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CHINA- TAIWAN RELATIONS

TAIWAN AND CHINA SEEK LESSONS FROM UKRAINE AS TAIWAN'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION STRENGTHENS

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The year 2022 in cross-Strait relations began quite predictably. Both sides repeated their calls for reconciliation, but in completely incompatible terms. Chinese leaders signaled somewhat obscurely that a new tougher Taiwan policy might be announced at the Chinese Communist Party's Twentieth Party Congress scheduled for this fall, which could further increase cross-Strait tensions. This predictability was upended by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. China insisted that this international confrontation had no lessons for the purely domestic matter of reunifying Taiwan. Nonetheless, China, Taiwan, and the US have all begun seeking military lessons from the Ukraine War.

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Taiwan and the US have intensified their discussion as to whether and how aggressively Taiwan should adopt an asymmetric defense relying on the small portable weapons—Javelins, Stingers, and others—that have thus far proven so successful in Ukraine. Diplomatically, the Biden administration has struggled to reassure China that it continues to honor the One-China Policy introduced in the Shanghai Communique 50 years ago even as it signals renewed support for Taiwan’s security. China’s support for Russia has antagonized Europe, Taiwan’s continues to enjoy success in international diplomacy, and Pacific allies Japan and Australia have become more explicit in their support for cross-Strait stability.

In Taiwan domestic politics, President Tsai Ing-wen is in the strongest position of any Taiwan president midway through a second term after leading her Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) to victories in a local by-election and a local recall effort, both called by the opposition Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT). If the DPP does well in regularly scheduled local elections this fall, that success may set the stage for a confrontation with Xi Jinping as he begins his history-making third term as general secretary of the modern Communist Party.

Verbal Volleys Across the Strait



Figure 1 President Tsai Ing-wen delivers her 2022 New Year's Address in the Reception Hall of the Presidential Office. Photo: Office of the President, ROC

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen [delivered a new year's address](#) as she has done every year of her presidency. She relegated cross-Strait relations to the end of her speech, first introducing “Resilient Taiwan, One with the World” as her theme for the new year, stressing that Taiwan is committed to raising its profile in the region and supporting democratic forces, including in Hong Kong. Only then did Tsai return to her familiar

themes on cross-Strait relations: that Taiwan will neither bow to pressure nor act rashly and that military action is not an option to resolve cross-Strait differences.

China’s cross-Strait new year’s proclamation was [issued by Liu Jieyi](#), director of the State Council Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO). Like Tsai’s, it sounded very familiar. Liu called on all Chinese sons and daughters to seek a better future for both sides of the Strait. He proclaimed that the historical imperative of complete reunification of the motherland is moving forward based on the One-China Principle and the 1992 Consensus. No one or any force can stop it. The only obstacle is the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taiwan and its efforts to collude with external forces, primarily the United States.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang’s [comments on Taiwan](#) in his Work Report to the annual National People’s Congress on March 5 sounded equally familiar: “We remain committed to the major principles and policies on work related to Taiwan, to the Party’s overall policy for resolving the Taiwan question in the new era, and to the One-China Principle and the 1992 Consensus.” This statement appeared in its familiar place near the end of the Work Report, a reassuring sign that cross-Strait unification is not becoming a more urgent issue for the People’s Republic of China (PRC) government.

The only troubling note were suggestions that the Communist Party’s Twentieth Party Congress this fall would offer a new approach to Taiwan as Xi Jinping begins his precedent-breaking third term as Party General Secretary. Central Standing Committee member Wang Yi attracted attention when he [referred to](#) “the Party's overall strategy for solving the Taiwan issue in the new era,” although there is no document articulating such a strategy, perhaps suggesting there would soon be such a document. Sun Yafu, TAO deputy director, [suggested](#) there would be a new approach presented at the Congress “which will have a positive impact on promoting work on Taiwan and on the situation across the Taiwan Strait.”

Ukraine Cements Strong US-Taiwan Ties

Two days after the initial Russian assault on Ukraine on Feb. 24, a US Navy destroyer transited the Taiwan Strait. On March 1, the White House dispatched a small group of former high-ranking

military and national security officials to Taipei. The bipartisan delegation, led by retired Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen, signaled US support and sought to reassure a rattled Taiwan public in the wake of Russia's invasion. In Congressional testimony in early April, Treasury Secretary Janet [Yellen all but declared](#) that China would face massive US sanctions, like those imposed on Russia, if it attacked Taiwan.

The task of bolstering Taiwan's defenses and strengthening deterrence has become even more urgent for US defense planners after Ukraine. Assistant Secretary of Defense Ely Ratner [remarked](#) in early March that "with China as the pacing challenge, Taiwan is the pacing scenario" for US security policy planning. In [February](#) and [April](#), the Biden administration authorized two arms sales with a combined value of \$195 million to supply equipment and technical support for US-built Patriot missile defense systems in Taiwan. Even as Washington seeks to persuade Taiwan of its need to prioritize "asymmetric" capabilities, the Biden administration reportedly is considering ways to expedite the delivery of the 66 F-16 C/D fighters approved by the Trump administration in 2019.

In early April, Japanese media reported that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would lead a Congressional delegation to Taipei to meet President Tsai the week of April 10 after visiting Japan. However, Pelosi abruptly postponed her travel to Asia after testing positive for COVID-19. If Pelosi had visited Taiwan, it would have been the first trip by a sitting House speaker in 25 years. PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi [said](#) any trip to Taiwan by Pelosi would amount to a "malicious provocation." Meanwhile, South Carolina Sen. Lindsay Graham in mid-April led a bipartisan CODEL of six senators to Taiwan for meetings with Tsai and senior officials.

By the end of March, both chambers of the US Congress passed bills to enhance US competitiveness vis-à-vis China with several Taiwan-friendly provisions included. Both bills express support for Taiwan as a close partner of the United States in addition to funding a fellowship program to embed Americans in Taiwan government agencies to enhance people-to-people ties. The Senate's "United States Innovation and Competition Act" ([USICA](#)) requires US government agencies to abandon use of "Taiwan authorities" when referring to the Taiwan government in internal and external communications (sec. 3215). The House's

"America Creating Opportunities for Manufacturing, Pre-Eminence in Technology, and Economic Strength Act" ([COMPETES](#)) calls on the State Department to commence negotiations to rename Taiwan's de facto embassy in the United States from the current "Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office" (TECRO) to "Taiwan Representative Office" (TRO) (sec. 30209). It is possible that all Taiwan provisions in both bills could be merged into the final text before it reaches President Biden's desk for signature, targeted for this summer. Both versions include subsidies (up to \$52 billion in the Senate version) to encourage semiconductor chip fabrication companies to expand production in the US, and the final version is widely expected to have subsidies in that range. The former chairman of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) Morris Chang bluntly called this re-shoring effort "a very expensive exercise in futility" for both the US government and TSMC given higher production costs in the US, even as Chang's successor at TSMC is lobbying for the promised subsidies.



Figure 2 Demonstrators in front of Russia's de facto embassy in Taipei in February. Photo: Lam Yik Fei/Getty Images

The Biden administration began rolling out details of its Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) in March, with indications that Taiwan is likely to be excluded from the initiative. IPEF envisages a set of agreements to be negotiated over 18 months with different groupings of Indo-Pacific countries under four separate "pillars." The US Trade Representative (USTR) will manage the trade pillar, whereas the Commerce Department will oversee pillars on supply chains, infrastructure and clean energy, and anti-corruption. In March, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo reportedly [told](#) members of Congress that her agency is not contemplating Taiwan's

inclusion at this time. USTR Katherine Tai also declined to comment to Congress whether Taiwan would be invited to join her agency's trade pillar. This non-committal stance motivated 200 members of Congress to write a [letter](#) to the two Cabinet secretaries urging Taiwan's inclusion. Taiwan's de facto trade minister John Deng also [said](#) publicly that Taiwan wishes to be a "full member" of IPEF and reiterated this request in an April 18 call with USTR Tai. [Secretary of State Antony Blinken said](#), however, when challenged on this at a House hearing on April 28, that the US is not "closing the door on anyone, including Taiwan." The Biden administration's hesitancy to invite Taiwan likely reflects a concern that many ASEAN nations might [worry](#) Beijing could perceive IPEF as an "anti-China" initiative if Taiwan is involved and therefore skip joining. IPEF is expected to be formally unveiled during President Biden's travel to Japan and South Korea on May 20-24.



Figure 3 US Trade Representative Katherine Tai testifies before a Senate Finance Committee hearing on President Biden's trade policy agenda on Capitol Hill in Washington on March 31, 2022. Tai declined to comment to Congress whether Taiwan would be invited to join her agency's trade pillar. Photo: Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

Throughout this reporting period, senior Biden administration officials were on the receiving end of PRC venting about US violations of the One-China Principle. In January, the Biden administration released its Indo-Pacific Strategy with several mentions of Taiwan, indicating Washington views the island on its own merits instead of merely as a feature of its China policy. Beijing remains upset by this and other indications of ongoing and deepening US support for Taipei, especially as the Biden has sought to reassure the self-governing island following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Blinken held monthly calls with his counterpart Wang Yi

through March, mainly to discuss Ukraine tensions, but Wang also used the calls to criticize US actions over Taiwan. In a March meeting in Rome with National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, Politburo member [Yang Jiechi stated](#) according to China's Foreign Ministry: "the Chinese side is gravely concerned about and firmly opposes the recent erroneous words and deeds by the US side on Taiwan-related issues." Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin held a phone conversation with his nominal counterpart, PRC Defense Minister Wei Fenghe, in April, and Wei [warned](#) that improper handling of the Taiwan issue "will have a subversive effect on the China-US relations."

The 50th anniversary of the Shanghai Communique came amid these heated exchanges. There were many analytic commentaries on both sides but none of the bilateral celebrations that might ordinarily mark such a milestone. Neither the US State Department nor the Chinese foreign ministry issued a celebratory statement. The foreign ministry spokesman [issued China's only commentary](#) in response to a question and noted that the Shanghai Communiqué "affirmed the One-China Principle" (an assertion that the US rejects), and the spokesman urged the US not to make China into an "imaginary enemy." Foreign Minister [Wang Yi noted](#) that the US says it does not support Taiwan independence but called these statements "just verbal assurances."

Taiwan Joins Sanctions Campaign Against Russia

Taipei [imposed](#) sanctions against Russia the day after its invasion. Several Taiwan firms with operations in Russia also joined the self-sanctioning efforts by multinational companies. ASUS, a leading Taiwan laptop producer, initially resisted joining the exodus and, as a result, a senior Ukrainian official on March 10 appealed to the computer maker's chairman in a public [letter](#). ASUS, which has a large share of Russia's laptop market, soon after announced it was stopping export shipments. In early April, Taipei [tightened](#) sanctions against Russia by identifying 57 categories of high-tech products that are off-limits for Russian end-users. This announcement occurred immediately after Washington's imposition of [increased sanctions](#) and underscored the degree to which Taipei is coordinating its actions with the United States and its allies.

Lithuania Remains Defiant as the EU and Taiwan Lend Support

In early January, Lithuania's president said that his government had made a mistake when it approved the use of the term "Taiwanese" for the name of Taiwan's new diplomatic office in Vilnius. Despite this admission, the Baltic nation gave no indication it was seriously seeking a name change, fearing a U-turn would not lead to de-escalation by Beijing and might invite further demands. Lithuania received a boost of support in late January when the European Union filed a [complaint](#) at the WTO that China's trade sanctions against Lithuania constituted discriminatory trade actions against the EU member state. Brussels made clear that it views Beijing's economic coercion against Lithuania and European companies with links to Lithuania as an attack on the integrity of the single European market. Taipei also lent support by setting up a \$200 million investment fund for Lithuania and by increasing imports of Lithuanian chocolate and rum.

Lithuania's resolve has been fortified by hardening European views toward Beijing and its "no limits" partnership with Moscow. EU leaders Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel were not shy in telling Xi during the frosty EU-China summit on April 1 that PRC coercion against Lithuania is unacceptable and must stop. At a press conference afterward, Michel said he and von der Leyen also [stressed](#) to President Xi and Premier Li "the importance of preserving stability and the status quo in the Taiwan Strait." Perhaps in response to the WTO case and EU pushback, [reports](#) emerged in the spring that China had begun to relax some of its trade sanctions. But the Lithuania-China dispute is likely to fester for the foreseeable future, with Taiwan watching carefully what happens next.

Lessons for a China-Taiwan Conflict from the Ukraine War

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Ukraine's thus far surprisingly successful resistance backed by a reunited Western opposition has quickly drawn government officials and analysts to consider what lessons the war might offer for the kinds of military coercion China has threatened against Taiwan. Repeated Chinese sorties of combat aircraft into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), reportedly [totaled approximately 1,000](#) in 2021 and [continued into 2022](#). At the same time the People's Liberation Army [_Navy](#)

[expanded its presence](#) along Taiwan's east coast. All these moves have underscored China's determination to intimidate Taiwan while expanding its military capacity to move toward coercion if it judges it necessary.

China, Taiwan, and the US have all suggested that Russia's invasion has compelled them to take the possibility of a cross-Strait military confrontation with renewed seriousness. Chinese foreign ministry [spokesperson Hua Chunying made clear](#) China's position, that the Taiwan situation is totally different from Ukraine. Taiwan, in China's view, has never been independent; it has always been part of China and its current situation is the result of an internal civil war. As a result, there is no place for foreign interference. Taiwan's foreign ministry condemned Russia's unilateral invasion, and [a senior Taiwan national security official warned](#) that a crisis over Taiwan would be even more destabilizing than the war in Ukraine for three reasons: Taiwan is a key strategic part of the "first island chain" controlling maritime access to China; the US is committed to security in the Taiwan Strait; and Taiwan is a critical supplier of semiconductors. The American Institute in Taiwan [spelled out the US position](#): consistent with its one-China policy, the US supports Taiwan's self-defense, opposes any unilateral changes in the status quo, and calls on Beijing to cease threats and pressure against Taiwan.

Beyond official positioning, analysts have been looking for lessons that might be applied as both Taiwan and China build militaries to deter, intimidate, or fight a cross-Strait war. While no lessons can be final until it is clear whether Ukraine's asymmetric defense or Russia's overwhelming conventional offense will prevail, initial assessments are already being offered. The first and most broadly accepted is that no Russian setback or defeat [will reduce China's commitment](#) to use force if necessary to prevent Taiwan independence in the short term and effect reunification in the longer term. For China the challenge, at least according to US analysts, is [how to dominate](#) the cross-Strait battle space before the US and its allies can bring their military forces to bear or exact unbearable economic costs. While China is almost certainly focusing intently on the military travails of its military partner, Russia, it has thus far said nothing critical of its performance publicly.

For Taiwan, the first lesson is that war is no longer unimaginable. As Ryan Hass at Brookings

[concluded](#), Taiwan needs “a greater sense of urgency...to coalesce[e] around a defense strategy that is appropriate.” When stated that generally, almost everyone agrees. Public opinion surveys in Taiwan confirm a general support for greater military capability, including an expanded draft and training for reserves to provide homeland defense. Yet there is little agreement on what that greater military capability should be. Many US and Taiwanese analysts outside Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense have contended that Taiwan’s far smaller military force can only prevail if it prepares to fight an asymmetric defense using large numbers of small mobile weapons and sensors, as the Ukrainians did in defense of Kyiv. Others, primarily inside Taiwan’s MND and the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) Party, [have argued](#) that there is a continuing need for large platforms—combat aircraft, tanks, submarines, and large surface ships—to counter Chinese intimidation and defend Taiwan’s sea lines of communication (SLOCs).

At the beginning of 2022, Taiwan launched a new All-Out Defense Mobilization Agency to develop and implement more comprehensive training for military reservists, and US National Guard units will [initiate exchanges](#) with Taiwan to strengthen this training effort. On April 12, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense [published a “National Defense Handbook”](#) for Taiwan citizens to prepare for war. A Taiwan NGO promptly criticized the handbook as unrealistic, suggesting for example that its reliance on downloading material onto cellphones would be untenable during an attack, and [issued](#) its own “Citizens’ Guide to Action When War Comes.” Perhaps an even more telling sign of renewed popular interest in preparing for war was a series of independent [citizen training exercises](#) to prepare for coping with a war on the island.

For Taiwan, beyond the need to prepare is the question of whether the US will intervene militarily. China certainly expects the US would, and they have built the People’s Liberation Army to keep the US out of a Taiwan fight. But recent [surveys suggest](#) that many Taiwanese do not expect “rock solid” US support to translate into military intervention, risking the question whether the Taiwan military alone can do more than delay the inevitable.

After stating that “the PRC [is] the department’s pacing challenge, [and] Taiwan is the pacing scenario,” Assistant Secretary of Defense Ratner

promised that the US would work with Taiwan and like-minded democracies to deter and defeat Chinese aggression. However, Ratner suggested that [his number-one lesson for Taiwan](#) remained “the importance of Taiwan developing its own [self-defense] capabilities.”

For the US, the challenge remains to persuade Taiwan to adopt a defensive posture that emphasizes the asymmetric and a territorial defense strategy, which US experts believe would make subjugation of Taiwan more than just a matter of defeating Taiwan’s armed forces. Taiwan analysis of US military sales to Taiwan have concluded that 16 of 18 recent US sales approvals were for asymmetric weapons, and that the [US denied a Taiwan request](#) for Black Hawk helicopters, after concluding it was not sufficiently asymmetric. In testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on April 7, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said that he was focused on expediting arms sales to Taiwan, and Chairman of the U.S Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley suggested that Taiwan should pay close attention to Ukraine’s response to the Russian invasion and learn tactics from Kyiv, including the need to give weapons and training to enlistment-age men and women. [Milley added](#) that Taiwan is a defensible island.

For the US, a second challenge will be to supply sufficient asymmetric weapons to Taiwan quickly enough to ensure deterrence despite the massive quantities being rushed to Ukraine to bolster its defense. Can the US produce enough defense equipment to help two small democracies while still ensuring US forces remain adequately stocked? If the US can do that, will Taiwan’s leaders be prepared to spend enough to amass the stockpiles to deter and, if necessary, overcome a combined assault and blockade?

One additional question is whether Japan, Australia, and others, which have recently expressed concern for stability in the Taiwan Strait, would be prepared to impose sanctions or act militarily if China were to shift from its current gray-zone tactics to outright military coercion.

President Tsai & DPP Win Twice Again

Local elections on Jan. 9 gave President Tsai and her Democratic Progressive Party two more victories to follow on their sweep in defeating all

four referendum issues initiated by the KMT on Dec. 18, 2021 (as documented in the previous [China-Taiwan chapter](#) of *Comparative Connections*). In Taichung, the DPP won a by-election over long-time local KMT power broker Yuan Kang-heng. (The election was required because the KMT had won a recall vote to remove Chen Po-wei of the DPP-allied Taiwan Statebuilding Party from his seat in the Legislative Yuan.) In Taipei, independent LY member Freddy Lim, also allied with the DPP, survived a KMT effort to recall him. Taiwan media widely viewed these elections as a test of strength between President Tsai and KMT Chairman Eric Chu. Clearly the DPP was more successful in marshalling its forces, but two more fundamental forces were at play. Recent [surveys show](#), first, that a slim majority of Taiwan voters continue to support Tsai's performance as president and, second, that support for the KMT has [slipped to its lowest level](#) since Tsai was first elected in 2016, especially among younger voters.



Figure 5 President Tsai Ing-wen speaks at the opening ceremony of the Ching-kuo Chi-hai Cultural Park and Chiang Ching-kuo Presidential Library in Taipei. Photo: Taipei Department of Cultural Affairs

On Jan. 22, Tsai made an effort to expand her base of support when she delivered the keynote address at the opening of the Chiang Ching-kuo memorial library, [surprising some supporters](#) who remember this son of President Chiang Kai-shek as the KMT architect of the White Terror. Tsai used the occasion to present herself as an heir to those parts of the KMT legacy most broadly accepted in Taiwan. She lauded Chiang for his fierce opposition to Communist China and his defense of Taiwan, while implicitly criticizing today's KMT for departing from Chiang's legacy and being too willing to open dialogue with the mainland while it threatens Taiwan.

Both parties have begun caucusing to select candidates for the island-wide "nine-in-one" local elections [scheduled for Nov. 26](#). These elections for magistrates, mayors, councilors, town chiefs, and town representatives across Taiwan are held every four years at the mid-point of the president's term. The KMT triumphed in the last round of these elections in 2018, midway through President Tsai's first term, even winning in pro-DPP Kaohsiung City and causing Tsai to resign as DPP chair. If Tsai's popularity holds, the DPP may do better this year, giving Tsai considerable authority to influence the selection of the DPP candidate to succeed her as president.

Looking Ahead

The incompatible positions of China, Taiwan, and the US on cross-Strait issues are likely to remain frozen and perhaps harden over the coming months. The first step down this road may come as early as May when Secretary of State Blinken is expected to give an address on the Biden administration's long-awaited China strategy. Beijing will examine the speech closely for any changes in how Taiwan is discussed. Over succeeding months, both Xi Jinping and Tsai Ing-wen will seek to strengthen their positions leading up to the Communist Party Congress and Taiwan's island-wide local elections this fall. If the Communist Party Congress issues a new policy statement on Taiwan, that may fuel more and harsher rhetoric from both sides. It may even aid Tsai and the DPP in the nine-in-one elections, just as hardline pronouncements from Beijing on the eve of Taiwan elections have often done in the past. Taiwan and the US will continue to expand Taiwan's bilateral and multilateral activities, while the US insists it continues to honor its one China policy of peaceful resolution. However, the most important variable may well

be the fate of Ukraine. If Ukraine succeeds in resisting the Russian invasion, and if the US-led Western alliance remains firm in support of Ukraine, that may strengthen Taiwanese advocates of military self-strengthening and the US commitment to support that effort. If it falters, China may intensify efforts to intimidate or even coerce Taiwan militarily to re-unify.

CHRONOLOGY OF CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

JANUARY—APRIL 2022

Jan. 3, 2022: Taiwan announces the launch of its All-Out Defense Mobilization Agency to boost capabilities of Taiwan's reservists.

Jan. 3, 2022: US suggests that Taiwan be included in State Partnership program so that Taiwan military and reservists can participate in training with National Guard.

Jan. 5, 2022: Taiwan begins repatriating 21 illegal Chinese migrants back to China.

Jan. 5, 2022: Secretary of State Antony Blinken and German Foreign Minister Annalen Baerbock [express concern](#) over “China’s attempts to bully Lithuania...all because Lithuania chose to expand their cooperation with Taiwan.”

Jan. 6, 2022: China is reported to have [started to quarantine live fish](#) imports from Taiwan.

Jan. 6, 2022: Beijing fines 7-Eleven for labeling Taiwan a country on its website.

Jan. 11, 2022: Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan approved a NT\$236.95 billion (\$8.55 billion) special budget, which will be used to buy anti-ship missiles, air defense systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, air-to-ground and surface-to-surface cruise missile systems, submarines, and weapons systems for Taiwan's Coast Guard.

Jan. 13, 2022: US [Navy bans officers](#) from attending events of the Washington Naval Attaché Association after the NAA invites three Taiwan officers to attend an event and China complains. The NAA subsequently bans participation by Taiwan officers.

Jan. 20, 2022: Taiwan Vice President William Lai Ching-te transits Los Angeles and San Francisco en route to attending the inauguration of Honduras’s president.

Jan. 22, 2022: Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen gives keynote speech at the opening of the Chiang Ching-kuo Presidential Library and praises Chiang for his defense of Taiwan.

Jan. 23, 2022: 39 Chinese combat aircraft [enter](#) Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ), the largest number since Oct. 4, 2021.

Jan. 27, 2022: US announces it will join the UK, the EU, Australia, and Taiwan at the World Trade Organization to challenge China’s trade curbs on Lithuania.

Feb. 9, 2022: Taiwan [purchases](#) a military communication system from the US for \$246.39 million that will update a system in use in Taiwan for nearly two decades.

Feb. 11, 2022: Taiwan [is ranked](#) as one of three “full democracies” in Asia, together with South Korea and Japan.

Feb. 12, 2022: Chinese state-run newspaper *People’s Political Consultative Daily* [names](#) Taiwan Nationalist Party (Kuomintang/KMT) Legislators Lin Wei-chou and Charles Chen as members of a “secret” faction of independence advocates.

Feb. 21, 2022: Taiwan announces it has lifted the ban on food imports from Japan’s five prefectures affected by the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster.

Feb. 21, 2022: China announces sanctions against Raytheon and Lockheed Martin because equipment they produce was included in the US sale of Patriot missile related arms and services to Taiwan.

Feb. 21, 2022: For the first time a Chinese KA-28 anti-submarine helicopter is spotted entering Taiwan’s ADIZ.

Feb. 25, 2022: Taiwan announces it will join international sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.

Feb. 26, 2022: US Seventh Fleet [announces](#) a Taiwan Strait transit by an *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyer, the *USS Ralph Johnson*. In apparently new wording, it says that is conducting a transit in the Taiwan Strait “through international waters in accordance with international law. The ship is transiting through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State.”

Feb. 27, 2022: Former Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo suggests the US renounce “strategic ambiguity” toward a cross-Strait conflict, saying also in unusually direct language that a Taiwan contingency is a Japan contingency.

March 1, 2022: At the direction of President Biden, former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Michael Mullen arrives with a delegation of four other former senior US security officials

March 4, 2022: Three Chinese naval vessels are spotted off Taiwan’s southeast coast, near Taiwan’s Orchid Island.

March 5, 2022: Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense launches a more intensive reservist training regimen to improve combat readiness.

March 5, 2022: Premier Li Keqiang’s Government Work Report [assures](#) China’s National People’s Congress that China will oppose any Taiwan separatist activities or any foreign interference in cross-Strait issues in line with “the Party’s overall policy for resolving the Taiwan question in the new era, the one China principle, and the 1992 Consensus.”

March 9, 2022: Taiwan’s Minister-without-Portfolio John Deng [reiterates](#) that Taiwan wants to participate in the United States’ forthcoming Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), stressing that Taipei is a reliable partner and crucial part of the global supply chain.

March 24, 2022: Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council Minister Chiu Tai-shan [calls](#) for “safeguarding the sovereignty of the Republic of China” and for “mutual recognition of sovereignty between both sides of the Strait.” [China’s Taiwan Affairs Office rejects this](#) as another form of the pro-independence “two state theory.”

March 25, 2022: Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan [approves](#) a constitutional amendment to lower the voting age in Taiwan from 20 to 18. Next, the amendment must be affirmed by at least half of all eligible votes in a national referendum.

March 31, 2022: US State Department’s Hong Kong Policy Act Report [cites](#) reports that Hong Kong acted on behalf of China to prevent Taiwan from participating meaningfully in the WTO, in which it is a member, and from assuming leadership positions.

April 6, 2022: US approves \$95 million sale of equipment and services to support Taiwan’s Patriot anti-air missile batteries.

April 7, 2022: Nationalist (KMT) Party Chairman Eric Chu announces that Alexander Huang will head the party’s representative office in Washington. Eric Huang will be the deputy representative and will be resident in Washington.

April 8, 2022: Peng Ming-min [dies](#). Peng was a Taiwanese democracy activist and the DPP candidate for president in Taiwan’s first freely contested popular election in 1996.

April 12, 2022: Taiwan MND [issues](#) civil defense handbook. The handbook details how to find bomb shelters, water, and food supplies via smartphone apps, as well as tips for preparing emergency first aid kits. Critics have wondered whether smartphone apps will work if the power grid and Internet are knocked out.

April 12, 2022: State Department’s Human Rights Report [expresses](#) concern that the PRC influences Taiwan media companies with business ties to China and puts pressure on other companies with business in China not to advertise in media outlets critical of China.

April 14, 2022: Taiwanese democracy activist Lee Ming-che is released from prison in China after serving a five-year sentence for “subversion of state power.”

April 14, 2022: Bipartisan delegation of US senators arrives in Taiwan. The visit comes shortly after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi cancels a planned visit after contracting COVID-19.

April 20, 2022: Taiwan MND [informs](#) the Legislative Yuan that it expects to take delivery of five new *Tuo Chiang*-class stealth multi-mission corvettes by the end of 2023.

