

2025 Cross-Strait Relations Risk Index Report

May 2025
China Cross-Strait Academy
(hong kong)



中国海峡研究院
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1. Summary of the development of cross strait relations in 2024

On May 19, 2021, the China Cross-Strait Academy (Hong Kong) released the 2021 Cross Strait Relations Risk Index. The Academy adopted the method of event data analysis in the field of international relations research, analyzed the changes in the relationship between Chinese Mainland and Taiwan from 1950 to 2020, and plotted the trend through the index model. The index has five first-level indicators, including political relations, military power, economic relations, social exchanges and public opinions, as well as foreign countries' policies and positions on Taiwan. They are subdivided into 16 second-level indicators and 38 third-level indicators. Through the comprehensive analysis of 38 factors in five aspects, the risk of cross-strait relations was calculated and its evolution trend was outlined. The study pointed out that the relationship risk index between Chinese Mainland and Taiwan was at a historical high level, even exceeding that of the period of military confrontation in the 1950s.

Since then, the Academy has updated the annual cross-strait relations risk index every spring to summarize the cross-strait relations of the previous year. According to the latest research, the cross-strait relations risk index in 2024 has reached a new high of 7.11. The rising trend of cross-strait risks has not only not been reversed, but has also crossed the "no-return" point of a peaceful solution, which means that under the continued Taiwan authorities' "Taiwan independence" provocation, mainland China can initiate all reasonable disposal actions including the war of unification against Taiwan at any time.

Political factors are the core factors that led to the rise of the index this year. In his inaugural speech, the leader of the Taiwan authorities, Lai Ching-te, talked about "sovereignty". This degree of "provocation" is extremely rare among the previous regional leaders. This shows that the DPP authorities' "Taiwan independence" road has entered a new and clear confrontation stage.

In the face of the attitude of the Taiwan authorities, on the one hand, the mainland continues the policy of "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems" and deepens cross-strait civil exchanges. On the other hand, the core leaders of mainland China have issued tougher statements on Taiwan than ever before, promoting coordinated actions among various departments, steadily advancing the unification process, and deterring "Taiwan independence" forces. In 2024, Chinese military aircraft crossed the median line of the strait 3,064 times, a record high, demonstrating the determination of mainland China. Various signs indicate that the understanding of the Taiwan issue on both sides of the strait has entered a new stage. It has become increasingly difficult to maintain the old political and military status quo. The action to promote national reunification has begun to accelerate, and the historical task of achieving cross-strait reunification will be completed.

Of course, in 2024, foreign forces led by the United States did not give up cheering for the "Taiwan independence" forces. American politicians visited Taiwan as many as 14

times, maintaining a high level. In addition to members of Congress from both parties, local politicians represented by governors have also visited Taiwan many times. This is not only the result of the Taiwan authorities' "invitation diplomacy" lobbying, but also shows that the United States' support for Taiwan is being refined and deepened.

With cross-strait political exchanges almost stagnant, cross-strait economic and trade exchanges have recovered. Taiwanese people's identity as "Chinese" remains low. See the detailed analysis below for the analysis and coding of specific five aspects.

1. Political Factors

| First-level | Second-level | Third-level |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|
| A Political Relations | A1 Positions on each other | A11 Taiwan authorities' policies concerning the mainland |
| | | A12 NCCPC policies and CPC leaders' statements concerning Taiwan |
| | | A13 Taiwan policies in the mainland's Five-Year Plans |
| | A2 High-level visits | A21 High-level visits between the two sides |

(Table 1: Indicators of political factors)

As shown in Table 1, there are 4 third-level indicators of political factors, which are Taiwan authorities' policies concerning the mainland, NCCPC policies and CPC leaders' statements concerning Taiwan, Taiwan policies in the mainland's Five-Year Plans and High-level visits between the two sides.

1) Taiwan authorities' policies concerning the mainland

The cross-strait policy of the Taiwan authorities can still be summarized as "resisting unification and maintaining the status quo." In 2024, the Taiwan authorities did not issue official documents to characterize cross-strait relations, so Taiwan's mainland policy needs to be judged through the speeches and statements of the leaders or senior officials of the Taiwan authorities.

On May 20, 2024, Lai Ching-te of the Democratic Progressive Party took office as the

new leader of the Taiwan authorities and delivered a speech¹. Lai Ching-te mentioned "Republic of China" 12 times in his speech. In contrast, Tsai Ing-wen only mentioned it once in 2016² and twice in 2020³. At the same time, Lai Ching-te mentioned "sovereignty" 7 times, while Tsai Ing-wen mentioned it 2 times and 0 times respectively.

The Republic of China, as a regime that existed in the evolution of Chinese history, was established in 1911 by the late Qing Revolutionary Party headed by Mr. Sun Yat-sen and was replaced by the People's Republic of China in 1949. In 1971, the United Nations Resolution 2758 clearly referred to the representatives of the Taiwan authorities as "representatives of Chiang Kai-shek" and did not use the expressions "Taiwan", "Republic of China" or "Republic of China in Taiwan"⁴. This declared the demise of the "Republic of China" from the perspective of international law. It no longer has any legitimacy, no longer receives any recognition, and no longer enjoys any "sovereignty".

Lai Qingde said that "Republic of China Taiwan is a sovereign and independent country", which clearly expressed the intention to split China. In contrast, Tsai Ing-wen did not dare to provoke so wantonly in her two inaugural speeches. At the same time, Lai Qingde emphasized that the Taiwan authorities are the so-called "election and legal government" and that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait should "replace confrontation with dialogue, replace containment with exchanges, and cooperate under the principles of equality and dignity". This shows that Lai Qingde is still emphasizing his own subjectivity, and the use of the "Republic of China" is just a pretext to maintain the status quo of the cross-strait division. Lai Qingde also called the Chinese government's measures to safeguard national sovereignty and promote unification "gray coercion" and "various threats and infiltrations." This shows that Lai Qingde's administration is still resisting unification and refusing to cooperate with the Chinese government's policy and line of "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems".

Compared with some "radical independence" or "legal Taiwan independence" factions that simply emphasize "Taiwan", Lai Qingde's statement is more confusing and more harmful. The Taiwan authorities play the "sovereignty of the Republic of China" card, which is naturally not to emphasize the historical connection between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, but to misappropriate and distort history to increase their own legitimacy, while trying to launch a "reverse united front" against people in the mainland who are friendly to the history of the Republic of China. In short, the Taiwan authorities' attitude towards "Taiwan independence" has not changed, and their step-by-step approach has not changed. This is the core political reason for the continued increase in risks in the Strait.

¹ <https://www.president.gov.tw/News/28428>

² <https://www.president.gov.tw/news/20444>

³ <https://www.cna.com.tw/news/firstnews/202005205005.aspx>

⁴ https://www.gov.cn/test/2006-02/28/content_213294.htm

2) Mainland China' policies concerning Taiwan

In 2024, the core leaders of mainland China have made many statements on the Taiwan issue, continuing to emphasize the principle of "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems", while warning the "Taiwan independence" forces and foreign forces.

On April 2, 2024, in a phone call with then-US President Biden, Chinese President Xi Jinping called on the United States not to support the "Taiwan independence" forces⁵, emphasizing that the Taiwan issue is the first insurmountable red line in Sino-US relations. China will not let the separatist activities of the "Taiwan independence" forces and external connivance and support go unchecked. China hopes that the United States will put President Biden's positive statement of not supporting "Taiwan independence" into action.

On September 30, President Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the reception for the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China⁶. Compared with the National Day speech in 2023⁷, this speech added the content of "Taiwan is China's sacred territory, and the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are connected by blood, and blood is thicker than water" when discussing the Taiwan issue. At the same time, he emphasized "resolutely opposing the secessionist activities of 'Taiwan independence'" and that the realization of the security and reunification of the motherland is the general trend and the will of the people. No one can stop the wheel of history. It can be seen that the attitude of mainland China in 2024 is more firm and tougher, which is a clear response to the increasingly complex cross-strait situation. This also indicates that mainland China's cross-strait policy is about to enter a new stage.

3) Summary

| First-level | Second-level | Third-level | 2023 Coding | 2024Coding |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--|-------------|------------|
| A Political Relations | A1 Positions on each other | A11 Taiwan authorities' policies concerning the mainland | 8 | 9 |
| | | A12 NCCPC policies and CPC leaders' statements concerning Taiwan | 10 | 10 |

⁵ https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202404/content_6943171.htm

⁶ http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/m/headline/202409/t20240930_12653769.htm

⁷ http://www.news.cn/politics/leaders/2023-09/28/c_1129892229.htm

| | | | | |
|--|----------------------|---|---|---|
| | | A13 Taiwan policies in the mainland's Five-Year Plans | 4 | 4 |
| | A2 High-level visits | A21 High-level visits between the two sides | / | / |

(Table 2: Index coding of political factors.)

In 2024, there will be no major changes in the cross-strait policies of mainland China and Taiwan. The Taiwanese authorities still adhere to the path of "Taiwan independence" and refuse to integrate with the mainland. The Lai Qingde authorities have brought out the signboard of "Republic of China" in an attempt to blur people's vision, but have clearly put forward the so-called "sovereignty", which is to confront mainland China with a more stubborn attitude. Mainland China adheres to the principle of "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems" and promotes cross-strait integration in an orderly manner. At the same time, it has more strongly elaborated its Taiwan policy and clearly conveyed a warning to the Taiwan authorities and foreign forces that have long favored Taiwan.

2. Military factors

| First-level | Second-level | Third-level |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| B Military Power | B1 Defense Strategy | B11 Taiwan's defense emphasis and the mainland factors |
| | | B12 The mainland's defense emphasis and Taiwan factors |
| | | B13 Military expenditures of the two sides each year |
| | B2 Military Friction | B21 Military frictions between the two sides |
| | B3 Navy main battle force comparison | B31 Destroyers amount comparison |
| | | B32 Frigates amount comparison |
| | | B33 Conventional Submarines amount comparison |
| | | B34 Nuclear Attack Submarines amount |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | comparison |
| | B4 Amphibious delivery force comparison | B41 Large Landing Ships amount comparison |
| | | B42 Dock Landing Ships amount comparison |
| | | B43 Amphibious Assault Ships (Helicopter Carriers) amount comparison |
| | | B44 Marine Corps building and comparison |
| | B5 Air force comparison | B51 4th Generation Fighters amount comparison |
| | | B52 5th Generation Fighters amount comparison |
| | | B53 Medium and Long Range Bombers amount comparison |
| | | B54 Airborne troops force comparison |
| | B6 Standoff Attack force comparison | B61 Medium and Short Range Ballistic Missiles force comparison |
| | | B62 Cruise Missiles force comparison |
| | B7 Army force comparison | B71 3rd Generation Main Battle Tanks comparison |
| | B8 Reconnaissance systems comparison | B81 Air Early Warnings comparison |

(Table 3: indicators of military power)

As shown in Table 3, there are 8 second-level indicators and 20 third-level indicators of military factors, which are related to the defense policies of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait and the comparison of the main battle forces of the two sides. Starting from the military part, there will be a lot of quantitative indicators with their own data, and the maximum and minimum value method will be adopted to assign value analysis after removing dimension. Since the new data may become the new maximum or minimum over time, subsequent calculations can lead to changes in previous results. This is normal and can also be understood as a retrospective construction of the past by emerging facts.

1) Defense strategy

Neither the Chinese mainland nor Taiwan has issued a special policy document in 2024, but their respective defense departments have made clear statements on cross-strait issues.

In March 2024, the Chinese Ministry of Defense stated that "Taiwan's troubles" originated from the United States's troublemaking, and demanded that the United States stop interfering in China's internal affairs, stop arming Taiwan, and cut off military exchanges with Taiwan⁸. On October 31, the Chinese Ministry of Defense clearly pointed out that Taiwan is a province of China and there is no "defense minister"⁹. This is a direct and powerful rebuttal to the "sovereignty" of the Lai Ching-te administration. On December 27, the Chinese Ministry of Defense stated that "resisting reunification by force" is a dead end, and the more provocations for seeking "independence", the tighter the noose around the neck¹⁰. The Chinese People's Liberation Army has the confidence and ability to thwart all external interference, smash the separatist plot of "Taiwan independence", and realize the complete reunification of the motherland¹¹. The tone of these statements is very tough, and they are in line with President Xi Jinping's statement, indicating that the Chinese government has made up its mind to move forward with the great cause of reunification.

In contrast, the Taiwan authorities are still the old-fashioned "resisting reunification by force" and "seeking independence by force". In August 2024, the Taiwan authorities claimed that the mainland does not yet have the ability to fully attack Taiwan¹². This shows that the Taiwan authorities lack a clear understanding of the cross-strait situation and still have a fluke mentality about the future trend. In September, the leader of the Taiwan authorities, Lai Ching-te, presided over the first meeting of the "All-Society Defense Resilience Committee" and put forward the slogan of "Resilient Taiwan, Sustainable Democracy", aiming to expand cooperation between the private sector and the government and enhance the so-called overall defense, people's livelihood, disaster prevention, and democratic resilience¹³. It can be seen that although Lai Ching-te's authorities subjectively hope to maintain the status quo and have deeply felt that the status quo is unsustainable, his way of dealing with it is to tie as many Taiwanese people as possible to the chariot in an attempt to blackmail the Chinese government. This is what the Taiwan authorities call "resilience". On October 22, the Chinese Navy's "Liaoning" (16)

⁸ http://www.mod.gov.cn/gfbw/xwfy/lxjzhzt/2024njzh_247047/2024n4y/16303805.html

⁹

https://content-static.cctvnews.cctv.com/snow-book/index.html?item_id=323764106364875321&t=1730361994430&channelId=1119&toc_style_id=feeds_default&share_to=copy_url&track_id=ccedb55f-cbc8-437a-8e5f-e2b960091971

¹⁰ http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/bmst/202412/t20241227_12674430.htm

¹¹ http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/bmst/202412/t20241227_12674431.htm

¹²

<https://www.dw.com/zh/%E5%8F%B0%E6%B9%BE%E5%9B%BD%E9%98%B2%E9%83%A8%E8%A7%A3%E6%94%BE%E5%86%9B%E5%B0%9A%E4%B8%8D%E5%85%B7%E5%A4%87%E5%85%A8%E9%9D%A2%E6%94%BB%E5%8F%B0%E8%83%BD%E5%8A%9B/a-70094746>

¹³ <https://www.president.gov.tw/News/28745>

fleet crossed the Taiwan Strait from south to north. On the 23rd, the Taiwan authorities' defense department stated that if China "blocked" Taiwan, it would be an act of war¹⁴. It is a very normal phenomenon for Chinese warships to pass through Chinese waters, but the Taiwan authorities are unwilling to miss this opportunity for provocation, which has worsened the situation.

2) Military expenditures and Frictions

In 2024, the Chinese mainland's military budget is 1.69 trillion yuan¹⁵, a year-on-year increase of 7%, equivalent to about 235.08 billion US dollars (the US Internal Revenue Service calculated the average exchange rate of RMB against the US dollar in 2024 to be 7.189¹⁶). In the same year, the Taiwan authorities' defense budget was 606.8 billion NTD¹⁷, a record high, a year-on-year increase of 4.57%, equivalent to about 18.89 billion US dollars. The difference in the defense budgets between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait is about 216.19 billion US dollars, a year-on-year increase of 9%.

The index continues to select the number of mainland military aircraft entering Taiwan's airspace as an alternative indicator of cross-strait military "friction". In the context of the Taiwan authorities, this refers to the mainland military aircraft "crossing the median line of the strait" and its "extension line" and entering Taiwan's southwest, southeast, east, northeast, and north airspace.

According to the "Aircraft Dynamics in the Airspace Surrounding the Taiwan Strait" released by the Taiwan authorities, there were 3,064 sorties in 2024, which continued to set a record high, an increase of 78.45% compared with 1,717 sorties in 2023. In May, when Lai Qingde's administration came to power, there were 279 sorties, which increased to 331 sorties in June, 421 sorties in July, and 406 sorties in August, and then remained at a high level. This shows that the Chinese Air Force and Naval Aviation have normalized patrols in the airspace around Taiwan, and also reflects a stronger deterrence against "Taiwan independence" forces and foreign forces.

From January 17, 2024, the Taiwan authorities will no longer provide a detailed list of aircraft models and sorties, but only the total number of sorties, which will undoubtedly have a negative impact on global military enthusiasts. The Taiwan authorities have not given a reasonable explanation for the reasons behind this.

¹⁴

<https://www.dw.com/zh/%E5%8F%B0%E6%B9%BE%E5%9B%BD%E9%98%B2%E9%83%A8%E9%95%BF%E4%B8%AD%E5%85%B1%E8%8B%A5%E5%B0%81%E9%94%81%E5%8F%B0%E6%B9%BE%E5%B0%86%E6%98%AF%E6%88%98%E4%BA%89%E8%A1%8C%E4%B8%BA/a-70578356>

¹⁵ <http://www.mod.gov.cn/gfbw/xwfy/zjtzh/16292604.html>

¹⁶ <https://www.irs.gov/zh-hans/individuals/international-taxpayers/yearly-average-currency-exchange-rates>

¹⁷ <https://news.pts.org.tw/article/653306>

3) The Change of main battle force

Taiwan:

On September 10, 2024, a Mirage-2000 fighter jet crashed while taking off from the Hsinchu base for night flight training in Taiwan¹⁸, and the number of this fighter jet has been reduced to 53. Taiwan currently has a total of 193 fourth-generation fighter jets in service.

According to Voice of America, in December 2024, the first batch of 38 US-made M1A2T "Abrams" tanks arrived in Taiwan, and the 584th Armored Brigade of the Taiwan Military will be the first to be equipped. This is the first time that the Taiwan authorities have obtained third-generation main battle tanks. The remaining tanks are expected to be delivered in 2026¹⁹.

Mainland:

In 2024, according to media reports, it is speculated that around May, the 052D "Dazhou" (135) will be completed.

According to the 2024 "China Military Power Report"²⁰ released by the United States, the number of China's medium- and short-range ballistic missiles will increase from 2,000 to 2,200. The number of airborne brigades will be reduced from 7 to 6. The US did not give a detailed explanation, and the Academy did not find any relevant news. We can only guess that it is related to the restructuring of the airborne forces. The number of Marine brigades, which are the spearhead of amphibious landings, increased from 8 to 11, once again demonstrating the mainland's determination to prepare for military action against Taiwan. The number of active conventional submarines decreased from 48 to 47.

4) Conclusion

| First-level | Second-level | Third-level | 2023 Coding | 2024 Coding |
|------------------|---------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| B Military Power | B1 Defense Strategy | B11 Taiwan's defense emphasis and the mainland factors | 9 | 9 |
| | | B12 The mainland's defense emphasis and | 8 | 9 |

¹⁸ <https://www.voachinese.com/a/taiwan-mirage-fighter-jet-crashed-pilot-rescued-20240911/7780267.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.voacantonese.com/a/m1a2-taiwan-20241216/7903049.html>

²⁰

<https://media.defense.gov/2024/Dec/18/2003615520/-1/-1/0/MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA-2024.PDF>

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|----|----|
| | | Taiwan factors | | |
| | | B13 Military expenditures of the two sides each year | 7 | 8 |
| B2 Military Friction | | B22 Military frictions between the two sides | 8 | 9 |
| B3 Navy main battle force comparison | | B31 Destroyers amount comparison | 10 | 10 |
| | | B32 Frigates amount comparison | 8 | 8 |
| | | B33 Conventional Submarines amount comparison | 8 | 8 |
| | | B34 Nuclear Attack Submarines amount comparison | 10 | 10 |
| B4 Amphibious delivery force comparison | | B41 Large Landing Ships amount comparison | 8 | 8 |
| | | B42 Dock Landing Ships amount comparison | 8 | 10 |
| | | B43 Amphibious Assault Ships (Helicopter Carriers) amount comparison | 10 | 10 |
| | | B44 Marine Corps building and comparison | 10 | 10 |
| B5 Air force comparison | | B51 4th Generation Fighters amount comparison | 10 | 10 |

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|----|----|
| | | B52 5th Generation Fighters amount comparison | 10 | 10 |
| | | B53 Medium and Long Range Bombers amount comparison | 10 | 10 |
| | | B54 Airborne troops force comparison | 10 | 8 |
| | B6 Standoff Attack force comparison | B61 Medium and Short Range Ballistic Missiles force comparison | 10 | 10 |
| | | B62 Cruise Missiles force comparison | 0 | 0 |
| | B7 Army force comparison | B71 3rd Generation Main Battle Tanks comparison | 10 | 9 |
| | B8 Reconnaissance systems comparison | B81 Air Early Warnings comparison | 10 | 10 |

(Table 4: the coding of military power indicators)

In 2024, the basic pattern of the military power comparison between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait has not changed. Based on this, after verification, the historical data of some equipment has changed, and the corresponding index assignment will also be adjusted accordingly, which will have some impact on the previous assignment. This is a reflection of the continued role of the Academy's retrospective construction system.

Judging from the changes in these values, on the whole, the mainland's military power continues to increase unilaterally. The Taiwan authorities' military expansion and preparation plan has achieved some results in 2024, that is, the third-generation main battle tanks have finally been put into service, changing the long-term backward appearance of the Taiwan authorities' armored forces. However, based on the experience of the Russian-Ukrainian battlefield, 108 tanks are unlikely to form any advantages, and even if they are all deployed in place, they cannot change the situation.

This change will not change the situation that the mainland is far stronger than Taiwan in the comparison of the military power between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

More planning results of Taiwan will be presented in the next few years, and the Academy will continue to pay attention.

3. Economic Relations

| First-level | Second-level | Third-level |
|----------------------|---------------------------|--|
| C Economic Relations | C1 Cross-strait trade | C11 Cross-Strait trade value |
| | | C12 Cross-Strait trade value's proportion in the mainland's total foreign trade volume |
| | | C13 Cross-Strait trade value's proportion in Taiwan's total foreign trade volume |
| | | C14 The mainland's trade surplus or deficits with Taiwan |
| | C2Cross-strait investment | C21 Investment across the strait |

(Table 5:Indicators of economic relations.)

As shown in Table 5, there are 2 second-level indicators and 5 third-level indicators for economic correlation factors, which are related to cross-strait trade and investment respectively.

1) Cross-strait trade

| Time | Exports from mainland Taiwan to | Imports from Taiwan to mainland | Total Trade | Trade Balance |
|--------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| 2023 | 68,485,924 | 199,349,772 | 267,835,695 | -156,504,941 |
| 2024 | 75,188,531 | 217,782,634 | 292,971,165 | -142,594,103 |
| change | 9.79% | 9.25% | 9.38% | -8.89% |

(Table 6: Trade between Mainland China and Taiwan in 2022 and 2023, in US \$"000. Source: General Administration of Customs of China²¹.)

Cross-strait trade recovered in 2024. According to data from the General

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<http://gdfs.customs.gov.cn/customs/302249/zfxgk/2799825/302274/302277/302276/4807727/index.html>

Administration of Customs of China, the total cross-strait trade volume in 2024 will be approximately US\$292.97 billion, up 9.38% year-on-year. Among them, the mainland exported approximately US\$75.2 billion to Taiwan, up 9.79% year-on-year, and imported approximately US\$217.78 billion from Taiwan, up 9.25% year-on-year. It is still a trade deficit between the mainland and Taiwan, and the cross-strait trade deficit will drop sharply by 8.89% in 2024.

The recovery of cross-strait trade is good news for all those who hope to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. However, the Lai Qingde administration continued to push Taiwan's economy away from mainland China in 2024, increasing trade with the United States, and the importance of exports to the United States exceeded exports to mainland China. The specific content of this was analyzed in detail by the Academy in the "The Blue Paper on Cross-Strait Relations – 2024" released simultaneously. The actions of the Lai Qingde administration not only artificially distorted the industrial chain and trade flows, poured cold water on the recovery of cross-strait economic and trade ties, but also chilled the hearts of friendly people on both sides of the strait, which objectively raised the risks of cross-strait relations.

| Time | Total cross-strait trade | The mainland's total foreign trade | Taiwan's total foreign trade | The mainland's share | Taiwan's share |
|--------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 2023 | 267,835,695 | 5,936,826,301 | 784,052,000 | 4.51% | 34.16% |
| 2024 | 292,971,165 | 6,162,288,695 | 869,361,000 | 4.75% | 33.70% |
| Change | 9.38% | 3.80% | 10.88% | | |

(Table 7: Share of Trade between China and Taiwan in 2022 and 2023, in US \$"000.

Source: China General Administration of Customs and Taiwan authorities "Ministry of Economic Affairs"²².)

According to statistics from the General Administration of Customs of the mainland and the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Taiwan authorities, cross-strait trade will account for 4.75% of the mainland's total foreign trade in 2024, compared with 4.51% in the same period last year; it will account for 33.70% of Taiwan's total foreign trade, compared with 34.16% in the same period last year. For the mainland, cross-strait trade accounts for about 1/20, which is an important position. For Taiwan, cross-strait trade accounts for about 1/3, which is a very important position. It can be seen that the basic pattern of cross-strait trade, in which the mainland needs Taiwan and Taiwan relies on the mainland, has not changed in 2024. For the mainland, Taiwan's importance has increased slightly, while for Taiwan, the importance of economic and trade ties with the mainland continues to decline, which is the result of the political intervention of the Lai Ching-te

²² <https://dmz26.moea.gov.tw/GA/common/Common.aspx?code=C&no=1>

authorities in economic and trade. This will lead to a continued increase in the risks of cross-strait relations.

2) Cross-straits investment

According to data from the Taiwan authorities' Ministry of Economic Affairs, Taiwan's investment in the mainland will be US\$3.654 billion in 2024, a year-on-year increase of 20.33%; the mainland's investment in Taiwan will be about US\$297 million, a year-on-year increase of 901.04%²³. Cross-strait investment has rebounded significantly.

3) Summary

| First-level | Second-level | Third-level | 2023 Coding | 2024 Coding |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| C Economic Relations | C1 Cross-strait trade | C11 Cross-Strait trade value | -8 | -8 |
| | | C12 Cross-Strait trade value's proportion in the mainland's total foreign trade volume | -6 | -6 |
| | | C13 Cross-Strait trade value's proportion in Taiwan's total foreign trade volume | -8 | -8 |
| | | C14 The mainland's trade surplus or deficits with Taiwan | 7 | 8 |
| | C2Cross-strait investment | C21 Investment across the strait | -5 | -10 |

(Table 8: Index coding of economic correlation.)

In 2024, cross-strait economic and trade activities will recover significantly. Both

²³ https://www.moea.gov.tw/MNS/english/news/News.aspx?kind=6&menu_id=176&news_id=118370

cross-strait trade will grow by more than 9%, and the mainland's trade deficit will shrink. Taiwan's investment in the mainland will grow by double digits, and the mainland's investment in Taiwan will grow by triple digits. All these show that there is a strong demand for economic and trade exchanges between the two sides of the strait. However, the Taiwan authorities are on the wrong path of "allying the United States to fight China", pouring cold water on this economic flame. The Taiwan authorities forcibly reduced economic and trade exchanges with the mainland, causing the proportion of cross-strait trade in Taiwan's foreign trade to decline. This example also illustrates the deceptive nature of the so-called "equal" exchanges of the Lai Qingde authorities. The DPP authorities have no intention of improving cross-strait relations, but actively hinder all activities that are conducive to the normal development of cross-strait relations. This also proves once again that the Taiwan authorities are the biggest obstacle to the development of cross-strait economic and trade.

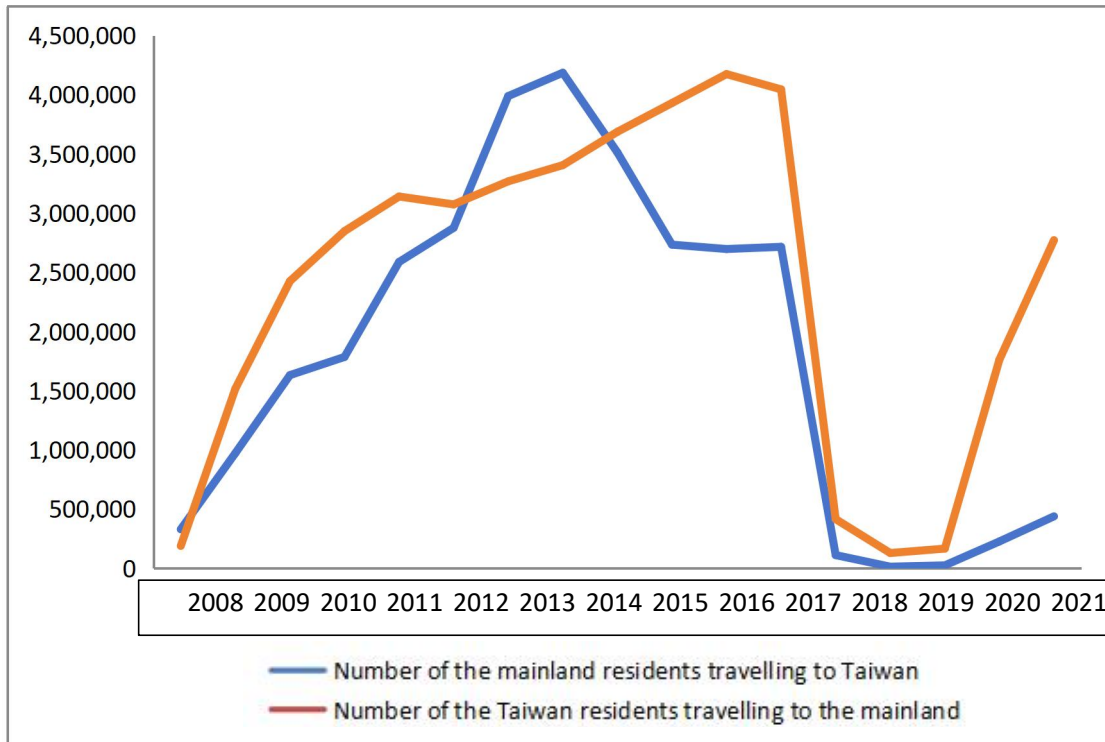
5. Social Exchanges and Public Opinions

| First Level indicators | Second Level indicators | Third Level indicators |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Social Exchanges and Public Opinions | Civil travels across the strait | Number of the mainland residents travelling to Taiwan |
| | | Number of the Taiwan residents travelling to the mainland |
| | | Number of people married across the strait |
| | Public opinions across the strait | Popularity of "reunification by force" among the mainland residents |
| | | Taiwan residents' recognition of the identity as "Taiwanese" |

(Table 9: Indexes of Social Exchanges and Public Opinions.)

As shown in Table 9, there are two second-level indicators and five third-level indicators for social exchanges and public opinions, which are respectively related to the movement of people across the Taiwan Strait and the change of public opinions across the Taiwan Strait.

1) Civil travels across the Strait



(Figure 1: Number of residents traveling between Taiwan and mainland China, source: Bureau of Tourism, Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Taiwan²⁴。)

According to data from the Taiwan authorities' Tourism Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation, cross-strait personnel exchanges continued to pick up in 2024. The number of mainland visitors to Taiwan was 438,212, nearly double the 226,296 in 2023. The number of Taiwanese visitors to the mainland was 2,770,284, a year-on-year increase of 57.3%, which clearly went out of the bottom of the historical trend. The recovery of cross-strait personnel exchanges in 2024 will help mitigate the risks of cross-strait relations.

In 2024, the mainland continued to seek to promote cross-strait personnel exchanges and actively relaxed the policy for mainland residents to visit Taiwan. However, the DPP authorities ignored the needs of the people and obstructed cross-strait personnel exchanges. The Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council stated that the Taiwan authorities "refused to respond to the full restoration of cross-strait passenger direct flights, and delayed responding to the application for charter boats from Pingtan to Taiwan proposed by the Taiwan tourism industry. The list of the first batch of mainland residents' group tours to Taiwan is still on the desk of the relevant departments of the DPP authorities."²⁵ It can be seen that the biggest obstacle to cross-strait personnel exchanges is also the Lai Ching-te authorities.

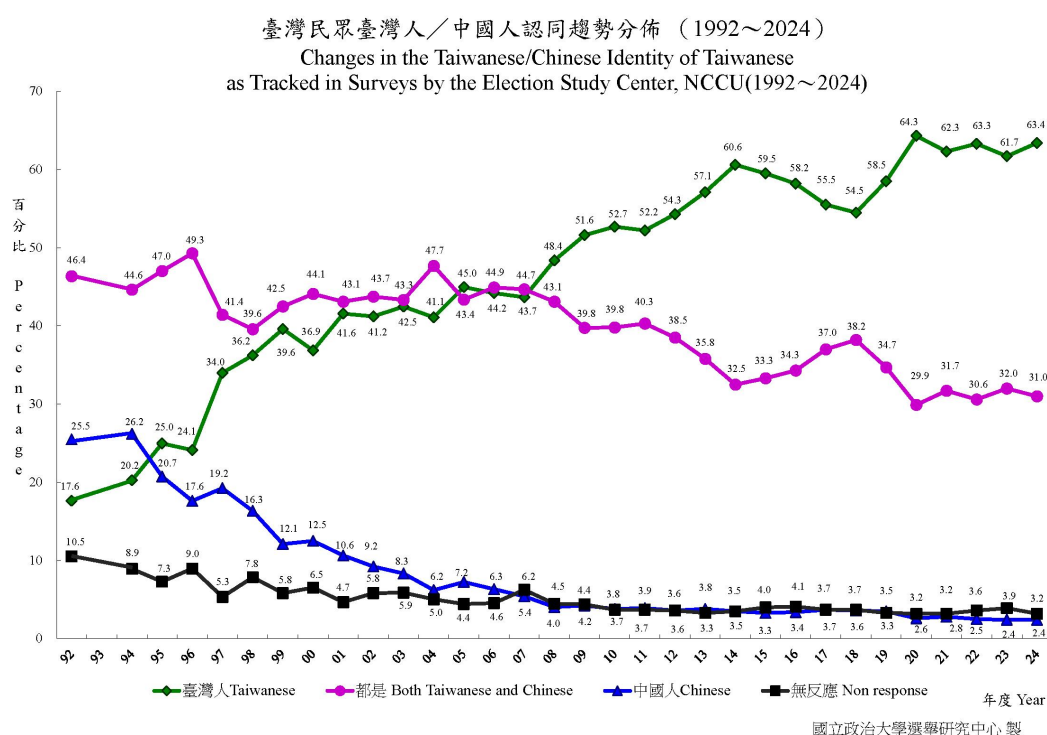
²⁴ <https://stat.taiwan.net.tw/>

²⁵ http://www.gwyttb.gov.cn/xwdt/xwfb/wyly/202501/t20250115_12678391.htm

In June 2024, the staff of the Academy traveled to Taiwan and also contributed to the cross-strait personnel exchanges, becoming part of the data. Whether it was feeling the summer evening breeze from the Pacific Ocean in Yilan, or hanging out in a bar in Taipei after the rain, basking on the beach in Keelung, or enjoying the pastoral scenery of central Taiwan on the high-speed rail to Kaohsiung... He once again personally felt the enthusiasm and friendliness of the Taiwanese people. And he firmly believes that the obstacles to cross-strait exchanges are only temporary, and the DPP authorities' attempt to hinder cross-strait reunification will not succeed.

According to the data of the "Ministry of the Interior Statistics Department" of the Taiwan authorities, there will be 6,330 cross-strait marriages in 2024²⁶, which is a decrease from 7,530 in 2023, but exceeds the level of 2022. This shows that the recovery trend of cross-strait marriages is in a state of slight fluctuation.

2) Public opinion across the strait



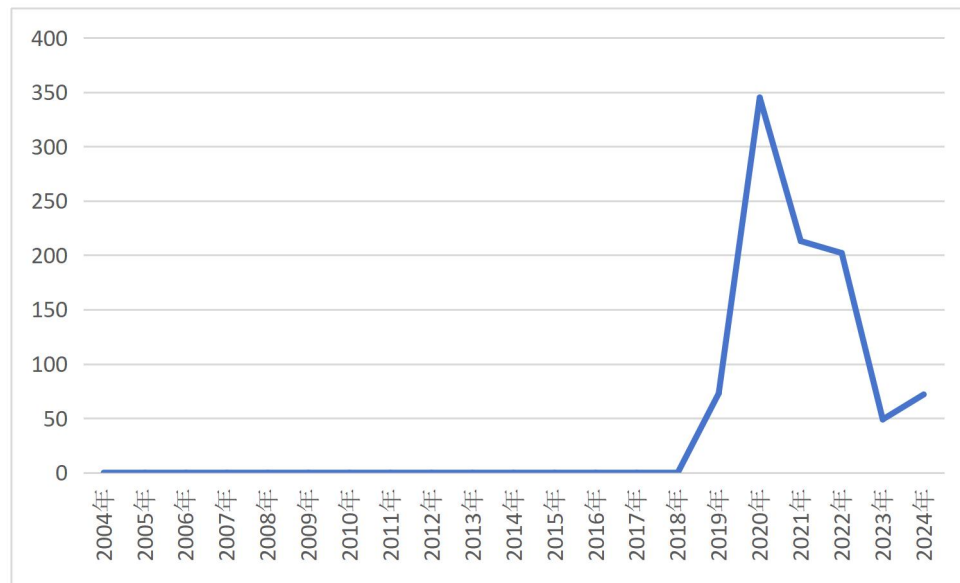
(Figure 2, Data source: Trend of distribution of important political attitudes at the Center for Election Studies, National Chengchi University²⁷)

Since 1992, the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University has conducted a tracking survey on the political identity of Taiwanese, and in February 2024,

²⁶ This is the number of Taiwanese spouses on the Taiwan side of the cross-strait marriage counted by Taiwan, which can also be understood as "couples", source: <https://statis.moi.gov.tw/micst/webMain.aspx?k=defjsp>.

²⁷ <https://esc.nccu.edu.tw/PageDoc/Detail?fid=7804&id=6960>

the university released its latest results, as shown in Figure 2. In 2023, Taiwan residents' recognition of the identity as "Taiwanese" declined from 63.3% in 2022 to 61.7% while identification as "Chinese" decreased, from 2.5% in 2022 to 2.4%, which is at an all-time low. Identification with mixed identity, or "both" increased from 30.6% in 2022 to 32%. Taiwanese's identification with "Chinese" was still at a low level, and their identification with "Taiwanese" was still at a high level. Although the change was not large enough to make a change in the indicator coding, it could be seen as sort of good news for those who support cross-strait reunification.



(Figure 3: "reunification of Taiwan by force" data on google trend, source: google trend²⁸)

This article continues to use Google Trends web search data as an alternative indicator of mainland public opinion on Taiwan. According to Google's rules, these data cannot be understood as the number of searches. The numbers represent search interest relative to the highest point on the chart for a given area and time. 100 is the highest popularity of the term in a certain period of time, 50 means that the popularity of the term is half, and 0 means that there is not enough data for the term. The monthly data released by Google adds up different months, and the data for a certain year may exceed 100.

Google seems to have adopted a new algorithm, and the data changes every year, but the trend remains unchanged. As shown in Figure 3, in 2024, the frequency of mainland residents using "military reunification of Taiwan" on the Internet has increased compared with the previous year, which shows that mainland netizens hope to settle the various perverse actions of the Lai Qingde authorities as soon as possible. Obviously, this topic lacked discussion during the Chen Shui-bian and Ma Ying-jeou periods, but it has begun to soar since Tsai Ing-wen came to power²⁹. This shows that mainland netizens

²⁸

<https://trends.google.com/trends/explore?date=all&geo=CN&q=%E6%AD%A6%E7%BB%9F%20%E5%8F%B0%E6%B9%BE&hl=en>

²⁹ During Chen Shui-bian's era, the Internet had not yet become popular in mainland China, which was also an important factor in the lack of online voice.

have developed strong negative emotions about the actions of the Taiwan Democratic Progressive Party authorities in recent years, and have formed a strong desire for "military reunification."

3) Summary

| First level | Second level | Third level | 2023 coding | 2024 coding |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| Social Exchanges and Public Opinions | Civil travels across the strait | Number of the mainland residents travelling to Taiwan | 0 | -1 |
| | | Number of the Taiwan residents travelling to the mainland | -4 | -6 |
| | | Number of people married across the strait | -1 | -1 |
| | Public opinions across the strait | Popularity of "reunification by force" among the mainland residents | 1 | 2 |
| | | Taiwan residents' recognition of the identity as "Taiwanese" | 9 | 9 |

(Table 10: Indicator coding for Social Exchanges and Public Opinions.)

The exchanges between the people on both sides of the strait can effectively alleviate the risks of cross-strait relations. In 2024, cross-strait exchanges rebounded significantly, which has a significant positive significance for alleviating cross-strait risks and reducing cross-strait risks.

According to the latest research by National Chengchi University in Taiwan, Taiwanese people's identification with "Taiwanese" remains at a historical low, and their identification with mixed identities has declined, which deserves the vigilance of compatriots on both sides of the strait.

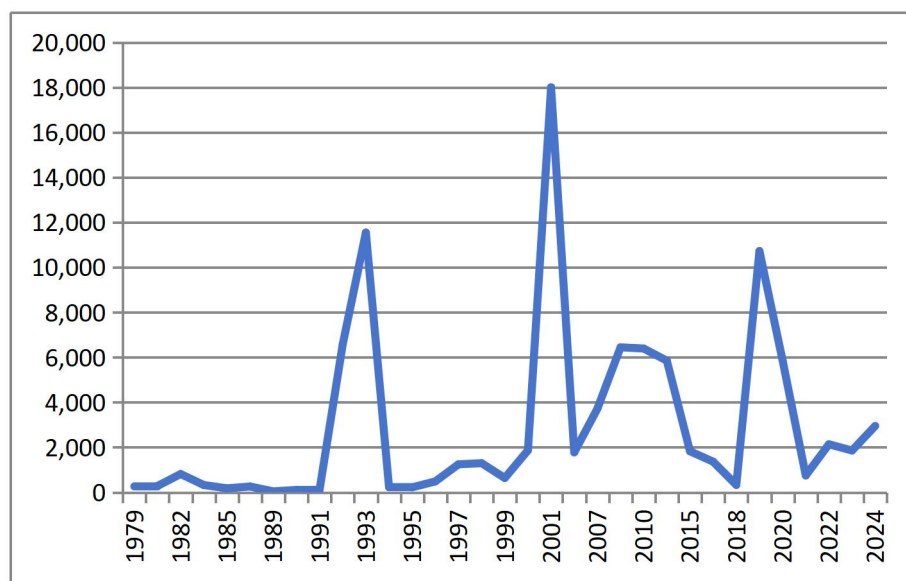
6. Foreign Countries' Policies towards and Statements on Taiwan

| First-Level indicators | Second-Level indicators | Third-Level indicators |
|---|-------------------------|--|
| E Exterritorial Policies and Positions on Taiwan | E1 U.S. | E11 The amount of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan over the years |
| | | E12 Activities of the U.S. Navy in the Taiwan Strait |
| | E2 U.S. allies | E21 Japan's policy towards and statements on Taiwan |
| | | E22 Australia's policy towards and statements on Taiwan |

(Table 11: Indexes of Exterritorial Policies towards and Statements on Taiwan)

As shown in Table 11, there are 2 second level indicators and 4 third level indicators for foreign factors, which respectively involve the Taiwan-related policies of the United States, Japan, and Australia.

1) The United States



(Figure 4: The amount of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan over the years from 1979 to 2023.
Source: News report.)

In 2024, the US arms sales to Taiwan amounted to \$2.951 billion, up 58.72% from \$1.859 billion in 2023. The largest of these arms sales was three sets of advanced surface-to-air missile defense systems (NASAMS), with a value of \$1.16 billion. In addition, it is worth noting the 720 "Switchblade-300" loitering munitions system. This shows that Taiwan is learning from the experience of the Russian-Ukrainian war, and both the United States and Taiwan have discovered the effectiveness of such suicide drones in modern warfare. This system can enhance Taiwan's asymmetric combat capabilities, which is in line with the US's arrangements for Taiwan.

| Year | Number |
|------|--------|
| 1950 | 1 |
| 1996 | 1 |
| 2015 | 0 |
| 2016 | 0 |
| 2017 | 0 |
| 2018 | 3 |
| 2019 | 9 |
| 2020 | 13 |
| 2021 | 11 |
| 2022 | 8 |
| 2023 | 6 |
| 2024 | 3 |

(Table 12: How Often U.S. Navy Ships Transited the Taiwan Strait, Source: News Reports)

In 2024, the US Navy crossed the Taiwan Strait three times, which was lower than the level in 2023 and returned to the level in 2018. In 2024, the US P-8A anti-submarine aircraft also flew through the Taiwan Strait three times. In the four years of the Biden administration, the number of US warships passing through the Taiwan Strait has decreased year by year. However, when Donald Trump takes office for the second time in 2025, the Academy will continue to observe any new trends of the US military in the Taiwan Strait.

On January 24, the USS "John Finn" (DDG-113) passed through the Taiwan Strait.

This was the first time in 2024³⁰.

On April 17, a US Navy P-8A anti-submarine aircraft passed through the Taiwan Strait from north to south³¹.

On May 8, the USS "Halsey" (DDG-97) crossed the Taiwan Strait³².

On September 17, a US Navy P-8A "Poseidon" anti-submarine patrol aircraft flew across the Taiwan Strait³³.

On October 20, the USS Higgins (DDG-76) and the Royal Canadian Navy frigate HMAS Vancouver (FFH-331) passed through the Taiwan Strait³⁴.

On November 26, a US Navy P-8A Poseidon anti-submarine patrol aircraft flew through the Taiwan Strait³⁵.

2) Japan and Australia

In 2024, the heads of government of Australia and Japan both made remarks related to Taiwan, from which it can be seen that the Taiwan policies of Australia and Japan continue the previous route, that is, to support the United States and favor the "Taiwan independence" forces.

From August 12 to 14, 2024, Shigeru Ishiba of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan led a delegation to visit Taiwan and met with Lai Ching-te, the leader of the Taiwan authorities³⁶. At the end of September, Shigeru Ishiba was elected president of the Liberal Democratic Party and published a signed article at the Hudson Institute, saying that he would build an Asian version of NATO to contain China³⁷. In October, Shigeru Ishiba took office as Prime Minister of Japan. On the 26th, Shigeru Ishiba called Taiwan a "country"³⁸. These actions and remarks show that the Liberal Democratic Party Shigeru Ishiba Cabinet is more partial to Taiwan than the previous cabinets of Shinzo Abe and Fumio Kishida. These remarks that break China's bottom line will only further deteriorate the situation and even cause Japan to be affected.

³⁰ <https://news.usni.org/2024/01/24/destroyer-uss-john-finn-performs-first-taiwan-strait-transit-of-2024>

³¹ <https://news.usni.org/2024/04/17/china-criticizes-u-s-p-8a-surveillance-flight-through-taiwan-strait>

³² <https://news.usni.org/2024/05/08/destroyer-uss-halsey-sails-through-taiwan-strait>

³³ <https://www.voachinese.com/a/us-says-navy-aeroplane-transits-taiwan-strait-20240917/7787373.html>

³⁴

<https://www.voanews.com/a/us-canadian-navy-ships-sail-through-taiwan-strait-week-after-china-war-games/7829524.html>

³⁵ <https://www.c7f.navy.mil/Media/News/Display/Article/3978390/7th-fleet-aircraft-transits-taiwan-strait/>

³⁶

<https://www.rfi.fr/cn/%E5%8F%B0%E6%B9%BE/20240815-%E6%97%A5%E7%9B%B8%E7%83%AD%E9%97%A8%E4%BA%BA%E9%80%89%E7%9F%B3%E7%A0%B4%E8%8C%82%E7%8E%87%E5%9B%A2%E8%AE%BF%E5%8F%B0-%E5%8C%97%E4%BA%AC%E5%BC%BA%E7%83%88%E4%B8%8D%E6%BB%A1>

³⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/simp/world-69384400>

³⁸ <https://www.cna.com.tw/news/aopl/202410260244.aspx>

In January 2024, Australian Prime Minister Albanese congratulated Lai Ching-te on his election as the leader of the Taiwan authorities, and reiterated that Australia's "one China" policy has not changed³⁹. In September, Albanese visited the United States and expressed support for maintaining the peaceful status quo in the Taiwan Strait with Biden. This shows that the Albanese government does not value Taiwan and is just repeating the statements of previous governments that are in line with Western political correctness. Australia's Taiwan policy has not changed.

3) Summary

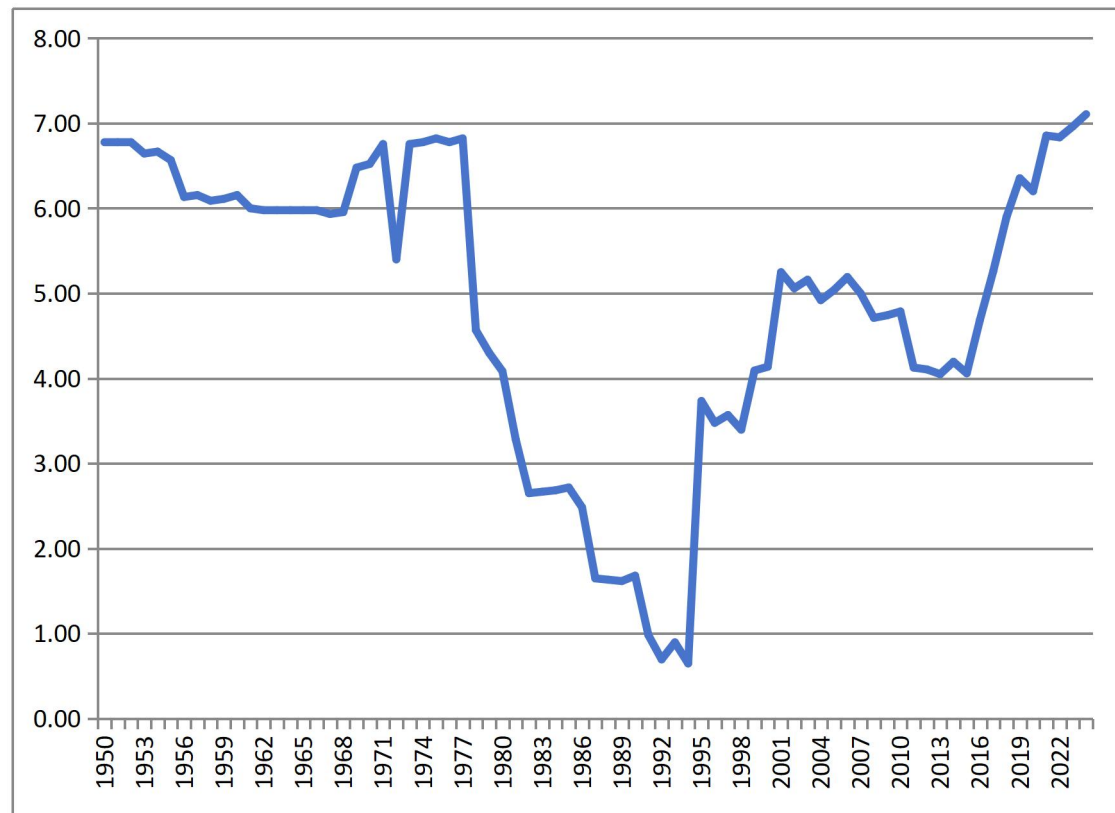
| First-Level indicators | Second-Level indicators | Third-Level indicators | 2023 Coding | 2024 Coding |
|---|-------------------------|--|-------------|-------------|
| E Exterritorial Policies and Positions on Taiwan | E1 U.S. | E11 The amount of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan over the years | 8 | 8 |
| | | E12 Activities of the U.S. Navy in the Taiwan Strait | 7 | 5 |
| | E2 U.S. allies | E21 Japan's policy towards and statements on Taiwan | 7 | 8 |
| | | E22 Australia's policy towards and statements on Taiwan | 7 | 7 |

(Table 14: Indicator Coding That Reflects Foreign Countries' Taiwan Policy and Stance.)

The Taiwan issue is China's internal affair, but it is affected by international relations. Among non-regional countries, the United States, Australia, and Japan have the greatest influence on the situation in the Taiwan Strait. In 2024, the United States continued its previous policies toward China and Taiwan, that is, to protect the "Taiwan independence" forces. The United States continued to sell weapons and equipment to Taiwan. The number of US Navy crossings through the Taiwan Strait continued to decline. Japan's new Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba clearly favored the Taiwan authorities and made extreme remarks that worsened the situation. Australia's Taiwan policy has not changed.

³⁹ <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/8486251/australias-position-on-taiwan-hasnt-changed-albanese/>

7. Coding and Trends of Indices



(Figure 5: Index coding)

On May 19, 2021, the China Cross-Strait Academy (Hong Kong) released the "2021 Cross-Strait Relations Risk Index", which indicated an assigned value of 6.59 for 2020. Now that four years have passed and new data are available, previous results have also been revised according to the data model. The value for 2020 has been revised to 6.20. The changes in these data are very small, and the overall trend has not changed. This also illustrates the effectiveness of the model from the side.

As shown in Figure 5, the cross-strait risk index in 2024 is 7.11, setting a new record high. It can be seen that the long-term trend of continued increase in cross-strait risks has not changed, and political and military risks are constantly increasing. The cross-strait risk index has hit a record high, indicating that cross-strait relations are still deteriorating. Moreover, the index has exceeded the level when military conflicts broke out between the two sides in the 1950s, which means that cross-strait relations are already very dangerous in the future, and contradictions may be intensified at any time.

In terms of politics, the Taiwan authorities ignored the goodwill of the mainland and continued to test the road of "Taiwan independence". The Lai Ching-te authorities of the Democratic Progressive Party have expressed their intention to confront the mainland, and have made a fuss about "sovereignty" and emphasized Taiwan's independence. This

is the most critical reason for the deterioration of cross-strait relations.

In 2024, the Taiwan authorities attempted to blackmail the mainland by tying the Taiwanese people to the chariot by building the so-called comprehensive defense resilience. The Taiwan authorities also took the initiative to provoke trouble in an attempt to intensify the conflict. The Chinese mainland issued a clear warning to the "Taiwan independence" separatist forces and foreign forces that favor Taiwan, and made it clear that the unification of the two sides of the strait is unstoppable.

In 2024, cross-strait economic and trade and investment both recovered, but the Taiwan authorities took the initiative to set up obstacles, which is the main reason for the decline in the proportion of cross-strait trade in Taiwan's foreign trade. In terms of cross-strait public opinion, according to the latest research by Taiwan National Chengchi University, Taiwanese people's identification with "Taiwanese" remains low, and their identification with the identity of "Taiwanese" continues to rise. This shows that solving the Taiwan issue is becoming increasingly urgent for mainland China.

In terms of foreign relations, the United States still actively supports the Taiwan authorities. The Biden administration continues to sell arms to Taiwan to arm Taiwan, resulting in continued tension in the strait. The US Navy passed through the Taiwan Strait three times, a decrease for the fourth consecutive year.

In short, cross-strait risks are still at a high level, reaching a new high in 2024, and breaking through the critical point of "non-peaceful means" to deal with them. This means that if the Taiwan authorities continue to carry out "Taiwan independence" provocations, mainland China can launch all reasonable disposal actions including a war of unification against Taiwan at any time. Under this background and trend, unless the risk decreases, there is no need to continue to update the "Cross-Strait Relations Risk Index". As a private think tank supporting cross-strait peace, the China Cross-Strait Academy (Hong Kong) supports the major policy of "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems" of mainland China, aiming to objectively present the changes in cross-strait relations risks, and does not want to over-exaggerate the risk of cross-strait military war. However, since the Lai Ching-te administration came to power, under the "Taiwan independence" manipulation and provocation of the DPP authorities, the cross-strait situation has come to the eve of fundamental changes. The DPP authorities and related "Taiwan independence" forces, as the core factors leading to the deterioration of cross-strait relations, will eventually pay a historical price for their "Taiwan independence" actions that harm Taiwan.