matter, but only up to a certain point.” Simply put, when faced with the prospect of economic opportunity, even the most skeptical of EU states may be willing to open their doors to Taiwanese investment.

While such openness to Taiwanese investments certainly comes with political risks for the EU, these risks pale in comparison with the potential benefits. In many regards, Taiwan is an ideal partner for the EU. Despite its small size, the island possesses a dynamic, diversified, and highly advanced economy. Its technology firms—particularly industry leaders like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC, 台灣積體電路製造股份有限公司) and Hon Hai Technology Group (Foxconn, 鴻海精密工業股份有限公司)—are critical sources for high-tech products, particularly advanced semiconductor chips. For the EU, which has [drastically increased](#) its involvement in the high-tech supply chain in recent years, developing stronger relationships with Taiwan’s technology firms could be highly beneficial. Furthermore, investments by Taiwanese firms traditionally lack the conditionality of Chinese investments, which have frequently been criticized as [tools of PRC influence](#). To its credit, the EU has recognized the benefits of increased engagement with Taiwan, describing the island as a “[semiconductor superpower](#)” and hosting a [Trade and Investment Forum](#) in June.

Now more than ever, an expanded EU-Taiwan investment partnership is in the interest of both sides. Recent geopolitical events—most notably the Russian invasion of Ukraine and China’s ongoing military drills in response to Speaker Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan—have clearly demonstrated the many threats posed by overreliance on authoritarian powers. For the EU, encouraging Taiwanese investment on the continent and continuing to increase EU investment in Taiwan could allow the grouping to secure a safer, more reliable source of high-tech products, while also providing support to a like-minded democracy. For Taiwan, meanwhile, this growing EU openness to investment could present valuable opportunities to diversify its investment portfolio, strengthen its informal diplomatic partnerships with EU states, and increase its diplomatic space. However, Taipei cannot afford to be passive. Instead, it should proactively work to expand its investments in the EU, mobilizing private investors and firms to build relationships with European counterparts. The EU has already demonstrated its interest in investing in Taiwan. The time has come for Taiwan to return the favor.

**The main point:** In the wake of the failure of CAI negotiations and a broader EU backlash against China, Taiwan has an unprecedented opportunity to expand its investment portfolio in Eu-

rope. Taipei should move proactively to increase its economic presence in the region.

*The author would like to thank GTI Summer Intern Meghan Shoop for her research assistance.*

[1] According to the official [OECD definition](#), “Foreign direct investment (FDI) is a category of cross-border investment in which an investor resident in one economy establishes a lasting interest in and a significant degree of influence over an enterprise resident in another economy.”

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## New Public Opinion Polling on US Support for Defending Taiwan

By: Timothy S. Rich, Katrina Fjeld, Aurora Speltz, Kerby Gilstrap

*Timothy S Rich is a professor of political science at Western Kentucky University and director of the International Public Opinion Lab (IPOL).*

*Katrina Fjeld is an honors undergraduate researcher at Western Kentucky University majoring in international affairs and Arabic.*

*Aurora Speltz is an honors undergraduate researcher at Western Kentucky University majoring in international affairs, Arabic, and Spanish.*

*Kerby Gilstrap is a recent alumna of Western Kentucky University, where she studied international affairs, Arabic, and sustainable development.*

*Funding for this survey was provided by the Mahurin Honors College at Western Kentucky University.*

The United States supports [maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait](#), and opposes any unilateral changes to the status quo. Yet, China’s military modernization threatens the continuation of this tenuous balance, making American military sales to Taiwan—totaling over USD [\\$15 billion](#) in armaments since 2010—crucial to the country’s defense. However, continued arms sales and support for Taiwan have heightened tensions with China, and “[harms peace and stability](#)” according to China’s Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO, 國務院台灣事務辦公室). This is despite the fact that China has “[made no promise to renounce the use of force](#)” in its quest for unification. Selling Taiwan military equipment, while helpful, may not be enough to deter China, as Taiwan realistically [cannot afford](#) to the buy

the quantity of “traditional” weaponry necessary. Failure to respond may risk American interests in the region and boost Chinese efforts at regional hegemony.

Most [experts assume](#) that the United States would respond to any attempt at an invasion. Furthermore, [President Biden recently pledged to defend Taiwan](#), even as the administration continues to pay lip service to a policy of strategic ambiguity. Likewise, any effort by the United States would also incur significant political and economic costs, likely limiting efforts to go “[all in](#)” on Taiwan’s defense or to end strategic ambiguity, [despite calls to do so](#). Left out of this is a discussion of the degree to which the American public is supportive of defending Taiwan.

Any military assault on Taiwan would be politically and militarily costly for China—and [despite public denials](#), Chinese officials have likely seen potential parallels to Russia’s military hubris in the early days of its invasion of Ukraine. Meanwhile, [polls conflict](#) in regards to Taiwanese willingness to fight China, and [a recent survey](#) suggests most Taiwanese do not pay much attention to China. Post-Ukraine invasion surveys of international relations experts conducted by William & Mary’s Global Research Institute have found that, despite common assumptions that the invasion of Ukraine would lead China to instigate conflict, 46.2 percent of respondents indicated that Chinese use of force against Taiwan was “[no more or less likely](#)” in the coming year—with 34.15 percent believing that it was actually *less* likely to occur. That said, several factors—including China’s increased military capabilities, frequent military drills in the vicinity of Taiwan, the start of Xi Jinping’s (習近平) third term, and the possibility of another Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民進黨) president elected in 2024—could create conditions that incentivize Chinese aggression.

Furthermore, Taiwanese may be overly optimistic about the United States’ willingness to intervene on their behalf. A 2020 Chinese Association of Public Opinion Research (CAPOR, 中華民意研究協會民調) poll found that [58.7 percent](#) believed the US would send troops to aid Taiwan; while a 2022 Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation (TPOF, 台灣民意基金會) poll found [53.8 percent](#) believed the same, nearly doubling from their October 2021 poll. This could be in part because of President Biden’s statement in late May 2022 that the United States would aid Taiwan in the case of a Chinese invasion. However, given the tepid US response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, overconfidence in US assistance may lead the Taiwanese government to forego the painful, but necessary, domestic military reforms that may be necessary to fend off an attack.

### **Recent Historical Public Opinion Polling on US Support for Taiwan**

Research has shown that the American public is [increasingly wary of military interventions](#), even as limited survey data has shed some light on US public support for Taiwan. An inward turn is evident in several polls, including a 2017 Pew Research Center poll that indicated [57 percent](#) of Americans wanted the United States to prioritize its own issues over world intervention. This shift on global intervention leaves future support for Taiwan ambiguous. For example, a [2019 Chicago Council on Global Affairs poll](#) found that 61 percent of Americans were against arms sales to Taiwan, while other survey work in [2020](#) found a more ambivalent public, with roughly 20 percent opposed to continued sales, though public support for arms sales slightly increased when framed as potentially harming relations with China. A [YouGov poll in 2017](#) found that 44 percent of Americans viewed Taiwan as friendly, but only 13 percent viewed it as an ally. In a similar display of American uncertainty, a [2018 Pew Research Center survey](#) determined that 41 percent of Americans were somewhat concerned about tensions between Taiwan and China, down from 44 percent the year prior. Meanwhile, a 2021 Chicago Council survey found that a narrow majority—[52 percent](#)—were supportive of using US troops to defend Taiwan, the first time support had reached such levels.

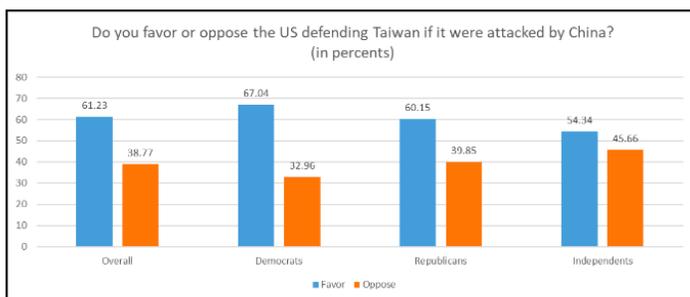
One of the issues with previous surveys is that it can be very difficult to parse out the factors influencing views of Taiwan. After all, many Americans know little about Taiwan. Rather than responding based on an affinity for Taiwan, respondents claiming support for defending Taiwan may be motivated more by animosities towards China. Views of China have increasingly soured in recent years, especially due to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#) and [trade war rhetoric](#) under President Trump, while issues such as [human rights abuses and intellectual property theft](#) have received increased attention. This growing distrust of China was well illustrated by a 2021 Pew survey, which found a desire for the United States to be tougher on [economic issues and human rights](#) with China; as well as a 2022 Pew survey that found that [82 percent of respondents](#) held an unfavorable view of China. Likewise, a 2021 Gallup study found that the percentage of Americans [viewing China as the country’s greatest enemy had increased to 45 percent](#), more than doubling since the previous year. Such views of China are exacerbated by misconceptions—including the belief that China has the world’s strongest economy, a belief held by [roughly half of Americans](#).

In addition, broader public views on US involvement in international affairs would presumably influence a willingness to defend

Taiwan. A public increasingly wary of international involvement may shy away from all efforts to defend fellow democracies, which could then appear as a decline in support for Taiwan. For example, a 2019 Pew survey found a partisan divide, with 62 percent Democrats but only 45 percent of Republicans stating that [“it’s best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs.”](#) Fatigue from previous military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan may also make the public hesitant to support future conflicts that may not see a quick end.

### ***New Public Opinion Polling Conducted in Summer 2022***

To address US perceptions of issues related to defending Taiwan, we conducted an original national web survey in the United States from June 29-July 11 via Qualtrics, with quota sampling for age, gender, and geographic region. We asked 1,728 Americans the question: “Do you favor or oppose the US defending Taiwan if it were attacked by China?” Overall, clear majorities state that the US should defend Taiwan (61.23 percent), with higher rates among Democrats than Republicans (67.04 percent vs. 60.15 percent). A majority of those without a party identification also favored defending Taiwan (54.34 percent).



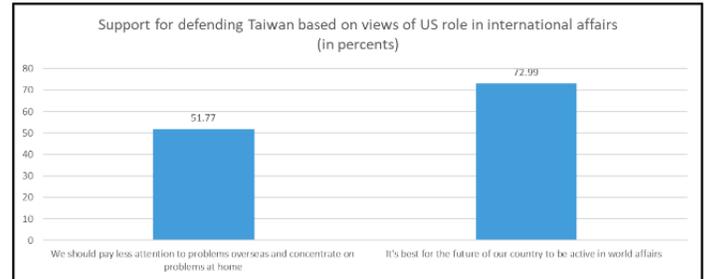
*Graphic: Responses to the question “Do you favor or oppose the US defending Taiwan if it were attacked by China?”*

Additional questions add greater insight. Before being asked about defending Taiwan, respondents were asked, “Which of the following best describes your view of the US role in world affairs?” Two potential answers could be selected:

1. “We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems at home;” or
2. “It’s best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs.”

Here, 56.29 percent of Democrats, but only 32.66 percent of Republicans and 40.31 percent of independents, chose the latter option. However, the overwhelming majority of those who stated that the US should be active in world affairs—72.99 percent—supported defending Taiwan. Surprisingly, even a slight majority—51.77 percent—of those stating that the US should

concentrate on problems at home also supported Taiwan’s defense.



*Graphic: Responses to the question: “Which of the following best describes your view of the US role in world affairs?” 1) “We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems at home;” or 2) “It’s best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs.”*

We also asked respondents to rate both China and Taiwan on a 1-10 scale, with 1 being very negative and 10 very positive. Overall, China averaged a 4.01 and Taiwan a 6.06, with lower China evaluations among Republicans (3.53) versus Democrats, and higher Taiwan evaluations among Democrats (6.40) versus Republicans (6.04). Unsurprisingly, those who rated China more negatively and Taiwan more positively were more supportive of the United States coming to Taiwan’s defense.

Lastly, regression analysis found that after controlling for gender, age, income, and education, the largest single factor influencing support for Taiwan’s defense was a belief that the United States should be active in world affairs—though party affiliation and opinion towards China and Taiwan all remained statistically significant in the expected directions. In addition, women were less supportive of defending Taiwan, while higher levels of education positively corresponded with support.

The results suggest a general willingness to see the United States defend Taiwan, at least in the abstract, which should aid efforts to not only continue arms sales but also build substantive relations between the two countries. However, such support likely remains predicated on factors often ignored in the absence of an immediate threat of invasion. Research commonly finds that the American public is strongly influenced by [American casualties](#), although this can be shaped by [leadership and framing by policy elites](#). If the public estimates heavy American casualties, this may decrease support for Taiwan. Moreover, a public supportive of defending Taiwan may lower the domestic political costs of coming to Taiwan’s aid, but it does not mean necessarily that the United States has [the capabilities to defend Taiwan](#).

**The main point:** New public opinion polling of US attitudes

towards the defense of Taiwan shows majority support for defending Taiwan, with this support strongest amongst those who believe in an active role for the United States in world affairs.