

# The Chinese Communist Party's Ideological Frameworks for Taiwan Policy



John Dotson

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## About the Global Taiwan Institute

GTI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit policy incubator dedicated to insightful, cutting-edge, and inclusive research on policy issues regarding Taiwan and the world. Our mission is to enhance the relationship between Taiwan and other countries, especially the United States, through policy research and programs that promote better public understanding about Taiwan and its people.

### The GTI “Counter Ideological Work and Political Warfare” Research Series

This report is the second of a planned five-part series of GTI policy backgrounder reports on the means and methods employed in Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ideological work and political warfare directed against Taiwan—efforts that are intended to undermine Taiwan’s democratic system, its social cohesion, and its ability to resist coercive efforts for “reunification” on the CCP’s terms. The remaining research reports will be forthcoming throughout 2024. The topics to be addressed will be:

- [\*The Chinese Communist Party’s Political Warfare Directed Against Taiwan: Overview and Analysis\*](#)  
(Published May 2024)
- *The Chinese Communist Party’s Ideological Frameworks for Taiwan Policy* (current report)
- Gray zone operations, economic coercion, and “lawfare” directed against Taiwan (forthcoming)
  - CCP intelligence, united front, and disinformation operations (forthcoming)
  - Cyber operations and PLA political work directed against Taiwan (forthcoming)

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*Cover photo: “Once Country, Two Systems Reunifies China”—characters displayed near Xiamen in Fujian Province, facing outwards towards the Taiwan-administered island of Kinmen.*

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## Executive Summary

The People's Republic of China (PRC) employs a series of official ideological frameworks that inform and direct its Taiwan policies—to include its political warfare efforts intended to subvert Taiwan society, and to weaken the resistance of the island's citizens to annexation on the terms of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Under the tenure of CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping, the party has steadily ramped up coercive pressure on Taiwan for “reunification,” and the CCP’s “ideological work” focused on Taiwan has intensified accordingly.

The CCP’s ideological claims rest upon **the denial of any legitimacy to the Republic of China (ROC), and claims of full PRC sovereignty over Taiwan**. This position holds that the ROC rightfully assumed control over Taiwan in 1945, but that the ROC then passed completely out of existence in 1949—with the PRC, as successor state, inheriting all sovereignty rights. The PRC position thus waves away the continued existence of Taiwan as a *de facto* sovereign state since 1949, and the fact that the PRC has never administered the island.

In the diplomatic arena, other central CCP positions include the **“One China Principle” (OCP)**, which holds that the PRC is the only “China” in the world, and that Taiwan is an “inalienable” part of China’s territory. Beijing repeatedly asserts the false narrative that its “One China Principle” is universally accepted worldwide—and that maintaining diplomatic relations with the PRC is, *ipso facto*, an acceptance of the OCP. In tandem with this, the PRC also consistently promotes a **distorted interpretation of United Nations Resolution 2758** (passed in 1971), which the PRC falsely claims conveyed UN recognition of its sovereignty claims over Taiwan.

In regards to its officially prescribed plans for “reunification” with Taiwan, the PRC rigidly adheres to the **“One Country, Two Systems” (OCTS)** framework first advanced in the late 1970s, which calls for Taiwan to be incorporated into the PRC as a regional government. The original OCTS concept promised considerably autonomy for Taiwan as a self-governing region, which could retain its existing political and economic

system separate from Beijing’s direct control. Despite such promises, during Xi Jinping’s tenure the PRC has backtracked from past pledges of Taiwan autonomy. Of particular note, a major policy speech by Xi in early 2019, and an official white paper issued in 2022, both omitted past pledges to respect Taiwan’s self-governance and to refrain from sending troops and administrative personnel to the island.

Instead, messaging from official CCP sources in the Xi era has signaled intent to ramp up united front and lawfare efforts to subvert Taiwan’s *de facto* independent status, and to subject Taiwan to full CCP political control under any future annexation settlement. The CCP has further demonstrated efforts to intertwine its ideological-*cum*-legal frameworks into its coercive psychological warfare against Taiwan’s citizens: this has been recently demonstrated by a June 2024 declaration of right and intent to target “Taiwan independence diehards” with harsh punishment in the PRC judicial system, and to apply this in an extraterritorial fashion beyond the PRC’s own borders.

Understanding the CCP’s own ideological frameworks for Taiwan policy is key to understanding how China’s own leaders conceive of the Taiwan issue, and how they formulate policy accordingly. These ideological concepts connect directly to the CCP’s conduct of political warfare: the primary set of tools employed in the CCP’s effort to bring Taiwan and its citizens under the party’s control.

## Part 1: Introduction

Chinese Communist Party (CCP, 中國共產黨) General Secretary Xi Jinping (習近平) has made the repeated assertion that “reunification” (統一) with Taiwan is a key element of China’s “great rejuvenation [or ‘revival’] of the Chinese nation” (中華民族偉大復興), and this theme has been a staple slogan of CCP propaganda under Xi’s tenure. For example, speaking before the 20th Party Congress of the CCP in October 2022, Xi asserted that “Taiwan is China’s Taiwan” (台灣是中國的台灣), and declared that:

*“Resolving the Taiwan problem, achieving complete unification of the ancestral nation, is the party’s unswerving historical mission, it is the common aspiration of all sons and daughters of China, it is an absolute requirement of achieving the great revival of the Chinese people. [We must] insist upon implementing the party’s Comprehensive Plan for Resolving the Taiwan Problem in the New Era, firmly grasp the initiative in cross-Straits relations, and resolutely advance the great cause of national unification.”*<sup>1</sup>

While eventual “reunification” has long been CCP policy, for decades Beijing was prepared to slow-walk this goal—as the party was either preoccupied by China’s internal turmoil, or else prioritized domestic economic growth. This is no longer the case, and throughout Xi’s tenure he has, in a series of steadily graduated steps, shifted People’s Republic of China (PRC) policy towards an increasingly assertive, aggressive, and multi-faceted effort to pursue its goals *vis-à-vis* Taiwan.

Beijing seeks to bring about the annexation of Taiwan by means of non-violent pressure if possible, while

simultaneously asserting its right to employ military force to compel unification. Accordingly, the CCP employs a variety of non-violent (or “non-kinetic,” in military terms) measures intended to wear down both the capacity and will of Taiwan’s government and citizenry to resist the imposition of an annexation settlement on the CCP’s terms: one that would not only incorporate Taiwan under PRC sovereignty, but also replace the island’s open and democratic political system with one subject to CCP dominance.

In support of this longer-term policy, the CCP has developed a series of ideological frameworks for Taiwan policy—all of which deny Taiwan any rights of sovereignty or self-determination, and all of which assert claims of absolute PRC sovereignty over both Taiwan’s territory and its citizens. The first report of GTI’s “Counter Ideological Work and Political Warfare” series, *The Chinese Communist Party’s Political Warfare Directed Against Taiwan: Overview and Analysis* (May 2024), provided an introductory discussion of the CCP’s playbook for political warfare directed at weakening Taiwan’s resistance to intended ultimate annexation.<sup>2</sup> This second report will discuss and analyze CCP ideology regarding Taiwan, and how the party’s ideological frameworks inform and bolster the CCP’s comprehensive program of political warfare against the island and its people.

1 “Xi Jinping Emphasizes Persisting In and Perfecting ‘One Country Two Systems’, Advancing Unification of the Motherland” (習近平強調，堅持和完善“一國兩制”，推進祖國統一) (excerpt of speech before the 20th CCP Party Congress), CCP Taiwan Work Office, October 16, 2022, [http://www.gwyttb.gov.cn/zt/djzt/xxxcgc/zyjs/202210/t20221016\\_12478556.htm](http://www.gwyttb.gov.cn/zt/djzt/xxxcgc/zyjs/202210/t20221016_12478556.htm).

2 John Dotson, *The Chinese Communist Party’s Political Warfare Directed Against Taiwan: Overview and Analysis*, Global Taiwan Institute, May 2024, [https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/OR\\_CCP-Political-Warfare.pdf](https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/OR_CCP-Political-Warfare.pdf).

## Part 2: A Primer on the CCP's Ideological Frameworks for Taiwan

The CCP's political warfare against Taiwan proceeds from its officially promulgated ideological-cum-legal frameworks for achieving “reunification” with the island, as summarized below.

### *The Inheritance of ROC Sovereignty—and the Denial of Any Legitimacy to the ROC*

The PRC government grounds its claims in, first, an insistence that the Republic of China (中華民國, ROC) was a legitimate government until 1949—and that the World War II agreements made by the Allies that transferred Taiwan and other territories from Japanese to ROC sovereignty (the 1943 Cairo Declaration, and 1945 Potsdam Declaration) were legitimate and binding. However, the PRC position then holds that the ROC went out of existence, in totality, when the PRC was declared in 1949:

*“On October 1, 1949, the Central People's Government of the PRC was proclaimed, replacing the government of the Republic of China to become the only legal government of the whole of China and its sole legal representative in the international arena, thereby bringing the historical status of the Republic of China to an end. This is a replacement of the old regime by a new one in a situation where the main bodies of the same international laws have not changed and China's sovereignty and inherent territory have not changed therefrom, and so the government of the PRC naturally should fully enjoy and exercise China's sovereignty, including its sovereignty over Taiwan. Since the KMT ruling clique retreated to Taiwan, although its regime has continued to use the designations 'Republic of China' and 'government of the Republic of China,' it has long since completely forfeited its right to exercise state sovereignty on behalf of China and, in reality, has always remained only a local authority in Chinese territory.”<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>3</sup> PRC State Council Information Office, *The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*, February 21, 2000, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7956.htm>.

Therefore, per the PRC position, Taiwan was once again part of “China” from October 1945 onwards (a position that aligned with the position of the ROC government itself, at least through the late 1980s). However, the PRC position then waves away the continued existence of Taiwan as a *de facto* sovereign state (continuing under the ROC name and constitutional framework), dismissing it as an illegitimate “local authority” subject to “China's sovereignty.”

### *The “One China Principle”*

The government of the PRC maintains a “One China Principle” (OCP, 一個中國原則), which holds that: there is only one China in the world; the PRC is that China; and Taiwan is an “inalienable” part of China's territory, over which Beijing rightfully holds complete sovereignty.<sup>4</sup> This contrasts with the “One China Policy” adopted with varying interpretations by many governments around the world: to include the United States, which extends official diplomatic recognition to the PRC—while withholding it from the ROC—while avoiding commitments regarding Taiwan's sovereignty status.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, the PRC repeatedly asserts the narrative that its “One China Principle” is universally accepted—and that maintaining diplomatic relations with the PRC is, *ipso facto*, an acceptance of the OCP.

### *UN Resolution 2758*

United Nations Resolution 2758 (UNR 2758), adopted in October 1971, removed the “China” United Nations seat from the Republic of China government in Taiwan and transferred it to the People's Republic of China. While the resolution stated that “the representatives of the Government of the

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Chong Ja Ian, “The Many ‘One Chinas’: Multiple Approaches to Taiwan and China,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 9, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/02/09/many-one-chinas-multiple-approaches-to-taiwan-and-china-pub-89003>.

[PRC] are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations,” the text of the resolution did not take any position related to the status of Taiwan.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, the PRC has consistently, and errone-

ously, invoked UNR 2758 as conveying with it UN recognition of its sovereignty claims over Taiwan.<sup>7</sup>

6 Text of UN Resolution 2758 (“Restoration of the Lawful Rights of the People’s Republic of China in the United Nations”), adopted by the UN General Assembly (October 25, 1971), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/192054?ln=en&v=pdf>.

7 Russell Hsiao, “Resolution 2758 and the Fallacy of Beijing’s UN ‘One-China Principle,’” *Global Taiwan Brief*, October 20, 2021, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2021/10/resolution-2758-and-the-fallacy-of-beijings-un-one-china-principle/>.

## *PRC Foreign Ministry Statements on the “One China Principle” and UN Resolution 2758*

A clear example of the CCP’s discourse about the OCP and UNR 2758—and of the ways that it often seeks to blur one into the other—was provided by PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin (汪文斌) in May 2024. At a routine press conference, Wang stated the following:

*“Taiwan is not a country. It has been an inalienable part of China’s territory since ancient times. [...] UNGA Resolution 2758 settled the question of who shall represent the whole of China, that is, the government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, including Taiwan, at the UN. The Resolution made it clear that there is but one China in the world and Taiwan is part of China and a non-sovereign entity. It reaffirmed the one-China principle. [...] The number of countries that have established diplomatic relations with China on the basis of the one-China principle has jumped from over 60 to 183. This clearly demonstrates that the one-China principle is not only a prevailing international consensus, but also a basic norm of international relations. [...] China will and must achieve reunification. No one or force can hold it back. [...] Those who challenge the one-China principle will be swept away by the trend of the times; those who turn back the wheel of history will be run over by it.”<sup>8</sup>*

Such distorted interpretations of diplomatic documents, and unfounded conflation of them with PRC policy positions, are an essential element of CCP lawfare directed against Taiwan.<sup>9</sup>

Such conflation was also invoked amid the PRC’s most recent success in luring away one of Taiwan’s diplomatic allies. Speaking on January 15, 2024, accompanying the announcement that the Pacific island state of

8 Of note, Wang also offered a direct threat to the United States: “Some in the US claim that UNGA Resolution 2758 ‘did not make a determination on the status of Taiwan’ and ‘does not preclude Taiwan’s meaningful participation in the UN system.’ This is a lie. They are trying to reopen the closed case that Taiwan is part of China—a matter already settled by the international community once and for all—to deny UNGA Resolution 2758 and the one-China principle. This move that turns back the wheel of history is a challenge to not only China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also international justice and conscience and the post-WWII international order. This is extremely preposterous and dangerous. [...] Our message to some in the US: The trend of the world is surging forward. Those who follow the trend will prosper; those who go against it will perish.” See: “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin’s Regular Press Conference on May 20, 2024,” PRC Embassy in the USA, May 20, 2024, [http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/fyrth/202405/t20240520\\_11308199.htm](http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/fyrth/202405/t20240520_11308199.htm).

9 John Dotson, *The Chinese Communist Party’s Political Warfare Directed Against Taiwan: Overview and Analysis*, Global Taiwan Institute, May 2024, [https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/OR\\_CCP-Political-Warfare.pdf](https://globaltaiwan.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/OR_CCP-Political-Warfare.pdf). For the discussion of lawfare as a component of CCP political warfare, see pp. 10–11.

Nauru was switching diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC, a PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated: “There is but one China in the world, Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s territory, and the government of the People’s Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China. It’s what has been affirmed in Resolution 2758 of the UN General Assembly and is a prevailing consensus among the international community [...] The Nauru government’s decision of reestablishing diplomatic ties with China once again shows that the one-China principle is where global opinion trends and where the arc of history bends.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> PRC Foreign Ministry, “Foreign Ministry Spokesperson’s Remarks on the Government of the Republic of Nauru’s Announcement to Break Diplomatic Ties with the Taiwan Region and Seek to Reestablish Diplomatic Ties with China,” Jan. 15, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xwfw\\_665399/s2510\\_665401/202401/t20240115\\_11223838.html](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202401/t20240115_11223838.html).



*Image: PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin, speaking at a press conference on May 20, 2024. During this event, Wang declared that “Those who challenge the one-China principle will be swept away by the trend of the times; those who turn back the wheel of history will be run over by it.”<sup>11</sup>*

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

### “One Country, Two Systems”

The government of the PRC first promulgated the “One Country, Two Systems” (OCTS, 一國兩制) framework in a series of statements made by then-paramount leader Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平) in 1978-1979. In broad terms, OCTS laid out a proposal for Taiwan (and in related proposals, Hong Kong and Macao) to be incorporated into the PRC as a regional government, while retaining its existing political and economic system separate from Beijing’s direct control. This embraced a promised “Three No Changes” (三個不變), which promised that “Taiwan’s [administrative] system will not change, its way of life will not change, Taiwan’s people-to-people relations with foreign countries will not change” (台灣的制度不變，生活方式不變，台灣與外國的民間關係不變). This also embraced the noteworthy pledge that Taiwan could maintain in its own separate armed forces.<sup>12</sup>

For its part, Taiwan’s government has consistently rejected OCTS—which would require both abandonment of Taiwan’s formal ROC constitutional framework, as well as subordination to the PRC—as a basis for either unification or cross-Strait negotiations.<sup>13</sup> This was true even

<sup>12</sup> Deng Xiaoping Puts Forward “One Country Two Systems” (鄧小平提出“一國兩制”), Central Broadcasting Network, Aug. 17, 2014, [https://news.cnr.cn/special/dengxiaoping/latest/201408/t20140817\\_516235884.shtml](https://news.cnr.cn/special/dengxiaoping/latest/201408/t20140817_516235884.shtml).

<sup>13</sup> As then-President Tsai stated in early 2019, “I must emphasize that we have never accepted the ‘1992 Consensus.’ The fundamental reason is because the Beijing authorities’ definition of the ‘1992 Consensus’ is ‘one China’ and ‘one country, two systems.’

before the CCP's ruthless crushing of dissent in Hong Kong, and its subjection of that city to full CCP political control, revealed the promises of OCTS to be hollow. Furthermore, in more recent messaging the CCP has subtly backtracked from prior pledges of Taiwan autonomy made under OCTS (*see discussion on pp. 10-11*).

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The speech delivered by China's leader today has confirmed our misgivings. Here, I want to reiterate that Taiwan absolutely will not accept 'one country, two systems.' The vast majority of Taiwanese also resolutely oppose 'one country, two systems,' and this opposition is also a 'Taiwan consensus.'" See: ROC Presidential Office, "President Tsai Issues Statement on China's President Xi's 'Message to Compatriots in Taiwan,'" January 2, 2019, <https://english.president.gov.tw/News/5621>.

## Part 3: The Xi Jinping Era and the Intensification of Ideological Work on Taiwan

The tenure of CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping has seen an intensification of CCP ideological narratives regarding the imperative of annexing Taiwan—and along with this, a quiet backpedaling on past commitments made to respect Taiwan’s autonomy under a future unification settlement. One significant benchmark was the year 2017, which saw the convening of the 19<sup>th</sup> CCP Party Congress (and Xi’s reappointment for a second term as general secretary) in October. That year also saw a shift—as the CCP’s own discourse would express it—from a posture of “changing from preventing independence to pursuing unification” (“防獨”轉向“促統”).<sup>14</sup> For example, one commentary from PRC state media in December of that year observed that:

*“[A]lthough the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of China [in October 2017] did not have a long discussion on Taiwan, expressions such as ‘realizing the complete reunification of the motherland’ and ‘the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation’ indicate that the mainland’s Taiwan strategy will shift from ‘preventing independence’ to ‘promoting reunification,’ and will compress the space for ‘Taiwan independence’ in a more proactive way, which makes the ‘Taiwan independence’ forces increasingly anxious.”<sup>15</sup>*

14 For examples of this discourse, see: “Scholar: The Central Emphasis of the Mainland’s Policy Is Changing from ‘Preventing Independence’ to ‘Promoting Unification’ and More Actively Taking Initiative to Achieve the Chinese Dream” (學者：大陸對台政策重點由「防獨」轉為「促統」更積極主動實現中國夢), *Global Times*, November 15, 2017, <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1584129856792056664&wfr=spider&for=pc>; and Jin Canrong (金燦榮), “「武統台灣」警告的指向性很清晰” (“The Direction of the Warning of ‘Armed Unification with Taiwan’ Is Very Clear”), *Global Times*, December 13, 2017, <https://opinion.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrK61PV>.

15 Jin Canrong (金燦榮), “「武統台灣」警告的指向性很清晰” (“The Direction of the Warning of ‘Armed Unification with Taiwan’ Is Very Clear”), *Global Times*, December 13, 2017, <https://opinion.huanqiu.com/article/9CaKrK61PV>.

### *Xi Jinping’s 2019 New Year’s Speech as a Signal of Renewed Pressure on Taiwan*

The year 2019 represented another significant benchmark in terms of the CCP’s escalating coercive efforts to assert control over Taiwan. Xi Jinping kicked off the new year with a January 2, 2019 speech titled “To Achieve the Great Revival of the Nation, Advance Peaceful Reunification of the Motherland and Common Struggle” (為實現民族偉大復興推進祖國和平統一而共同奮鬥). The speech was presented as Xi’s commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the January 1979 “Letter to Taiwan Compatriots” (告台灣同胞書).<sup>16</sup> In the January 2019 speech, Xi offered little that was new: he issued renewed calls for adherence to the “1992 Consensus” (九二共識); for reunification based on the “One Country, Two Systems” (一國兩制) framework; and for vaguely-defined “democratic consultation” (民主協商) regarding Taiwan’s future.<sup>17</sup> Although the speech did not represent an overt change of PRC policy, it did represent a change in emphasis, with Xi directly associating himself with a more assertive posture in terms of asserting PRC claims over Taiwan.

The January 2019 speech was significant in at least three

16 The original “Message,” announced on New Year’s Day 1979, was an open letter nominally issued by the PRC National People’s Congress, and published prominently in the *People’s Daily*. The statement called for renewed progress towards unification, declaring that “reuniting the motherland is the sacred mission that history has entrusted to the people of this era” [統一祖國，是歷史賦於我們這一代的神聖使命]. The 1979 message also called for an end to hostile military exchanges (such as occasional artillery duels) between the mainland and Taiwan-controlled islands along the coast, and proposed the “Three Links” (*San Tong*, 三通) of direct postal communication, direct travel, and trade between the two sides. See: “National People’s Congress Standing Committee (Letter to Taiwan Compatriots)” (全國人大常委會《告台灣同胞書》), PRC Government, January 1, 1979, [https://www.gov.cn/test/2006-02/28/content\\_213298.htm](https://www.gov.cn/test/2006-02/28/content_213298.htm).

17 Xi Jinping, “To Achieve the Great Revival of the Nation, Advance Peaceful Reunification of the Motherland and Common Struggle” (為實現民族偉大復興推進祖國和平統一而共同奮鬥), PRC Government, January 2, 2019, [https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2019/content\\_5358673.htm](https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2019/content_5358673.htm).

ways. One noteworthy theme was the effort of the speech to subtly retool past slogans-*cum*-frameworks in ways that asserted PRC sovereignty over Taiwan: such as its mention of “the two sides of the Strait reaching agreement, on the basis of the One-China Principle, the ‘1992 Consensus’ [which agreed that] ‘both sides of the Strait belong to one China, commonly striving for national unification’” (推動兩岸雙方在一個中國原則基礎上達成「海峽兩岸同屬一個中國，共同努力謀求國家統一」的“九二共識”).<sup>18</sup> This statement, seemingly innocuous on its surface, first asserts that Taiwan’s government had committed to the “1992 Consensus” (a dubious assertion, even if the conversation were limited to the period of the early 1990s); and that this in turn was done on the basis of the PRC’s “One China Principle” (which asserts full PRC sovereignty over Taiwan). This is another classic example of CCP narrative leg-*er*demain, in asserting that a given diplomatic event (whether it be UNR 2758, the establishment of diplomatic relations, *et al*) represents, *ipso facto*, adherence to the “One-China Principle” as defined by the CCP.



Image: A meeting held in Beijing to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1979 ‘Letter to Taiwan Compatriots’ (January 2, 2019). Senior CCP leaders were present, to include CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping (center stage).<sup>19</sup>

18 Ibid.

19 “Highlights of Xi’s Speech at Taiwan Message Anniversary Event,” PRC State Council Information Office, January 2, 2019, [http://english.scio.gov.cn/topnews/2019-01/02/content\\_74334053.htm](http://english.scio.gov.cn/topnews/2019-01/02/content_74334053.htm).

Arguably the most salient aspect of the speech was couched within subtle language, whose significance could easily slip past casual observers not attuned to the signaling often couched in veiled terms within CCP discourse. In previous years, CCP messaging on Taiwan—especially that conducted in connection to the OCTS framework—had promised a high degree of autonomy to Taiwan.<sup>20</sup> Xi’s January 2019 speech contained the following significant sentence: “Under the prerequisites of ensuring national sovereignty, security, and development interests, after peaceful reunification, the social system and lifestyle of Taiwan compatriots will be fully respected; and Taiwan compatriots’ private property, religious beliefs, and lawful rights and interests will receive full protection.” (“在確保國家主權、安全、發展利益的前提下，和平統一後，台灣同胞的社會制度和生活方式等將得到充分尊重，台灣同胞的私人財產、宗教信仰、合法權益將得到充分保障。”)

This statement, while conciliatory on the surface, actually withdrew many of the promises for Taiwan autonomy made in preceding decades. It made no mention of past pledges not to dispatch troops or administrative personnel to Taiwan (*see further below*), nor did it promise to maintain Taiwan’s political system or autonomous governance. (The vague promise to maintain Taiwan’s “social system” is far weaker, and subject to innumerable interpretations.) The promise to maintain religious freedoms must be viewed within the CCP’s extensive crackdown on religious practice during Xi’s tenure.<sup>21</sup>

20 For example, the 1993 edition of the PRC white paper on Taiwan policy promised that Taiwan would be “distinguished from the other provinces or regions of China by its high degree of autonomy,” and that “the mainland will not dispatch troops or administrative personnel to the island.” (See: *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China*, PRC State Council, August 1993, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7953.htm>.) The 2000 document echoed the promises of the 1993 edition, promising that “after reunification, Taiwan will enjoy a high degree of autonomy, and the Central Government will not send troops or administrative personnel to be stationed in Taiwan... [and will] fully respect Taiwan compatriots’ wish to govern and administer Taiwan by themselves.” (See: *The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*, PRC State Council, February 2000, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7956.htm>.)

21 Sarah Cook, *The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Reviv-*

But most significant of all, the statement premises all promises of liberality under the “prerequisites of ensuring national sovereignty, security, and development interests”—all criteria invoked by the PRC in its harsh crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong, and in the subjection of that territory to full (if thinly veiled) CCP political control.<sup>22</sup>

The third and final noteworthy aspect of the speech was that, despite the declared desirability of “peaceful reunification,” Xi pointedly asserted the PRC’s right to exercise military force, stating that “We make no promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option of taking all necessary means” to prevent Taiwan independence. While this was consistent with longstanding CCP messaging on Taiwan, its direct reassertion by Xi himself—coupled with the escalation in PRC coercive military pressure that followed, from 2020 to the present—seems in retrospect a clear harbinger of things to come.

### *The CCP’s “Comprehensive Plan” for Unification*

In late 2021, and then developing into early 2022, PRC state media began to mention what it called the “Party’s Comprehensive Plan for Resolving the Taiwan Problem in the New Era” (新時代黨解決台灣問題總體方略) (*hereafter*, “Comprehensive Plan”). The “plan” lacks any public official policy document, but in January 2022 a Xinhua commentary described the “plan” in terms of five slogans: “national unification, national rejuvenation” (國家統一, 民族復興); “ending political antagonisms, realizing lasting peace” (結

*al, Repression, and Resistance under Xi Jinping*, Freedom House, February 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/special-report/2017/battle-chinas-spirit>.

<sup>22</sup> “In Full: Official English Translation of the Hong Kong National Security Law,” Hong Kong Free Press, July 1, 2020, <https://hongkongfp.com/2020/07/01/in-full-english-translation-of-the-hong-kong-national-security-law/>; and “Hong Kong National Security Law: What Is It and Is It Worrying?,” BBC News, March 18, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-52765838>.



*Image: Then-President Tsai Ing-wen delivering a speech in response to Xi Jinping’s New Year’s 2019 open address to the people of Taiwan, which signaled intensified efforts to achieve “unification.” Tsai’s response rejected both the “Once Country, Two Systems” framework and the PRC’s advocacy of a “1992 Consensus” (January 2, 2019).<sup>23</sup>*

束政治對立, 實現持久和平); “placing hopes in the Taiwan people, opposing ‘Taiwan independence’ separatism” (寄希望於臺灣人民, 反對「台獨」分裂); “integrated development, common market” (融合發展, 共同市場); and “cultural inheritance, spiritual concordance” (文化傳承, 心靈契合).<sup>24</sup>

The “plan” appears to be a vaguely defined set of slogans rather than a truly cohesive set of policies. However, the broad themes in it—bypassing Taiwan’s government in favor of engagement with private individuals, pursuing economic integration, and promoting cultural exchanges—reflect longstanding united front efforts directed at Taiwan. In this sense, it should be understood more as a loose description of the CCP’s united front political warfare, rather

<sup>23</sup> Image source: ROC Presidential Office, photo dated January 2, 2019, <https://english.president.gov.tw/News/5621>.

<sup>24</sup> “五组关键词读懂新时代党解决台湾问题总体方略” (“Five Groups of Keywords for Understanding the Party’s Comprehensive Plan for Resolving the Taiwan Question in New Era”), *People’s Daily* online, January 19, 2022, <http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2022/0119/c1001-32334991.html>.

than as a cohesive plan of action.<sup>25</sup> The components of the “plan” related to “integrated development” are also reflective of the concept of “fusion with Taiwan” (融合): the idea that economic integration with Taiwan will pave the way for political unification.<sup>26</sup> This idea is central to much of the CCP’s united front work, particularly as it relates to Taiwan’s outlying islands close to the PRC coast.<sup>27</sup>

### *The 2022 White Paper on Taiwan Policy*

In August 2022, the PRC State Information Office<sup>28</sup> released a new white paper on Taiwan policy, titled *The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era* (台灣問題與新時代中國統一事業).<sup>29</sup> This document was the CCP’s first white paper on Taiwan policy since 2000, and was noteworthy in a few respects. This includes directly linking Taiwan policy more closely with Xi himself. As the document states, the CCP central leadership under Xi had “comprehensively grasped the epochal changes in cross-Strait re-

lations, richly developing national unification theory and policies towards Taiwan, advancing cross-Strait relations in the correct developmental direction, forming the Chinese Communist Party’s Comprehensive Plan for Resolving the Taiwan Problem in the New Era, [and] providing a foundation and program of action for successfully performing Taiwan work in the New Era.” The 2022 white paper was particularly emphatic in identifying the annexation of Taiwan as a cornerstone of the “great rejuvenation [or ‘revival’] of the Chinese nation” (中華民族偉大復興), a staple slogan of CCP propaganda under Xi’s tenure.<sup>30</sup>

The 2022 white paper is most noteworthy, however, in what it left out. Both the 1993 and 2000 white papers made sweeping promises of autonomy for Taiwan under the OCTS framework, as well as pledges that the PRC would send neither military personnel to garrison the island, nor CCP officials to administer it.<sup>31</sup> As with Xi’s January 2019 speech, such pledges were glaringly omitted from the 2022 policy document. Tellingly, however, the document included three invocations of the need to “uphold national sovereignty, security, [and] development interests” (維護國家主權、安全、發展利益)—phrasing that has become coded language under Xi’s tenure for establishing full-CCP political dominance over restive regions.<sup>32</sup>

25 For a fuller analysis of the “plan,” see: John Dotson, “What Is the CCP’s ‘Comprehensive Plan for Resolving the Taiwan Problem’?” *Global Taiwan Brief*, February 9, 2022, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/02/what-is-the-ccps-comprehensive-plan-for-resolving-the-taiwan-problem/>.

26 “徹底解決台灣問題前，我們必須先解決3件事” (“Before Thoroughly Resolving the Taiwan Problem, We Must First Resolve Three Things”), *Hongsi Wenhua Wang*, October 18, 2023, <https://www.hswb.org.cn/wzzx/xxhq/bm/2023-10-17/84428.html>.

27 Eric Chan and Ian Murphy, “Countering Cognitive Warfare: Taiwan’s Defense Against Party Influence in Kinmen,” *Global Taiwan Brief*, July 24, 2024, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2024/07/countering-cognitive-warfare-taiwans-defense-against-party-influence-in-kinmen/>.

28 It is worth noting that the PRC State Council Information Office is an alter ego of the CCP Central Propaganda Department (中央宣傳部, *Zhongyang Xuanchuan Bu*). The two names are used by the same bureaucratic entity, depending on whether it is acting in a Party or nominal state role.

29 The official English-language version is: *The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era*, PRC State Council Information Office, August 2022, <https://english.news.cn/20220810/df9d3b8702154b34bbf1d451b99bf64a/c.html>. The Chinese version is: 台灣問題與新時代中國統一事業, PRC State Council Information Office, August 2022, [https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2022-08/10/content\\_5704839.htm](https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2022-08/10/content_5704839.htm).

30 In the English language edition of the document, the word “rejuvenation” appears 28 times. This emphasis is even heavier in the Chinese edition, where *faxing* (復興) appears 34 times, and where *Zhonghua minzu weida faxing* (“great rejuvenation of the Chinese people”) (中華民族偉大復興) appears 15 times.

31 The 1993 document included the promise that Taiwan would be “distinguished from the other provinces or regions of China by its high degree of autonomy,” and that “the mainland will not dispatch troops or administrative personnel to the island.” (See: *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China*, PRC State Council, August 1993, <https://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7953.htm>.) The 2000 document echoed these statements, promising that “after reunification, Taiwan will enjoy a high degree of autonomy, and the Central Government will not send troops or administrative personnel to be stationed in Taiwan.” (See: *The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*, PRC State Council, February 2000, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/taiwan/7956.htm>.)

32 For a fuller analysis of the contents of the 2022 white



Image: A conference convened by the PRC Embassy in Kenya to discuss the 2022 white paper on Taiwan policy (May 20, 2024). Such events demonstrate how CCP propaganda narratives are intertwined with its lawfare efforts, as the PRC leverages diplomatic pressure on other governments to adhere to its policies on Taiwan.<sup>33</sup>

### The 2024 Addendum to the Anti-Secession Law

While there is no true rule of law in the PRC, the CCP does employ nominal law to codify—and often, to emphasize for propaganda purposes—existing CCP policies. This was the case with the 2005 *Anti-Secession Law* (反分裂國家法), which declared that “Taiwan is a part of China. The nation will never permit ‘Taiwan independence’ separatist forces under any name, or in any manner to break Taiwan away from China” (台灣是中國的一部分。國家絕不允許「台獨」分裂勢力以任何名義、任何方式把臺灣從中國分裂出去). The law also declared that, in the event of either

paper, see: John Dotson, “Beijing Signals a Harder Line Policy on Taiwan Through the 20th Party Congress and Beyond,” *China Brief*, September 20, 2022, <https://jamestown.org/program/beijing-signals-a-harder-line-policy-on-taiwan-through-the-20th-party-congress-and-beyond/>.

<sup>33</sup> “Ambassador to Kenya Zhou Pingjian Attends Symposium on ‘The Taiwan Question and China’s Reunification in the New Era’ Organized by the Embassy” (駐肯亞大使周平劍出席使館舉辦的「台灣問題與新時代中國統一事業」座談會), PRC Foreign Ministry, May 21, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zwbd\\_673032/gzhd\\_673042/202405/t20240521\\_11308931.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zwbd_673032/gzhd_673042/202405/t20240521_11308931.shtml).

Taiwan secession or circumstances under which “possibilities for peaceful reunification should be completely exhausted,” then “the state shall employ non-peaceful means (非和平方式) and other necessary measures” to return Taiwan to the national fold.<sup>34</sup>

In June 2024, the PRC government released a legal document, issued in the form of a joint statement from five government agencies, titled *Opinions Concerning Punishing Taiwan Independence Diehard Elements, and National Crimes of Inciting Separatism, on the Basis of Law* (關於依法懲治「台獨」頑固分子分裂國家、煽動分裂國家犯罪的意見). The document threatened harsh punishment—up to and including death—for activities promoting an independent Taiwan. This is to include a broad range of activities, including holding a referendum on Taiwan’s status, engaging in government-to-government ties, or promoting Taiwan’s membership in international organizations. Still heavier punishments are to be levied on persons “colluding with foreign countries or outside organizations or persons” (與外國或者境外機構、組織、個人相勾結). The “opinion” also made claims of extraterritoriality in PRC authority, thereby placing not only Taiwan residents under threat, but potentially anyone worldwide running afoul of the CCP’s definition of “separatist” activities.<sup>35</sup>

The June 2024 document provides another example of how the CCP’s ideological frameworks intertwine with both its propaganda campaigns and coercive lawfare directed at Taiwan. The “opinion” should be viewed less as

<sup>34</sup> *Anti-Secession Law* (反分裂國家法), PRC National People’s Congress, March 14, 2005, [http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/zccs/zccs\\_61195/cjtdwgfz/flwj/202408/t20240801\\_12639638.htm](http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/zccs/zccs_61195/cjtdwgfz/flwj/202408/t20240801_12639638.htm).

<sup>35</sup> *Opinions Concerning Punishing Taiwan Independence Diehard Elements, and National Crimes of Inciting Separatism, on the Basis of Law* (關於依法懲治「台獨」頑固分子分裂國家、煽動分裂國家犯罪的意見), PRC Government, June 21, 2024, [http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/topone/202406/t20240621\\_12629559.htm](http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/topone/202406/t20240621_12629559.htm). The five agencies issuing the document were: the Supreme People’s Court, the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of State Security, and the Ministry of Justice. The fact that the high court issued this finding in tandem with the four legal / security agencies further emphasizes the lack of any judicial independence in the PRC system.

a legal document than as a component of a broader effort to intimidate Taiwan's citizens, and as yet another manifestation of the CCP's political warfare against the island and its people.



*Image: “Punishing Taiwan Independence Diehards on the Basis of Law” (依法惩治台独顽固分子). A website of the PRC Taiwan Affairs Office lists identified “Taiwan independence diehard elements,” and further offers an e-mail address to inform on the “crimes” of these and other “diehards.”<sup>36</sup>*

<sup>36</sup> “Punishing Taiwan Independence Diehard Elements on the Basis of Law” (依法惩治台獨頑固分子), PRC Taiwan Affairs Office, [http://www.gwyttb.gov.cn/zccs/zccs\\_61195/cjtdwgfz/](http://www.gwyttb.gov.cn/zccs/zccs_61195/cjtdwgfz/). The 10 identified “diehard elements” are: Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌), You Si-kun (游錫堃), Wu Jaushieh (吳釗燮), Hsiao Bi-khim (蕭美琴), Koo Li-hsiung (顧立雄), Tsai Chi-chang (蔡其昌), Ker Chien-ming (柯建銘), Lin Fei-fan (林飛帆), Chen Jiau-hua (陳椒華), Wang Ting-yu (王定宇).

## Conclusions

Casual observers of Chinese statecraft are often too quick to discount the role of ideology in both the CCP's foundational worldview, and in its policy-making. However, the establishment of correct ideology to unify and guide the party has always been a central concern of the CCP. This has been even more true during the tenure of Xi Jinping, who has elevated the eponymously-titled “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era” (習近平新時代中國特色社會主義思想) to a core element of all aspects of the party's work, and of his own cult of personality. This ideological focus has been particularly pronounced in relation to Taiwan policy, under the cognizance of Xi and his appointed ideology czar Wang Huning (王滬寧).<sup>37</sup>

The CCP's ideological frameworks for Taiwan also connect directly to its political warfare efforts intended to subvert Taiwan's democratic political system, and the collective will of Taiwan's citizens to resist an annexation settlement on the CCP's terms. PRC united front efforts directed at subverting Taiwan society, its information manipulation efforts directed at Taiwan's information

ecosystem, and the lawfare conflation of CCP policy positions with diplomatic developments like UNR 2758, are all informed and directed by the ideological frameworks that the CCP promotes both to China's own people and the broader international community. Understanding these frameworks is therefore a key element for coming to grips with the CCP's program of political warfare directed against Taiwan—and increasingly, the wider world beyond.

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<sup>37</sup> John Dotson, “The Promotion of Wang Huning and the Prospects for an Increasingly Ideological CCP Taiwan Policy,” *Global Taiwan Brief*, November 2, 2022, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2022/11/the-promotion-of-wang-huning-ccp-taiwan-policy/>; and John Dotson, Wang Huning's First Year Supervising the United Front System: Taiwan Policy and Discourse, *Global Taiwan Brief*, January 10, 2024, <https://globaltaiwan.org/2024/01/wang-hunings-first-year-supervising-the-united-front-system-taiwan-policy-and-discourse/>.