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**民主進步黨**  
Democratic Progressive Party, Taiwan

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# President Tsai at NYT DealBook Summit

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**Video Source:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZB6XDID15Rg>

[English Transcript]

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* Madam President, thank you for joining us.

*President Tsai:* It's my pleasure.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* I want to start with an issue I think that everybody is thinking about, which is that in the aftermath of the APEC meeting between President Biden and President Xi, how do you evaluate the risk of an invasion from China on Taiwan at this point?

*President Tsai:* I understand where you're coming from for that question. Indeed, Taiwan is facing mounting military intimidation, gray zone campaigns, cyber-attacks, and information manipulation. Now, in the face of such threats, the people of Taiwan remain calm, and some commentators even suggest that we may be, quote, too calm. But the fact is, the people of Taiwan remain clear-eyed about the situation, and we continue to make our utmost efforts to strengthen our defense capabilities and societal resilience.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* President Xi did reiterate his intention to unify with Taiwan, but he said he wanted to do it peacefully. How do you believe that this would happen?

*President Tsai:* Well, I think the Chinese leadership at this juncture is overwhelmed by its internal challenges. And my thought is that perhaps this is not a time for them to consider a major invasion of Taiwan.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* Because of the economic challenges in China right now?

*President Tsai:* No, largely because of the internal economic and financial, as well as political challenges, but also the international community has made it loud and clear that war is not an option. And peace and stability serves everybody's interests.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* Let me ask you this: Taiwan's chip manufacturing is critical for the world, as you know so well. The Biden administration has made it a priority to try to move some of that chip production to the United States. What do you think the impact of that is going to be long term on the relationship and value of the strategic relationship that Taiwan has for the United States?

*President Tsai:* Well, I think this move to the US in terms of our chip manufacturing capabilities, as far as we're concerned, for the moment, it's a good move in the sense that we are helping our allies and our friends in terms of building the supply chain resilience. But at the same time, we would be able to use resources available in the United States, especially the human resources and talent.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* But do you worry that long term it makes the relationship any less valuable to the United States? Insofar as if in the future, China were to want to take over and unify with Taiwan, that the US would be less likely to come to your defense or more?

*President Tsai:* Well, the thing is that we have more than the semiconductors to be valuable. You know, the clusters, the semiconductor clusters that we have here for semiconductor production, cannot be, you know, rebuilt or replaced by elsewhere. So we're pretty confident that this, the capacity that we have now, and the importance of our industry cannot be replaced anywhere else.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* Let me ask you, maybe in a different way, the United States' political posture towards Taiwan, as you know, has been this idea of strategic ambiguity. And yet President Biden has been very outspoken that he would defend Taiwan if it came to that. What do you believe the real US policy is in practice?

*President Tsai:* Well, I would say that we have noted that there has been increasing debate in the US on policy towards Taiwan. But I want to stress here that first, the people of Taiwan remain deeply grateful, as always, for the longstanding and steadfast support from our American friends. And second, the people of Taiwan are resolute in our commitment to self-defense. And we are clear-headed about the fact that one is responsible for protecting one's own homeland. Now, on your support, putting policy pronouncements aside, the fact is that Taiwan-US collaboration across many domains has reached historic highs in recent years.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* There's a big question in the United States specifically, but really in the West, about U.S. businesses and others, and we have a number of CEOs that we're talking to today about whether they should continue to be doing business with China. And I'm curious about what you think about that specific question: Does the relationship at a business level between U.S. business and China make your situation better or worse?

*President Tsai:* As doing business in China today is riskier than before, and the Western companies may want to look for alternative or additional bases in the region. And we welcome them to foster a deeper connection with Taiwan. The world has awakened to the importance of supply chain resilience and security, and secure supply chains are the backbone of a robust economy. And this is where Taiwan can be of tremendous value.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* In Washington right now, there is a debate taking place over the funding for the war in Ukraine and, now, the war in Israel. How much are you watching and following that as it relates to, again, the U.S. support for Taiwan and what you think ultimately, would happen? Does that concern you?

*President Tsai:* We are watching the development in Ukraine very closely, of course. I want to thank the U.S. for openly reiterating that its partnership with Taiwan is an enduring one and that its focus in the Indo-Pacific remains unaffected by events elsewhere. Earlier this month, the G7 foreign ministers' statement reiterated that the security of Taiwan is indispensable to global security. Now, the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have reminded us that the best war is the one not fought. And to avoid a war from taking place, it is crucial for us to demonstrate the strength and resolve to defend ourselves. At the same time, it is also crucial to remember that it takes concerted efforts by all partners and allies to fend off the aggressions of extremism, terrorism, and authoritarianism.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* You met with former Speaker Kevin McCarthy in the spring. Beijing called that a violation of its sovereignty. Pelosi, as you know, visited Taiwan, and there was a military response to it. How do you calculate the importance of these meetings with the potential response from Beijing?

*President Tsai:* Well, the meetings are meaningful in the sense that show that the U.S. friendship towards Taiwan and also the relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan are close. Of course, China had to react, and they have to say what they need to say, but what is more important is that we all work together to manage whatever risks that we may be encountering. But I think what has been happening is that we have been managing the risk jointly. I think we are okay in that regard.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* Finally, you have served eight years, two terms. The people of Taiwan will elect their next president coming up in January, and it appears that the Democratic Progressive Party will secure a third term. How much do you worry that it is going to raise the prospect of more military aggression in China? Is that what the result is going to be over the next several years?

*President Tsai:* Well, I think that China wants to be involved in our election. There's no secret about it, and that would also make their preference known to the public and the world as well, in each one of our elections. But I think they are probably not particularly successful in their effort trying to influence the election here, primarily because this is a democracy, and people know that they have made their best decisions as to who is going to be the next leader of Taiwan. And so, China, of course, is interested in interfering in Taiwan's election, and through different means. They are indeed trying to sway our election in their favor. In fact, all major elections in Taiwan since 1996 have seen similar influence operations from China. Now, this includes the use of military stress and economic coercion. The extensive quantitative warfare campaigns of both traditional and social media platforms are also not unfamiliar to the people of Taiwan. Now, instead of wishing for the day when Beijing will give up on these tactics, we should rather focus on strengthening the resilience of our democracy. Now, one way of doing so is to foster greater

unity and trust among different social groups so that people are able to resist this enormous information and other influences aimed at sowing discord. When people have firm faith in the strength of democracy, we can more effectively push back against the election interference.

*Andrew Ross Sorkin:* Madam President, I want to thank you for your time today. We very, very much appreciate it. Thank you.

*President Tsai:* Thank you.

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