



Stand with Taiwan: Countering the PRC's Political Warfare and Transnational Repression



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Chair Senator Sullivan, Co-chair Representative Smith, and CECC members, thank you for having me as a witness today. I would also like to thank the U.S. Congress and Administration for your longstanding bipartisan support for Taiwan.

Last fall, our national baseball team won the World Baseball Softball Confederation's Premier 12 Championship. But our players were not allowed to wear jerseys bearing our country's name, nor could they proclaim our country's name in public. After hitting a decisive three-run homerun, our team's captain pointed to the blank space on his jersey where "Taiwan" should be, celebrating the name that cannot be named.

This is the reality we live with -- Constantly being silenced by the PRC. However, enduring such political warfare has also built up our capacity to resist.

As the title of this public hearing suggests, in addition to growing military threats and economic coercion, the PRC's political warfare against Taiwan has also escalated. Their tactics include manipulations of international laws, "united front work" activities, espionage, infiltration, and disinformation campaigns.

In terms of lawfare, the PRC has twisted the UN Resolution 2758 for political propaganda in the international arena. They not only aim to suppress Taiwan's participation in various international organizations but also seeks to legitimize the use of force to annex Taiwan.

In addition, the PRC has intensified its united front and infiltration efforts within Taiwan.

According to our National Security Bureau, the number of espionage indictments in 2024 was four times higher than in 2021---rising from 16 to 64. Targets include the military, the Parliament, both the ruling party and the opposition, and civic groups. The PRC has even recruited gangsters to build an armed support network all over Taiwan.

The PRC has also established united front organizations in Taiwan to invite religious groups, village chiefs, and college students on heavily subsidized trips to China. For college students, there are special programs attracting young Taiwanese to study, work, or start businesses in China. These activities aim to integrate them into China's economy and eventually come to view China's politics and culture in a positive light.

After last year's elections, the two major opposition parties formed a majority voting bloc in Taiwan's Legislative Yuan. After their electoral victory, the leading opposition party KMT's caucus leader led 17 of its lawmakers, nearly one-third of the entire caucus, to visit China and meet Chinese officials. Shortly thereafter, the KMT, along with the TPP, rushed to push through a series of unconstitutional bills, prevented the national security legal amendments from proceeding to a first reading, and froze or slashed the national defense budget without proper justification. Many Taiwanese believe these actions show how pro-China forces are exploiting Taiwan's democratic mechanisms to undermine both its sovereignty and democracy.

In terms of disinformation, our National Security Bureau reported that messages with China's influence increased from 1.3 million in 2023 to 2.2 million in 2024, being spread through newspapers and TV stations, as well as social media platforms such as TikTok. According to a thinktank GTI, some media outlets have received direct instructions from the CCP's Taiwa

n Affairs Office regarding news coverage and editorial commentary. The PRC also funds Taiwanese influencers to produce content in China that aligns with its political agendas.

What's the goal of the PRC's political warfare?

Firstly, it seeks to distort the world's understanding of Taiwan, specifically by framing cross-strait conflicts as a "domestic issue" to isolate Taiwan.

Secondly, the PRC works to erode Taiwanese people's confidence in the United States.

A recent poll found that TikTok users in Taiwan are more likely to view China favorably, and more likely to believe that a pro-USA government might provoke war. This is a clear sign that the disinformation is influencing TikTok users, most of whom are young people.

Thirdly, by spreading false narratives, the PRC aims to make Taiwanese either lose confidence in their government or disengage from politics.

Potentially, these actions can ultimately lead people to lose the motivation and will power to defend our democracy.

As to "transnational repression," recently the PRC released an "investigation report," claiming that Taiwan's military conducted cyberattacks against China. They publicized the names of 20 Taiwanese military officers and threatened them with arrest warrants and judicial punishments. Last month, the PRC launched a first-ever large-scale disinformation to attack a DPP legislator, Puma Shen, who was advocating for tightened national security legislation.

These transnational attacks against members of the military and the government, including the planned car collision targeting then-VP-Elect Hsiao in Czechia, are tactics the PRC is using to intimidate Taiwanese, the cost they would have to bear if they dare to resist China.

How is Taiwan countering these threats? It takes cooperation between the government and civil society.

In addition to raising the national defense budget to a historic high, President Lai adopted a “whole-of-society Defense Resilience Strategy,” aimed at strengthening the civic defense capacity. To counter the united front, he has proposed further national security reforms to enhance our resilience against China’s united front and infiltration tactics.

To tackle disinformation, all government agencies are asked to rapidly respond to misleading information. More importantly, many NGOs have created independent fact-checking websites as well as tools that can be embedded in apps.

For the cognitive warfare aiming to affect the young generation, the Ministry of Education is developing teaching materials about “Understanding China.” It aims to teach students how to critically assess Chinese propaganda.

In a highly polarized politics, the effort of the ruling government alone is insufficient. Luckily, Taiwan has a robust civil society with a strong will to defend democracy.

I had the honor of serving as the Chief Commander of the Wild Lily Student Movement, calling for the democratic election of our parliament. Decades later, as a professor in 2014, I was even prouder to be part of the Sunflower Movement, witnessing the younger generations successfully opposing deeper economic integration with China. Through struggles like these, our society has built a strong democratic tradition.

Even now, as I am speaking, Taiwan is in the middle of an unprecedented mass recall campaign launched by civic volunteer groups. The vote will take place this coming Saturday. 31 of the KMT’s 36 elected district legislators are facing bottom-up recall, because many Taiwanese believe these lawmakers have forgotten that the KMT used to be an anti-Communist party.

As Taiwanese, we know that our freedom did not fall from the sky. Generations of Taiwanese have fought and made sacrifices for our democracy. We are working very hard to prevent a war from happening. However, Taiwan alone will not be enough to deter China's aggression. As you must all be aware, Taiwan's security is not only critical to the stability of the region, but also key to the global economy. Standing with Taiwan, we can work together to protect our shared value, prosperity, and the rules-based global order.

Thank you all for your time and support.