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**Taiwan’s “Little Pink” Resentment: Expulsions, Douyin, and the Edge of Democratic Tolerance**

By: Kai-Shen Huang

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Individuals who behave insincerely—like influencers who tailor their views to chase clicks, or politicians who stage good deeds for public approval—do not just waste people’s time, attention, and emotional energy. They also exploit trust and goodwill for their own gain. This kind of inauthenticity was often dismissed as a personal quirk, not a serious threat. But in Taiwan today, there are now instances where such behaviors that once appeared tolerable—perhaps amusing, odd, or irrelevant—have triggered explicit governmental intervention and social condemnation.

Commonly labeled as *xiaofenhong* (小粉紅, “little pinks”) by netizens, a small number of influencers on the platform Douyin (抖音), mostly immigrants from the People’s Republic of China (PRC) to Taiwan, have recently gained notoriety for openly advocating for Taiwan’s unification with China—sometimes even supporting a military invasion. Their provocative public displays have included waving the PRC flag and livestreaming pro-unification messages from prominent locations in Taipei.

Their behavior has cast a spotlight on the uneasy question of authenticity: these influencers benefit from the freedoms of a liberal democracy, yet use those same liberties to champion authoritarian ideals—or even to promote the destruction of the very free society under which they live. The dissonance is hard to ignore—and for many, harder still to accept.

Take, for example, Liu Zhenya (劉振亞), better known online as “Yaya” (亞亞). Originally from China’s Hunan province, Liu secured dependent residency in Taiwan and runs the influential Douyin channel [“Yaya in Taiwan”](#) (亞亞在台灣). Through her account, she routinely shares videos advocating Taiwan’s unification with China, often interspersed with

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more benign lifestyle clips that are also posted to platforms like YouTube. Yaya's livestream style is consistently confrontational. During [China's military drills near Taiwan in May 2024](#), tensions surged across Taiwanese society. Yet, Liu responded by [livestreaming](#) her enthusiastic praise of the exercises, adopting a tone as if she were theatrically auditioning for the role of a PLA commander:

*"From May 23 to May 24, the PLA Eastern Theater Command conducted the 'Joint Sharp Sword-2924A' exercise, involving land, naval, air, and rocket forces encircling Taiwan. The map clearly shows the island entirely encircled, leaving no room for escape by sea or air! Did you see the carefully crafted, aggressive announcements from the Eastern Theater Command, deliberately published in traditional characters to ensure clarity for Taiwanese audiences? This exercise is undoubtedly the most powerful and aggressive to date. Defending national sovereignty, [we're] always ready. Perhaps tomorrow morning we'll wake up to see Taiwan covered in PRC flags—that thought alone is thrilling!"*



*Image: A screenshot of Yaya's Douyin account, where she asserted that "Taiwan is an inseparable part of China" and "[We] don't want 'One Country, Two Systems' [we want] 'One Country, One System'" (Image source: [Douyin](#))*

Although extreme political rhetoric of this kind has circulated in Taiwan for years, the government has only recently begun to respond—and abruptly escalated it as a matter of national security. Liu's dependent residency was [revoked](#), with a five-year ban on reapplication, and she was ordered to leave Taiwan by March 25. Weeks later, Liu reappeared in a profile published by [Global People](#), a magazine affiliated with *China's People's Daily*. Speaking from across the strait, she doubled down on her views, [calling Taiwan "China's territory" and declaring that "Taiwan independence is a dead end."](#)

Liu was not alone in her expulsion from the island: two other Chinese immigrants and Douyin influencers, [Enji \(恩綺\)](#) and [Xiaowei \(小微\)](#), who also promoted armed unification, were similarly ordered to leave Taiwan by March 31.

In explaining the government's decision, authorities cited provisions prohibiting conduct deemed harmful to national security and social stability. [Liu's appeal to halt her deportation was rejected by the court](#), which referenced Article 20(1) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*—"Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited"—as the legal basis for ruling that her speech constituted incitement to war.

### **A War of Symbols**

The government's decision to revoke the residency rights of these influencers signals a shift in the way these influencers' behavior is being perceived. Behavior that was previously seen as mere posturing or eccentricity is now provoking a more serious response from the government. The influencers' presence in Taiwan, coupled with their use of Taiwan's democratic freedoms to challenge its legitimacy as a state, has brought into sharp focus a deeper question: Who truly belongs, and under what terms?

Taiwanese authorities have described the expulsions as being essential to [safeguarding national security](#). But legally, the picture is less clear. If these influencers committed serious offenses—participating in united front operations, entering into sham marriages for the sake of residency, or working with foreign hostile forces—the appropriate response would have been to block their departure and pursue a formal investigation. Therefore, the decision to deport these influencers has short-circuited what might have been a test of legal accountability. It also raised broader concerns about the credibility of using national security as a rationale for deportation, and the government's willingness to subject this rationale to legal scrutiny.

What these influencers have stirred is not merely legal controversy, but a more unsettling current of social unease. As cross-Strait relations deteriorate, public tolerance for such inflammatory rhetoric—especially open endorsements of “armed unification”—has sharply declined. President Lai Ching-te’s (賴清德) declaration on March 13 that China is a “[foreign hostile force](#),” and his [announcement of 17 measures to combat pro-PRC subversion](#), has further intensified this atmosphere, thereby reinforcing a political climate in which such provocations are perceived very differently. Moreover, the public’s perception that these individuals came to Taiwan for its freedoms and welfare, only to attack the very foundations of the society that shelters them, elicits a sense of betrayal in many that cuts deeper than politics and reveals the fragility of trust in times of growing threat.

The urge to hold these individuals accountable is not only emotional, but also symbolic. When a Chinese immigrant publicly advocates for armed unification, the provocation strikes at the two very symbols that define Taiwan: a distinct political identity, and a democratic order that was hard-won and is fiercely defended. Identity draws lines, marking who is inside and who is out—and demands recognition of these identifying signifiers. Democracy, by contrast, protects plurality: the right to express, perform, and even celebrate ideas that challenge the dominant narratives of identity.

This symbolic tension is starkly visible when pro-PRC immigrants invoke the language of democratic rights to display flags and espouse rhetoric that embraces authoritarianism and delegitimizes Taiwan’s sovereignty. In doing so, they exploit one symbol (democracy) to erode another (identity). This is not merely an ideological disagreement, but a conflict over which symbols represent the collective identity and who gets to decide these symbols.

It may be tempting to dismiss such incidents as isolated performances and thus not worthy of legal intervention. But in the context of rising geopolitical tensions, symbols carry strategic weight. TikTok clips, flag-waving, and patriotic soundbites are provocative media created with the goal of becoming further amplified in online and offline spaces. They are not just spontaneous expressions of individual opinion, but part of a broader arsenal of soft disruption that edges into the territory of [gray zone tactics](#). In a society like Taiwan’s, where speech is free but sovereignty is contested, such performances create impacts far greater than their seeming triviality might suggest.

## *The Edge of Tolerance*

In the end, this public backlash reveals a volatile mix of forces: geopolitical anxiety, a deepening sense of national identity, and moral outrage at perceived betrayal. That convergence makes these pro-unification influencers, with their very identity as Chinese immigrants in Taiwan, almost irresistible targets—lightning rods for frustrations that probably extend far beyond their individual conduct.

And yet, these cases are more than spectacles of outrage—they are a litmus test of Taiwan’s democratic character under siege. A confident democracy does not bend its legal judgment to the whims of public sentiment. When the state resorts to deportation in the name of security, the government is not merely enforcing laws, but also redrawing the boundaries of citizenship itself. The government’s recent handling of extreme speech by Chinese immigrants—especially that which calls for war—starkly indicates where those boundaries lie. By drawing that line, Taiwan is defining not just who belongs, but what its democracy can withstand.

**The main point:** The government’s recent decision to deport several Chinese immigrant Douyin influencers after they advocated for “armed unification” reveals that such behavior is now being taken seriously by the government, and indicates the limits of tolerance in Taiwan’s democracy. Public outrage over these cases stems from geopolitical tensions, deepening national identity, and a sense of betrayal that these influencers are paradoxically using one aspect of Taiwanese identity (democracy) to erode another aspect of identity (sovereignty).

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## **Polls Indicate that the US Public Supports Taiwan Defense, Regardless of Views on China**

By: Timothy Rich

*Timothy S. Rich is a professor of political science at Western Kentucky University and director of the International Public Opinion Lab (IPOL). His research focuses on public opinion and electoral politics in East Asia.*

In February this year, the US State Department Fact Sheet on [Taiwan](#) dropped the phrase “we do not support Taiwan independence,” which had been indicative of the United States’ long-standing position on cross-Strait relations. [China](#) quickly rebuked the Trump Administration’s move as a “regression” and “errone-

ous.” Secretary of State Pete Hegseth’s statements at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) meeting that same month further indicated an American pivot away from security concerns in Europe and [towards the Asia-Pacific](#).

Whether these early moves indicate a fundamental shift in policy towards Taiwan or simply a means to signal a more aggressive stance towards China is unclear. However, the action does pose the question of whether the United States is committed to Taiwan’s defense. In 2024, then-candidate Donald Trump suggested that, as president, he [would not defend Taiwan](#). A Trump Administration that is less interested in military commitments may also envision some means to use Taiwan as a negotiation point with China. In contrast, former President Biden pledged to [defend Taiwan](#) if China were to invade—and traditionally, most experts [have assumed](#) that the United States would respond militarily on Taiwan’s behalf.

China’s rapid military growth and increasingly provocative actions towards Taiwan challenge the United States’ policy of [maintaining peace](#) across the Taiwan Strait. The United States has increased arms sales to Taiwan in recent years, including the approval of [USD 2 billion in missile and radar systems](#) in 2024. However, even with proposed increases in spending, Taiwan [cannot afford](#) the quantity of weapons necessary for its defense. Thus, a broader US commitment is crucial.

As a result, I seek to unpack to what extent the American public supports Taiwan’s defense, especially as “America First” populism suggests an increasingly inward-looking public. At the same time, increasing anti-China sentiment and acknowledgement of the threat that a rising China poses to Taiwan may bolster efforts toward Taiwan’s defense. Moreover, how politicians in both the Republican and Democratic Parties emphasize the China threat could potentially further drive public sentiment.

Identifying the extent of support can be difficult. A plurality (44 percent) of respondents surveyed by [YouGov](#) in 2017 viewed Taiwan as friendly (with only 13 percent viewing Taiwan as an ally), while 41 percent in a [2018 Pew Research Center](#) claimed to be concerned about cross-Strait tensions. Meanwhile, a majority (61 percent) of respondents in a [2019 Chicago Council on Global Affairs](#) survey opposed arms sales to Taiwan. Surveys since 2020 have typically been more favorable to Taiwan, as sentiment towards China has become more negative. For example, a [2021 Chicago Council survey](#) showed that 52 percent supported using US

troops to defend Taiwan, while [a 2022 survey](#) through the International Public Opinion Lab (IPOL) found even higher support among respondents (61 percent) for defending Taiwan, including a thin majority among those who stated the United States should focus on domestic concerns. A 2023 YouGov survey further suggests that the US public is [less interested](#) in warming relations with China at the expense of Taiwan, with little difference between Democrats and Republicans. Still, the use of military force on behalf of Taiwan shows more [mixed results](#) here and in [2022](#).

To address such questions regarding US public sentiment, I commissioned a national web survey through Centiment from February 12-26. We asked 522 respondents: “Do you support or oppose the United States defending Taiwan if it were attacked by China?” Here, a clear majority—63.79 percent—support coming to Taiwan’s defense, with surprisingly slight variation by partisan identification (Democrats: 64.53 percent; Republicans: 65 percent). Further analysis shows that majorities in every age cohort (e.g., 18-29, 30-39, 40-49) supported the United States defending Taiwan, with older respondents slightly more in favor. Our findings are consistent with the previous surveys mentioned above finding increased bipartisan support for Taiwan.

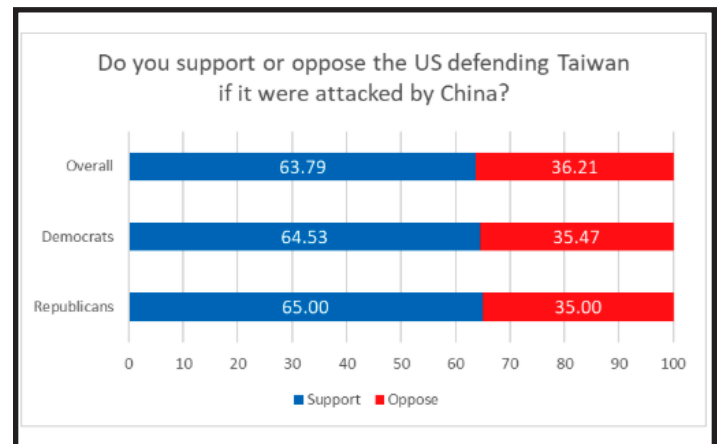
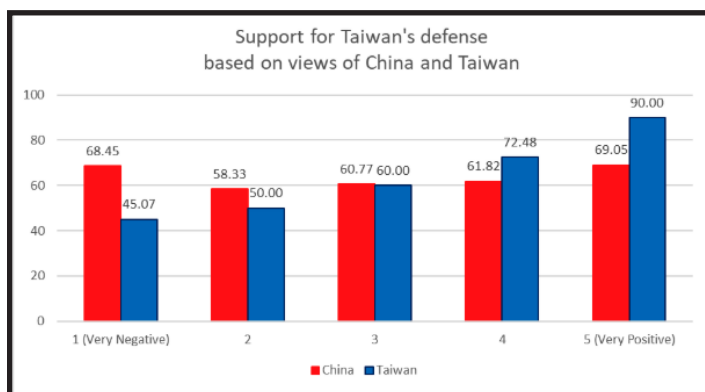


Figure: Do you support or oppose the United States defending Taiwan if it were attacked by China? (Figure source: Created by author using data from Centiment.)

These results, however, do not tell us whether respondents are supportive of Taiwan’s defense as a result of favorable views of Taiwan itself, or whether this support simply benefits from anti-China sentiment. Suppose that views of China are the dominant factor here. In that case, this public opinion poll may suggest only a thin commitment to Taiwan—one that could be malleable if the Trump Administration gains concessions from China in areas unrelated to Taiwan’s defense.

Nonetheless, previous research indicates that [sentiment](#) towards Taiwan drives views more than anti-China sentiment. To address this, we asked respondents earlier in the survey to evaluate several countries, including China and Taiwan, on a five-point scale (1 being very negative, 5 very positive). As expected, we find a public with more favorable views of Taiwan, averaging a 3.10 on the scale to China's 2.34—with Democrats exhibiting higher evaluations of both compared to Republicans (China: 2.58 vs. 2.13; Taiwan: 3.21 vs. 3.09). Moreover, age corresponds with greater deviation in assessments, with those under 30 exhibiting marginally higher evaluations for China over Taiwan (2.99 vs. 2.92), growing to a two-point difference for those in their 70s (1.65 vs. 3.65).

Whereas we expected those with more positive views of China to be less supportive of Taiwan's defense, we find a nonlinear pattern. There was little substantive difference regarding support for Taiwan's defense between those who view China very negatively versus very positively, with a total variance across views of China of only 10.72 percent. However, as views of Taiwan improve, support for its defense increases in an essentially linear pattern, with support doubling between those with the most negative views versus the most positive views of the country.



*Figure: Support for Taiwan's defense based on views of China and Taiwan. (Figure source: Created by author using data from Centiment.)*

In order to capture beliefs about the role of the United States in world affairs earlier in the survey, I asked respondents which of the following best describes their views: 1) "We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems at home;" or 2) "It's best for the future of the country to be active in world affairs." Even among those prioritizing domestic issues, a majority (56.33 percent) supported defending Taiwan, increasing to 75.24 percent among those supporting active US foreign policy. I also earlier asked

respondents to evaluate the statement "I pay attention to international news"—finding those who agreed with the statement were predictably more supportive of Taiwan's defense (70.45 percent). Yet, even a majority of those not paying attention to international news showed support for aiding Taiwan (56.76 percent).

Additional statistical analysis finds that when controlling for demographic factors, views on the role of the United States in world affairs, and attention to international news, evaluations of Taiwan still positively correlate with a statistically significant increase in support for its defense. In contrast, views of China are not statistically significant.

The results suggest that even as the American public has grown increasingly inward-looking, it still supports efforts to defend Taiwan. Moreover, the results incentivize Taiwan to continue soft power measures that increase public affinity for the country, as this is a greater motivator than anti-China sentiment—the latter of which will always be influenced by factors beyond the Taiwan Strait. Admittedly, this analysis does not address how deeply committed the US public is to this position or whether the United States even has [the capabilities to defend Taiwan](#). If China were to invade, actually coming to Taiwan's actual defense would not only far exceed the scope of current US commitments, but also likely bring about a much larger military conflict. A risk-averse US public may quickly lose support for a conflict where American casualties could exceed those from the [Vietnam War](#). With an invasion posing considerable costs for China, other actions, such as a limited blockade, may be more probable. Unfortunately, existing survey work typically does not unpack public support for Taiwan under different contingencies. This presents the possibility that the broad, abstract US support for Taiwan's defense may not hold up during potentially prolonged and expensive interventions.

**The main point:** Although the government's "America First" rhetoric casts doubt on US commitment to Taiwan's defense, polls indicate that a majority of Americans support the United States defending Taiwan if attacked by China. This support is regardless of the individuals' views towards China. However, positive views of Taiwan do correlate with greater support for US defense of Taiwan.

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## The Malicious Exploitation of Deepfake Technology: Political Manipulation, Disinformation, and Privacy Violations in Taiwan

By: Ahmet Yiğitalp Tulga

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The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has facilitated the creation of hyper-realistic yet entirely fabricated text, audio clips, videos, and images, commonly referred to as “[deepfakes](#).” The emergence of deepfake technology has provided malicious actors with a potent tool for spreading propaganda, disseminating misinformation, damaging reputations, manipulating public perception, and eroding trust in institutions. This technology allows these groups to create highly realistic yet false narratives, posing a significant threat to both national and global security.

In the case of Taiwan, deepfake technology is also exploited for malicious purposes: including political manipulation and reputational damage, by both independent malicious actors and state-sponsored groups. Accordingly, this study examines how deepfake technology has been used by these actors in Taiwan, providing specific examples to illustrate its impact.

### **What is a Deepfake and How to Make One**

Recent advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) have resulted in the development of algorithms capable of generating highly-realistic synthetic images, videos, audio, and text. Among these innovations, deepfake technology is particularly noteworthy. Although definitions may vary, deepfakes generally refer to AI-generated media that manipulates perceived reality using deep-learning techniques to fabricate events, statements, or actions. [1] Deepfake creation often relies on generative adversarial networks (GANs), which comprise two neural networks: a generator that creates synthetic content, and a discriminator that assesses and refines it until the difference between real and fake content becomes nearly indistinguishable. [2]

Originally developed for entertainment and creative applications, deepfake technology is increasingly being misused for deceptive purposes. With the growing accessibility of deepfake tools such as [FakeApp](#) and [Nudify](#), malicious actors can now easily generate highly convincing fake content that poses [significant risks](#) of reputational damage, disinformation, and manipu-

lation.

### **How Malicious Actors Use Deepfakes**

Numerous academic studies indicate that malicious actors frequently exploit deepfake technology to create non-consensual sexual videos and images. According to [one report](#), [95,820](#) sexually explicit deepfake videos were circulating on the internet in 2023. These deepfake videos are reported to be extremely popular on the internet, having garnered [approximately 134 million](#) views. Similarly, a study by Van der Nagel [asserts](#) that 96 percent of deepfake images, videos, and content consist of non-consensual pornographic material.

In recent years, South Korea and the United States, along with many other countries, have experienced a significant increase in deepfake sexual content disseminated by malicious actors across the internet and social media platforms such as [Telegram](#), often without the victims’ consent. More than one in ten students in the [United States reported knowing](#) friends or classmates who use deepfake technology to create sexually explicit images of other students. For instance, in the United States, a female high school student was victimized by deepfake pornography created by her classmates using a [nudifying app called “Clothoff”](#), and the manipulated video was subsequently shared on Snapchat and Instagram. Similarly, a notable case involved a [high school teacher in Busan, South Korea](#), whose face was superimposed onto explicit images and shared in a Telegram group with 1,200 members under the hashtag “Shame Your Teacher.”

Beyond its use in non-consensual pornography, deepfake technology is increasingly being leveraged for fraudulent activities. Thousands of individuals have been deceived by deepfake content featuring fabricated likenesses of well-known figures, including [Elon Musk](#) and [Brad Pitt](#). In early 2024, the [British engineering firm Arup](#) became a victim of a deepfake-enabled fraud scheme, resulting in a financial loss of approximately USD 25 million.

Manipulative deepfake content involving political figures represents another area where malicious actors frequently exploit this technology. For instance, politicians in [Pakistan](#), [Slovakia](#), and [Türkiye](#) have been targeted with deepfake content designed to manipulate public perception. In 2024, more than [30 high-profile](#) female British politicians were targeted with deepfake technology, with their images uploaded to a sexually explicit website prior to the UK general election. Similarly, a deepfake video falsely claiming that [Ukrainian](#)

[President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's wife](#) purchased a luxury car during her visit to Paris in June 2024 was circulated on social media. Shared by pro-Russian influencers, the video garnered nearly 18 million views within 24 hours. Additionally, in March 2025, a [fraudulent deepfake video of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto](#) was circulated through at least 22 different TikTok accounts, reportedly misleading thousands of viewers.



*Image: Still images from a fabricated video posted to Youtube in the lead-up to Taiwan's January 2024 elections, which featured statements falsely attributed to then-presidential candidate Lai Ching-te. (Image source: [Taiwan FactCheck Center](#))*

### **Usage of Deepfake Technology for Malicious Purposes in Taiwan**

With the rise of deepfake technology, Taiwan has encountered challenges akin to those faced by many other countries. Deepfake content has resulted in significant consequences, including the dissemination of disinformation, the manipulation of political discourse, and violations of personal privacy.

The first major issue is the use of deepfake technology for political manipulation. [During](#) and after the 2024 Taiwanese presidential election, there was a surge in disinformation campaigns driven by deepfake technology, which featured fabricated videos and manipulated audio clips intended to discredit political figures. For instance, deepfake videos falsely accused leaders of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民進黨) of [corruption](#), and aimed to undermine the credibility of the party's presidential candidate Lai Ching-te (賴清德) by fabricating a private conversation [between Lai and then-President Tsai Ing-wen \(蔡英文\)](#) using AI-generated deepfake technology. Furthermore, [sexually explicit deepfake videos](#) featuring some political figures were circulated to further damage their reputa-

tions. These examples highlight the growing impact of deepfake technology on electoral interference, where synthetic media is utilized to sway public opinion, inflict reputational harm, and disrupt democratic processes in Taiwan.

False and misleading content generated using deepfake technology has also targeted the [Taiwanese military](#). For instance, fabricated texts created with deepfake technology have been circulated on the internet and social media platforms to spread false and deceptive information about the [Taiwanese military](#).

In addition to disinformation targeting Taiwanese politics, political figures, and the military, Taiwan has also experienced the malicious use of deepfake technology for personal attacks. [YouTuber Chu Yu-chen \(朱玉宸\)](#), who used deepfake technology to superimpose women's faces onto pornographic videos for profit, serves as a particularly alarming example. Despite more than 100 victims coming forward, legal loopholes initially enabled him to evade severe punishment. This case prompted Taiwanese lawmakers to introduce [new legislation in 2023](#), explicitly criminalizing deepfake-generated sexual imagery and strengthening protections for victims of AI-driven privacy violations. Moreover, the case of [Robert Tsao \(曹興誠\)](#), a businessman who was targeted with deepfake-generated sexual images, serves as a significant example of how deepfake technology can be weaponized to damage reputations and inflict emotional distress.

Beyond these individual cases, Taiwan has been at the forefront of efforts to combat deepfake-related disinformation and cyberattacks, particularly in the context of cross-Strait tensions. Reports indicate that foreign actors, particularly from China, have exploited [AI-generated media to undermine Taiwan's](#) political stability, erode trust in its institutions, and weaken the military. Given Taiwan's strategic geopolitical position and its vulnerability to disinformation campaigns, the government has worked closely with social media platforms, [fact-checking organizations, and civil society groups](#) to curb the spread of deepfake-related disinformation. Despite these efforts, the rapid evolution of deepfake technology continues to present challenges, underscoring the need for ongoing legal, technological, and policy-driven responses.

Taiwan's experience demonstrates how deepfake technology can be manipulated for a range of harmful purposes, including election interference, reputational damage, and privacy violations. Although legislative measures and digital literacy initiatives have been in-

troduced to counter these threats, the rising accessibility of AI-powered tools necessitates a collaborative effort among governments, technology companies, and civil society to effectively address the escalating misuse of deepfake technology. Additionally, Taiwan could leverage its existing science and technology cooperation with [the United States](#), [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [France](#) and [Germany](#) to work on finding collaborative solutions to tackle the issue of deepfakes globally.

**The main point:** Deepfake technology has been used maliciously for the purpose of political manipulation, disinformation, and reputational damage. In Taiwan, deepfakes have been used in election interference, attacks on political figures and the military, as well as violations of personal privacy. To counter these threats, there needs to be collaboration among government, technology companies and civil society—in addition to international partnerships.

[1] Mary Ellen Bates, “Say What? ‘Deepfakes’ Are Deeply Concerning,” *Online Searcher* 42, no. 4 (2018): 64.

[2] Ahmet Yiğitalp Tulga, “A Comprehensive Analysis of Public Discourse and Content Trends in Turkish Reddit Posts Related to Deepfake,” *Journal of Global and Area Studies* 8, no. 2 (2024): 257-276.

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## **Growing Canada-Taiwan Relations—Will the Momentum Continue?**

By: Adrienne Wu

*Adrienne Wu is a program manager at Global Taiwan Institute and the host of Taiwan Salon, GTI’s cultural policy and soft power podcast.*

### **Introduction**

The Canadian elections held on April 28 have again [elected](#) a Liberal Party minority government. Considering that the Conservative Party had been [leading national polls since mid-2023](#), the Liberals’ victory was a surprising upset aided by strained Canada-US relations. While the reelection of a Liberal government indicates that there will likely be an overall continuity in Canadian policies, there are still questions about the strength of cross-party support for Taiwan—and whether the current momentum towards closer Canada-Taiwan relations will continue.

### **Canada-Taiwan Relations Over the Past Five Years**

Like many countries, Canada’s historical relations with Taiwan have fluctuated over the years. After Ottawa broke off official relations with the Republic of China in 1970, the government—in a manner similar to the United States—established a “One-China Policy” that [“recognizes the \[People’s Republic of China \(PRC\)\] as the sole legitimate government of China, but neither endorses nor challenges the PRC’s position on Taiwan.”](#) Still, the two countries continued to engage informally through people-to-people exchanges. The establishment of a Canadian Trade Office (CTO) in Taipei in 1986 and the reciprocal establishment of a Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in Ottawa in 1991 further strengthened Canada-Taiwan ties. As a result, from 2015-2019 bilateral trade between Canada and Taiwan grew [more than 15 percent](#), and a Canada-Taiwan [avoidance of double taxation agreement](#) was signed in 2016. Overall, while the two countries have maintained ties and Canada’s One-China Policy does not bar it from Taiwan engagement, Ottawa has avoided taking a clear stance on Taiwan’s sovereignty due to concerns of provoking the PRC.

However, there has been a marked shift in Canada-Taiwan relations in recent years. Due to [worsening Canada-PRC relations](#) (triggered by Canada’s detainment of the PRC citizen Meng Wanzhou [孟晚舟], and the PRC’s subsequent detainment of Canadian citizens Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor) and rising PRC aggression, Canada introduced its own [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#) (IPS) in 2022. Simultaneously [noting](#) that “China is an increasingly disruptive global power,” and that “Canada will oppose unilateral actions that threaten the status quo in the Taiwan Strait,” the IPS also highlighted areas of cooperation with Taiwan and asserted that Canada would support Taiwan’s resilience. Additionally, Canada also began to take a more active stance towards security in the Taiwan Strait, with Canada and the United States conducting their [first joint naval transit](#) through the Taiwan Strait in 2021 and further joint transits occurring in [2022](#), [2023](#) and [2024](#).

In 2023, the release of an interim report by the Special Committee on the Canada–People’s Republic of China Relationship, titled [Canada and Taiwan: a Strong Relationship in Turbulent Times](#), further examined the Canada-Taiwan engagement and outlined 34 recommendations for strengthening relations and supporting Taiwan. Framed within the context of countering PRC aggression and promoting Taiwan’s resilience, the report encouraged increased diplomatic engagement, closer economic ties, and supporting Taiwan’s meaningful participation in multilateral organizations. Additionally, it outlined specific areas of shared in-



terest in the economic empowerment of indigenous populations (Taiwan and Canada are co-founders of the [Indigenous Peoples Economic and Trade Cooperation Arrangement](#)), disinformation, critical minerals, semiconductors, and supply chain resilience. Upon the report's publication, Taiwanese Representative to Canada Harry Tseng (曾厚仁) [emphasized](#) that the comprehensive nature of the report made it the “most significant development in Taiwan-Canada relations since the two nations severed diplomatic ties in 1970.”

Since its publication, Ottawa has addressed many of the recommendations made in the report. For instance, Ottawa carried out Recommendation 11 and signed a [Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Arrangement](#) (FIPA) with Taiwan in December 2023. After the establishment of a FIPA, [Taiwan direct investment in Canada](#) has increased dramatically, jumping from CAD 2.2 billion (roughly USD 1.6 billion) in 2023 to CAD 7.3 billion (roughly USD 5.3 billion) in 2024. Trade between Taiwan and Canada has also benefited from the 2024 signing of a [Mutual Recognition Agreement on Authorized Economic Operators](#) and their shared endorsement of a “[Collaborative Framework on Supply Chains Resilience](#),” both of which aim to make supply chains more secure and mutually beneficial. In 2023, Canada also succeeded in getting Taipei to relax [restrictions on Canadian beef](#). From February 2024 to February 2025 Canada's [beef and veal exports](#) to Taiwan increased by 26.3 percent. Beyond agriculture and direct investment, Canada and Taiwan also signed a [Science, Technology, and Innovation Agreement](#) in 2024 to expand cooperation in key sectors, such as artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology, and semiconductors.

In addition to closer economic ties, Canada has also been active in its diplomatic engagement with Taiwan. For instance, Canadian parliamentary delegations visited Taiwan in [April 2023](#) and [May 2024](#). Both delegations were led by Liberal members of parliament (MPs) and included Liberal, Conservative and Bloc Quebecois MPs, which shows that Canada's support for Taiwan cuts across party lines. Notably, [two Canadian MPs](#) (from the Liberal and Bloc Quebecois parties) also attended the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China's (IPAC) Taipei Summit. In contrast, no US members of IPAC attended the summit. Following former President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) [attendance](#) at the 2024 Halifax International Security Forum (held in Halifax, Nova Scotia), the first Asian iteration of the forum took place in Taipei in February of this year. While the full guest list for the event has not been made public, [former De-](#)

[fense and Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay](#) was among those who attended. Peter MacKay was also among the speakers at Taiwan's [2022 Yushan Forum](#), which focuses on Taiwan's New Southbound Policy, and [former Industry and Health Minister Tony Clement](#) attended the 2025 Yushan Forum.



*Image: Then-President Tsai poses for a group photo with a Canadian parliamentary delegation attending the 2024 Taiwanese presidential inauguration. (Image source: [Office of the ROC President](#))*

Canadian participation in IPAC's Taipei Summit, Taipei's Halifax Security Forum, and the Yushan Forum—which span topics from countering PRC aggression, to defense and security and regional ties—highlights the wealth of shared interests between Taiwan and Canada. In mid-2024, Canada also [joined](#) Taiwan, the United States, Japan, and Australia in becoming a full partner of the Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF). At last year's [2024 GCTF Joint Committee Meeting](#), the partners outlined key areas for 2025, including preventing drug-related crimes, whole-of-society resilience, energy sustainability, public-private partnerships in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and using media literacy to counter information manipulation and interference.

### **What's Next?**

Leading up to the 2025 elections, some had raised concerns about Prime Minister Mark Carney's [past ties to China](#). Additionally, it was evident that [Beijing preferred](#) a Carney victory. Hurting from US tariffs, a Liberal government under Carney might be tempted by the [economic incentives](#) of closer ties with China. Yet, ahead of the election, Prime Minister Carney [affirmed](#) that China is Canada's biggest threat and that it is “a threat within broader Asia and to Taiwan.” The Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada [noted](#) that Prime Minister Carney is “likely to keep China at an arm's length” while strengthening ties with Japan, South Korea, Australia

and potentially India. If Canada remains adamant that China is a threat, then it will need to seek out additional partners as it refines its Indo-Pacific policies—which is also an opportunity for Canada-Taiwan relations to continue to thrive.

To build upon the existing momentum, Ottawa should:

- *Continue to counter the PRC’s misuse of United Nations (UN) Resolution 2758 and reaffirm that Canada’s “One-China Policy” does not bar Canadians from engaging with Taiwan.*

After the IPAC Taipei Summit, Canada’s House of Commons unanimously passed a [motion](#) that UN Resolution 2758 “does not establish PRC sovereignty over Taiwan nor determine Taiwan’s future status in the UN or any international agencies.” While this is an important step in countering [the PRC’s efforts](#) to isolate Taiwan through the use of lawfare, the motion alone is not enough. Ottawa should ensure that Canadians—and especially government employees—are aware of the distortion of UN Resolution 2758 and understand that Canada’s “One-China Policy” does not bar engagement with Taiwan. As University of Ottawa Professor Scott Simon has [noted](#), “As a sovereign state, Canada has the right to define that policy and determine our own relationship with Taiwan without external interference.” By making Canadians aware of these differences between these stances, they will both become less vulnerable to PRC coercive efforts that isolate Taiwan and will gain a better understanding of Taiwan’s geopolitical context.

- *Continue asserting the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait through joint naval transits, regional defense cooperation, and statements of support for Taiwan.*

The Canada-US joint naval transits from 2021 to the present have helped to promote Canada as a reliable partner in the Taiwan Strait. However, Canada could take a greater role as a partner by joining regional security partnerships like the [Quadrilateral Security Dialogue \(the Quad\)](#) or AUKUS. More informally, Canada should also look for ways to increase [cooperation with Taiwan’s coast guard](#) and [on defense training](#), just as the United States does already. Additionally, Ottawa should continue to push back on PRC efforts to establish a new normal in the Taiwan Strait by condemning PRC incursions, as it did in the [recent G7 statement](#).

- *Explore areas of shared interest between Canada and Taiwan, especially when it comes to Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy and Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy (NSP).*

Canada-Taiwan relations over the past five years have grown so much due to the abundance of shared interests between both countries. However, there are still opportunities to build further on these shared interests. For instance, although Taiwan and Canada have already signed agreements on investment promotion and science and technology, former MP Tony Clement has [urged](#) Canada and Taiwan to work even more closely on AI technology and supply chain resilience. In addition to AI, Canada and Taiwan could partner on tackling shared global challenges like countering disinformation, energy sustainability, and foreign aid programs. International Christian University Professor Stephen Nagy has also [pointed out](#) that Canada’s IPS overlaps significantly with Taiwan’s NSP—making Taiwan a reliable like-minded ally as Canada pursues Canadian interests in the Indo-Pacific.

- *Pass legislation that creates a foundation for closer Canada-Taiwan relations, such as the Canada-Taiwan Relations Framework Act.*

In 2021, Conservative MP Michael Cooper introduced the [Canada-Taiwan Relations Framework Act](#), also known as Bill C-343. The Act clarifies Canada’s “One-China Policy,” promotes defense cooperation between Canada and Taiwan, and supports Taiwan’s participation in multilateral international organizations. Still—as of this article’s publication—the Act has not undergone a second reading. To build upon the momentum of recent Canada-Taiwan cooperation, Canadian policymakers should prioritize passing legislation that can create a strong foundation for all future Canada-Taiwan relations—either by revisiting Bill C-343 or by creating new legislation. As a starting point, Ottawa could look at existing US-Taiwan legislation such as the *Taiwan Relations Act* or *Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act*, and tailor such legislation to Canada-Taiwan relations.

**The main point:** Over the past five years, Canada-Taiwan relations have grown in multiple areas, including closer economic ties, increased diplomatic engagement, and signed agreements relating to shared areas of interest. To build upon this momentum, a new Liberal government should continue to clarify Canada’s “One-China Policy,” assert the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, build upon areas of shared interest between Canada and Taiwan, and pass legislation that creates a strong foundation for future Canada-Taiwan relations.

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## Rethinking Taiwan's Investment Security Strategy

By: Dah-Wei Yih

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Taiwan's Legislative Yuan (LY, 立法院) in late April passed a high-profile [reform](#) to tighten oversight of outbound investment—a move initially unpopular with the business community but one that has since gained traction. Industry support has grown, in part due to anxiety over [Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company's \(TSMC, 台灣積體電路製造股份有限公司\) USD 100 billion investment plan](#), which [many perceive](#) as a blow to Taiwan's industrial edge and technological leadership.

While the reform marks a step toward managing outbound capital flows, its focus remains on preserving industrial competitiveness. This stands in contrast to a broader global shift. Democracies including [Japan](#), [South Korea](#), [Italy](#), [the United States](#), [the United Kingdom](#), and [the European Union](#) have, in recent years, recalibrated their investment screening regimes to prioritize national security, particularly the risks of capital and technology transfers that could empower authoritarian adversaries.

As a democratic technology powerhouse on the front lines of authoritarian expansion, Taiwan must realign its regulatory priorities. Modernizing its investment review framework requires moving beyond purely economic considerations to a strategic lens that accounts for geopolitical threats. While civilian innovation remains vital, many emerging technologies carry dual-use potential, with implications for military buildup and espionage. Taiwan's regulatory approach should therefore mirror global best practices: safeguarding not just industrial capacity, but also national security and democratic resilience.

### ***A Legacy System Facing a New Era***

With more than three decades of experience in implementing inbound and outbound investment screening policies, Taiwan has long positioned itself as a seasoned player in this field. These regulatory measures trace back to the 1990s, when Taipei grew increasingly concerned about the mass relocation of Taiwanese enterprises to China. At the time, factors such as low labor costs, lenient environmental standards, and ac-

cess to a vast consumer market in China fueled fears of rapid capital flight and the "[hollowing out](#)" of Taiwan's economy. In response, Taipei developed a regulatory framework aimed at preserving the island's long-term competitiveness—a framework that has largely remained intact ever since.

As a result, Taiwan's regulatory regime differentiates investments based on their destination, using industrial competitiveness as the primary evaluation criterion. Under [Article 22 of the Statute for Industrial Innovation](#), outbound investments are generally subject to relatively relaxed oversight, consistent with the island's commitment to an open and liberal investment environment. However, investments directed toward China, Hong Kong, and Macau are governed by more stringent controls under Article 35 of the [Act Governing Relations Between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area](#) and [Article 30 of the Act Governing Relations with Hong Kong & Macao](#). Within this framework, Taiwan has concentrated significant regulatory resources on sectors such as [liquid-crystal display \(LCD\) panels and semiconductors](#)—industries that form the backbone of Taiwan's global competitive advantage.

Yet, many of these regulatory structures were designed for an earlier era—one in which the primary threats and technologies looked very different from those of today. When viewed through the lens of evolving investment security frameworks across other democratic nations, the island democracy's approach—centered primarily on industrial competitiveness—now appears misaligned with contemporary global priorities.

### ***Emerging Transnational Mechanisms for Investment Security***

Today's transnational investment security mechanisms have emerged in response to a [changing national security environment](#). Events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and China's more assertive global posture have heightened concerns among democracies, prompting countries like Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, and members of the European Union to adopt more strategic approaches to economic policymaking. As a result, democracies are increasingly implementing proactive measures—including outbound investment regulations—to safeguard their strategic interests. The primary objective of outbound investment review has shifted toward preventing critical technologies from being exploited to advance the military modernization of adversarial nations.

In 2023, for example, the G7 countries issued a [joint](#)

[statement](#) acknowledging the role of outbound direct investment (ODI) controls in protecting “sensitive technologies from being used in ways that threaten international peace and security.” Shortly afterward, the United States and the United Kingdom [pledged to align their investment screening policies](#) to prevent the leakage of critical and emerging technologies that are reshaping the national security landscape, such as artificial intelligence (AI), quantum information technology (QIT), and semiconductors. To that end, both countries committed to addressing risks associated with outbound investments and ensuring that their capital and expertise would not support the “military, intelligence, surveillance, and cyber-enabled capabilities of countries of concern.”

The following year, the European Commission proposed [new outbound measures](#) as part of its broader economic security strategy to address risks associated with cross-border capital flows. The US-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) likewise [reaffirmed a shared commitment](#) to mitigating outbound investment risks in a targeted set of critical technologies. Together, these initiatives mark the first coordinated efforts among democracies to develop robust transnational norms for managing outbound investments that could harm national security.

More recently, the Trump Administration issued a [National Security Presidential Memorandum](#) (NSPM) titled “[America First Investment Policy](#),” reaffirming its commitment to strengthening outbound investment security while extending key elements of the Biden Administration’s approach. The directive establishes new red lines for both foreign investments in the United States and US investments abroad, calling for more rigorous reviews to deter predatory capital flows from countries like China and to prevent American resources from supporting surveillance, espionage, or weapons development in hostile states.

Washington’s evolving policy not only aligns with growing international efforts to prevent authoritarian actors from acquiring sensitive technologies, but also seeks to protect strategic industries from foreign infiltration and manipulation. In light of this global regulatory shift, it is imperative for Taiwan to reinforce its own investment review framework—both to keep pace with emerging security challenges and to align more closely with its democratic partners.

### ***A Renewed Investment Security Strategy for Taiwan***

Modernizing Taiwan’s regulatory framework requires a fundamental rethinking of its objectives. While the

island democracy has long focused primarily on preserving industrial competitiveness, recent reforms among its democratic counterparts reflect growing apprehension over China’s strategic ascent and its state-led pursuit of critical technologies. These technologies, while supporting civilian innovation, often carry significant risks of military application and espionage. In this context, Taiwan’s investment controls must broaden to include national security and geopolitical considerations, particularly the prevention of capital and expertise transfers that could enable authoritarian regimes to gain footholds in strategic sectors.

A refined regulatory approach also demands the adoption of updated policy tools and more effective use of existing statutory authorities. Where needed, new legislation or amendments should ensure the system remains adaptable to rapidly evolving geopolitical and technological dynamics.

Historically, Taiwan has relied heavily on *ex post* measures, such as [fines](#) and [penalties](#), while lacking more proactive *ex ante* tools like divestment orders or the authority to block high-risk transactions. The [recent legislative reform](#) marks incremental progress by introducing security-oriented review criteria and corresponding regulatory tools, allowing authorities to monitor and potentially halt certain types of outbound investment before they occur. However, how these measures will be implemented and enforced remains unclear.

Even where penalties exist, they are often too modest to deter major actors. The [updated law](#) caps fines at just over USD 30,000—an amount unlikely to dissuade well-resourced technology firms when national security and access to cutting-edge capabilities are at stake. Notably, moreover, the reform does not address outbound investment to China—not by design, but because such cases fall under separate statutes. To counter evolving national security challenges comprehensively, Taiwan’s institutional reforms must ultimately extend to these China-specific laws as well.

To align with global regulatory trends, Taipei should place greater emphasis on how advanced technologies are reshaping the national security landscape. Restrictions imposed by the United States, United Kingdom, and European Union increasingly target transformative fields such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and military-related applications of advanced semiconductors. Given that Taiwanese firms—most notably TSMC—produce [nearly 90 percent of the world’s advanced semiconductors](#), supervisory and regulatory resources should be concentrated on this critical sec-

tor. In particular, Taipei should strengthen its capacity to proactively identify potential violations and take enforcement action when necessary. Over the years, the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) [has made significant strides](#) in these areas and serves as a valuable reference point for Taiwan's initial reform efforts.

The Taiwanese government should also prioritize direct engagement with its democratic counterparts, including a clear commitment to implementing comparable regulatory regimes and enhancing information-sharing mechanisms on threats. This effort should involve key stakeholders in both the policy and intelligence communities.

As global norms shift toward greater vigilance over cross-border capital flows, Taiwan has a strategic opening to deepen institutional coordination with like-minded allies. Its active participation is essential to broader allied efforts aimed at ensuring that the development and application of cutting-edge technologies remain within the purview of democratic nations. Establishing a more comprehensive investment review regime—particularly one focused on protecting sensitive technologies and countering the influence of authoritarian actors—would not only enhance the island democracy's resilience but also pave the way for a more robust, values-based economic partnership with fellow techno-democracies.

**The main point:** As national security concerns reshape global investment policies, democracies such as the United States, United Kingdom, Japan, and members of the European Union are moving toward more proactive controls to prevent sensitive technologies from reaching authoritarian regimes. Taiwan, as a key player in advanced semiconductors, should transition its own regulatory framework toward a more strategic, security-oriented investment review regime, strengthen its enforcement capacity, and enhance institutional coordination with like-minded partners. Such reforms would bolster the island's national resilience, safeguard sensitive technologies, and support the development of a values-based international architecture for investment security.

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