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

## China Influence Tracker (V)



Photo: DPP China Affairs Department

*March 27th, 2025*

In collaboration with the [DPP China Affairs Department](#), the latest DPP U.S.

Mission report provides key updates on the evolving cross-strait situation. Enclosed are the key developments to date:

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## **Taiwan Bolsters National Security and Global Partnerships: Building a Multi-Layered Defense Against China's Threats**

### **■ President Lai Announced National Security Measures to Combat CCP Infiltration**

On March 13, President Lai Ching-te convened a high-level national security meeting, introduced 17 major strategies to respond to five major national security and united front threats Taiwan now faces: (1) China's threat to national sovereignty, (2) its threats from infiltration and espionage activities targeting Taiwan's military, (3) its threats aimed at obscuring the national identity of the people of Taiwan, (4) its threats from united front infiltration into Taiwanese society through cross-strait exchanges, and (5) its threats from using "integrated development" to attract Taiwanese businesspeople and youth. This landmark move marked a decisive turn in Taiwan's national security posture. In tandem, the government unveiled 17 comprehensive counter-infiltration measures—including reinstating military tribunals for security-related offenses, mandating public disclosure of cross-strait interactions, enhanced identity checks, and the promotion of media literacy about China—to construct a legal and administrative firewall against Beijing's expanding influence. By mid-April, Premier Cho Jung-tai will convene a cabinet meeting to adopt effective implementation plans for the 17 measures, while amendments to the *National Security Act*, *Anti-Infiltration Act*, *Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area*, *Laws and Regulations Regarding Hong Kong & Macao Affairs*, or *Cyber Security Management Act* should be proposed to ensure a sound legal framework for targeted enforcement, risk management, and greater transparency.

Multiple ministries have swiftly moved to implement the strategy. The Ministry of National Defense confirmed that espionage and collusion with foreign powers would be subject to military prosecution. The Ministry of Education warned of Chinese united front efforts extending into elementary and secondary schools, while the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) urged vigilance against religious and athletic exchanges used as cover for political influence. Premier Cho Jung-tai reiterated the administration's "Three Objectives":

remove those advocating hostile military actions against Taiwan, committing treason or contravening the law or the Constitution, and guilty of treason under military jurisdiction.

## ■ **Responding to Gray-Zone Tactics and Building Societal Resilience**

On March 4, President Lai spoke at the Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF) disaster preparedness workshop, highlighting the administration's policy theme of a "More Resilient Taiwan." He announced enhanced central-local response coordination, classifying undersea cables as critical infrastructure. In response to recent cable sabotage by suspicious Chinese vessels, the Executive Yuan established standardized response protocols and penalties. Defense Minister Wellington Koo noted that while gray-zone conflicts may fall short of war, they serve as tools of lawfare, propaganda, and cognitive warfare aimed at weakening Taiwan's will to resist. The Coast Guard also established a legal advisory team to support frontline enforcement against these gray-zone tactics, particularly efforts to disrupt communications and public morale.

## ■ **Countering Historical Distortion and United Front Narratives**

During the commemoration of the 78th anniversary of the 228 Incident, an uprising in Taiwan in 1947 violently suppressed by the KMT government, President Lai warned that China has not renounced the use of force against Taiwan and pledged to accelerate the declassification of political archives and transitional justice initiatives. In contrast, the CCP sought to co-opt the 228 narrative as part of its reunification propaganda, distorting historical memory and national identity to advance cultural unification. Taiwan responded by doubling down on civic education, local historiography, and historical truth-telling. According to an official poll conducted by the Mainland Affairs Council, nearly 90% of Taiwanese support the position that "neither side of the Taiwan Strait is subordinate to the other," over 70% back enhanced national security laws and the vetting of public servants for Chinese documentation, and nearly 80% support conditional and reciprocal cross-strait tourism exchanges via semi-official platforms. These findings reflect strong public alignment with the government's national security and sovereignty safeguards amid growing Chinese threats.

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## **China's Coercion on Taiwan: Political, Economic, and Military Infiltration**

### **■ China's Escalating United Front Tactics: Political Manipulation**

#### **1. PRC's 2025 Taiwan Work Conference: Coordinated United Front Operations and Military Coercion**

In late February, Beijing convened the annual Taiwan Affairs Work Conference, chaired by Politburo member Wang Yi and addressed by Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Wang Huning. The meeting reiterated Beijing's commitment to the "One China Principle" and the so-called "1992 Consensus" while voicing explicit support for "pro-unification forces" within Taiwan. It emphasized the need for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to maintain strategic control over cross-Strait relations.

Simultaneously, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) declared an unannounced military exercise zone off the coasts of Kaohsiung and Pingtung, reinforcing its two-pronged strategy of peace and war approach (和戰兩手策略). This was accompanied by the rollout of the "Fujian 17 Measures" – a set of economic incentives targeting Taiwanese citizens. In response, Taiwan's MAC warned that these synchronized actions reveal a broader CCP strategy to pressure Taiwan into unification, using both coercion and infiltration. The Council also stressed that expressions supporting unification may fall foul of Taiwan's *National Security Act* or *Anti-Infiltration Act*.

#### **2. China's Two Sessions: Economic Lures**

On March 4, 2025, China escalated its efforts at the National People's Congress (NPC) and CPPCC. Premier Li Qiang's government report reiterated opposition to "Taiwan independence and foreign interference," calling for institutional mechanisms to integrate Taiwan into China's economic and cultural systems. Local governments, such as the Pingtan Pilot Zone, simultaneously expanded preferential policies for Taiwanese investors and entrepreneurs. The legal front also intensified. On March 8, China's Supreme People's Procuratorate vowed stricter enforcement against so-called "Diehard Taiwan Independence Separatists," signifying the regularization and institutionalization of Beijing's

legal war on Taiwan.

### **3. Propaganda and Cognitive Warfare: Weaponizing Public Opinion**

Parallel to these moves, Beijing unleashed a new wave of propaganda and disinformation campaigns. On March 7, Foreign Minister Wang Yi declared “Taiwan is a province of China” and falsely claimed that UN Resolution 2758 had resolved the Taiwan issue. China Central Television launched the “#中国台湾省#” campaign, mobilizing Taiwanese celebrities to amplify Beijing’s messaging. On March 12, the Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) further pushed “U.S. skepticism” narratives, including attacks on TSMC’s U.S. investments and Taiwan’s defense spending—attempts to sow domestic division and undermine public trust in Taiwan’s international partnerships.

On March 13, Fujian introduced the “101 Taiwan Youth Entrepreneurship Support Program,” offering a 50,000 RMB grant and the title of “Entrepreneurship Star” to attract young Taiwanese talent. Framed as economic support, the program is a clear example of Beijing’s long-term united front strategy—using financial incentives to erode Taiwan’s economic autonomy and shift loyalty among younger generations.

China also sought to legitimize its rule over Taiwan through symbolic political gestures. The NPC included 13 “Taiwan Province representatives,” none of whom hold ROC nationality. NPC delegate Zhou Qi proposed inviting more Taiwanese youth to experience “Chinese-style democracy,” which Taiwan’s MAC immediately condemned as blatant propaganda. The MAC emphasized that the Taiwanese public is well aware of the nature of China’s authoritarian system and will not be misled by such propaganda campaigns.

In response to this intensified campaign, Taiwan’s government stepped up its countermeasures. The MAC issued warnings about China’s military maneuvers and increased defense budget, stressing the need to “watch China’s actions, not just its words.” Taiwanese scholars noted that while Beijing’s official language mirrored last year’s policies, the stronger emphasis on “integrated development” indicates a shift toward deepening influence through economic co-optation. The experts further argued that China’s “whole-process people’s democracy” is not a genuine political model but rather a vehicle for united front work—designed to divide, co-opt, and dilute Taiwan’s democratic identity. It represents an extension of the CCP’s information warfare, targeting the

cognitive space of Taiwanese society, particularly its youth.

## **China's Expanding Economic and Educational Infiltration: Industrial Narrative Warfare, Academic Influence, and Talent Control**

### **1. TSMC's U.S. Expansion Becomes a Tool of Beijing's Cognitive Warfare**

On March 3, U.S. President Donald Trump and TSMC CEO C.C. Wei jointly announced a major expansion of TSMC's operations in the United States—an additional \$100 billion investment to build three chip fabrication plants, two advanced packaging facilities, and a new R&D center. While this move reinforces TSMC's global footprint and deepens U.S.-Taiwan tech cooperation, Beijing has seized on the development to fuel disinformation, framing the investment as “Taiwan's semiconductor industry being hollowed out by the U.S.” These narratives have been echoed by opposition politicians in Taiwan, amplifying anxieties about national industrial security.

President Lai Ching-te and TSMC's Wei countered these claims in a joint press conference on March 6, dismissing fears of “TSMC becoming USMC.” Lai emphasized that TSMC's global strategy enhances—not undermines—Taiwan's technological leadership. The government, he noted, is committed to ensuring domestic production capacity with full support for land, energy, and talent resources. CEO Wei added that 11 new production lines are being built in Taiwan this year alone but are still insufficient to meet global demand—underscoring the need for international expansion to reinforce Taiwan's strategic semiconductor advantage.

Meanwhile, former President Ma Ying-jeou warned that TSMC's U.S. expansion could pose a “national security risk,” questioning the government's ability to protect core technologies. KMT Chairman Eric Chu and KMT lawmakers criticized the administration for allegedly failing to safeguard Taiwan's R&D edge. In response, the DPP called out the hypocrisy, pointing to Ma's previous attempts to draw TSMC investment into China during his tenure, arguing that it was KMT's pro-China policies—not the current global expansion—that truly endangered Taiwan's industrial future.

### **2. Rising Academic Infiltration and United Front Activities in Higher**

## **Education**

As Beijing intensifies its united front operations through academic channels, Taiwan's Ministry of Education took a decisive step in February by blacklisting three Chinese universities controlled by the CCP's United Front Work Department—**Jinan University, Huaqiao University, and Beijing Chinese Language and Culture College**. These institutions are known for targeting Taiwanese students as part of political indoctrination programs. The ministry raised concerns over approximately 2,100 Taiwanese students potentially being used as political tools and urged high school principals to avoid future engagement.

The MAC explained that these schools have documented performance metrics tied to their political objectives, turning education into an extension of the CCP's influence operations. While opposition parties criticized the move as political interference in academia, government officials defended it as a necessary step to protect academic autonomy and national security. Meanwhile, Beijing has continued to lure Taiwanese youth through subsidies and propaganda campaigns, including winter camps and recruitment drives organized by United Front organizations in Taiwan.

### **3. Unbalanced Cross-Strait Education Exchange: Beijing's Unilateral Restrictions**

Despite Taiwan's repeated calls for restoring cross-strait student exchanges, Beijing has maintained its unilateral ban on Chinese students enrolling in Taiwanese degree programs since 2020. In February 2025, Taiwan once again urged China to lift this restriction, but the TAO responded by blaming Taipei for its refusal to accept the "1992 Consensus," accusing the DPP of using anti-United Front rhetoric to block academic engagement.

Taiwan's **Ministry of Education clarified that it has never prohibited Chinese students from studying in Taiwan**. Rather, it is Beijing that has weaponized educational exchange as a political tool—another manifestation of how China uses soft power leverage to punish Taiwan for its political stance, while simultaneously promoting united front activities targeting Taiwan's youth.

### **China's Escalating Gray Zone Tactics: Military Coercion and**

## Hybrid Infrastructure Attacks

### 1. Unannounced Military Drills Undermine Regional Stability

In the lead-up to China's Two Sessions, the PLA abruptly designated a maritime exclusion zone off the coasts of Kaohsiung and Pingtung for live-fire exercises. The drills mobilized 60 PLA vessels and 45 aircraft, including 34 that crossed the Taiwan Strait median line—marking a significant escalation in cross-strait military provocations. These surprise maneuvers, in violation of international conventions, not only threatened Taiwan's civilian maritime traffic and coastal communities but also represented a direct challenge to regional security and stability.

The Presidential Office and national security authorities responded immediately, urging Beijing to exercise restraint and avoid unilateral escalation. **President Lai Ching-te reaffirmed Taiwan's commitment to strengthening its defense capabilities, pledging to increase defense spending beyond 3% of GDP and to deepen cooperation with democratic allies.** Local officials in southern Taiwan noted that the drills had disrupted fishing operations, while defense analysts viewed the exercise as a retaliatory display, likely in response to recent Taiwanese interdictions of suspicious Chinese vessels.

Internationally, the United States, European Union, and Japan condemned Beijing's provocative behavior and reiterated the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. In contrast, Chinese state media downplayed the escalation as "routine training," while simultaneously issuing veiled threats that such unannounced drills would become a normalized tactic—intended to instill fear and exert psychological pressure on Taiwan's populace.

### 2. The "Hong Tai" Cable Incident: Low-Profile Attacks via Flag-of-Convenience Vessels

In late February, the Togolese-flagged Chinese vessel *Hong Tai* was intercepted after dragging and severing undersea cables between Taiwan and its outlying islands. Investigations revealed that the ship, a "flag of convenience" vessel with a history of multiple aliases—including *Hong Tai 168* and *Shan Mei 7*—was linked to Chinese state-owned enterprises. Its deliberate presence in sensitive subsea areas suggests the incident was no accident, but part of a broader

strategy leveraging low-attribution actors to conduct gray zone infrastructure sabotage.

Taiwan's Ministry of Digital Affairs and Chunghwa Telecom swiftly activated contingency protocols to maintain communications for Kinmen, Matsu, and Penghu. The Ocean Affairs Council and national security agencies urged that such incidents be treated as national security threats and proposed legal reforms to impose penalties on suspicious vessels that deliberately loiter in Taiwan's exclusive economic zone.

Taiwan's Coast Guard further revealed that several similarly suspicious vessels—including the decommissioned Cameroonian-flagged ghost ship *Dali*—had been detected lingering off Taiwan's maritime borders. These findings highlight China's increasing use of third-party proxies to carry out hybrid attacks on Taiwan's undersea infrastructure. This low-visibility sabotage aims to destabilize Taiwan's communications backbone and sow domestic uncertainty.

U.S. and EU officials have voiced grave concern over the systemic threat posed to global undersea cable networks, pledging to strengthen “Submarine Cable Diplomacy” and multilateral coordination on infrastructure security. In response, the TAO dismissed the *Hong Tai* incident as a “maritime accident” and accused Taiwan of politicizing the matter—a deflection tactic emblematic of Beijing's broader denial strategy.

## **China's Legal Warfare and Political Infiltration: A Systematic Assault on Taiwan's Sovereignty and Democratic Resilience**

### **1. Identity Manipulation and “Domestication”: Legal Tools Disguised as Integration**

Since February 2025, Beijing has accelerated the issuance of PRC national IDs and residence permits to Taiwanese citizens, a move seen as a deliberate “domestication” scheme, taking a page from Russia's “compatriots” policy playbook. President Lai Ching-te has identified possession of such documents as a national security risk, prompting swift legal and administrative countermeasures. On March 20, the Ministry of the Interior confirmed that over 40 individuals were under investigation, with 14 already stripped of their Taiwanese household registration—losing access to healthcare, passports, and other citizenship privileges.

To safeguard national security and uphold administrative discipline, the Taiwanese government began requiring all civil servants, military personnel, and educators to sign affidavits starting in March, affirming they do not hold any PRC-issued identification documents. Authorities also intensified investigations into third-party agencies assisting with such applications. The MAC revealed that China has established multiple proxy service points—including the Taiwan Youth Innovation Park in Quanzhou, Fujian—highlighting the regional and organized nature of Beijing’s united front operations. Also, one such agency, Yu Zheng Asset Management (昱證資產), offers fast-track document services through promotional “3-day visa tours” to Xiamen. The Taiwanese government has launched a legal probe to determine whether these actions violate the *Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area*.

In response, China’s TAO accused Taiwan of “suppressing normal exchanges,” while announcing a fourth batch of 17 integration measures, including online renewal services and a new “dual-document verification” linking Taiwan travel permits to Chinese residence IDs. These moves, framed as conveniences, are in fact tools to absorb Taiwanese citizens into China’s legal system and legitimize Beijing’s integration agenda.

## **2. Curbing Pro-Unification Propaganda: Upholding Democratic Boundaries**

In recent months, Taiwan’s government has moved decisively to counter pro-unification propaganda and address online influencers, primarily Chinese spouses, who promote “armed reunification” and echo Beijing’s propaganda. The most high-profile case involves Liu Zhenya, a Chinese spouse operating the “亞亞在台灣” channel. After repeatedly advocating for China’s use of force against Taiwan, she had her residency permit revoked and was ordered to leave the country with a five-year re-entry ban. Despite her denials and legal appeal, the Taipei High Administrative Court upheld the government’s decision, citing *Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which prohibits incitement to war.

While Chinese authorities decried the move as censorship and vilified whistleblowers, Taiwan reiterated its commitment to the rule of law and clarified that such cases are exceptions, not a blanket judgment on all PRC

spouses. Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation echoed this view, urging the public not to stigmatize new immigrants based on the actions of a few.

Liu ultimately departed Taiwan on March 25, in compliance with the immigration order. That same day, China's TAO responded with a coordinated narrative offensive. TAO spokesperson Chen Binhua condemned Taiwan's decision as "judicial bullying" of cross-strait families and portrayed PRC spouses as "members of the Taiwanese people's families," framing Liu's expulsion as a political persecution rather than a lawful consequence of inciting violence.

Yet Beijing's retaliation did not stop at rhetoric. On March 25, the TAO launched a new section on its official website titled "Report the Malicious Acts of Taiwan Independence Henchmen and Accomplices Persecuting Taiwan Compatriots." Framed as a whistleblower portal, the column calls on the public to submit evidence against Taiwanese individuals allegedly "persecuting" PRC spouses and "sabotaging cross-strait peace." By 5:00 p.m. on launch day, the TAO reported receiving 323 emails, naming individuals such as Minister of the Interior Liu Shyh-fang, DPP legislators Shen Bo-yang, Wu Si-yao, and Huang Jie, prosecutors from the Taipei District Prosecutors Office, and public figures including Kuma Academy donor Robert Tsao, "Deep Green Dentist" Shih Shu-hua, and influencers Wu Tzu-yu ("八炯") and Chen Bo-yuan ("閩南狼PYC"). The TAO threatened to investigate and pursue "lifetime accountability" under PRC law for those it deems responsible.

### **3. The 20th Anniversary of the *Anti-Secession Law*: A Renewed Legal Threat**

On March 14, Beijing held a high-profile forum marking the 20th anniversary of the *Anti-Secession Law*. Chaired by NPC Standing Committee Chair Zhao Leji, with participation from senior officials including Wang Yi and Liu Zhenli, the event reaffirmed the law's role as a cornerstone of China's strategy to suppress Taiwan's sovereignty. Participants signaled plans to further institutionalize legal tools to "punish separatism."

Through coordinated messaging from the Ministry of State Security, Xinhua, and CCTV, Beijing touted the law as "a sword protecting national unity," implicitly threatening its expanded use against Taiwan. The TAO reasserted that the so-called "1992 Consensus" and "One China Principle" remain the non-

negotiable basis for cross-strait dialogue. Former KMT official Huang Ching-hsien was invited to speak as a “Taiwanese representative,” in an effort to manufacture a façade of domestic support for unification.

Taiwan’s MAC condemned the *Anti-Secession Law* as an authoritarian tool of legal intimidation and rejected the legitimacy of Huang’s participation, asserting that he does not represent public opinion in Taiwan. Scholars noted that Xi Jinping’s absence from the event may signal tactical restraint, but the legal, military, and ideological messages remain clear: China is doubling down on its united front campaign under the banner of the rule of law.

#### **4. Cross-Border Detentions: Rising Personal Risk for Taiwanese in China**

According to the MAC, at least 75 Taiwanese citizens have been detained, interrogated, or gone missing in China since 2024—reflecting the expansion of Beijing’s legal warfare into personal coercion. MAC warned that China’s prevailing mindset—non-unification equals separatism—has blurred legal thresholds to the point where even silence can be criminalized.

One of the most alarming cases is that of Li Yanhe (李延賀)—better known by his pen name Fucha (富察), a Taiwan-based publisher known for releasing books on Chinese politics and history. He was secretly detained and sentenced under the vague charge of “inciting secession,” without any public trial or due process. His publisher, Gusa Press (八旗文化), condemned the ruling, noting that over the two-year ordeal, there had been no public investigation, indictment, or trial proceedings—underscoring how China’s prosecutorial and state security apparatus is used to carry out political persecution. Fucha's case mirrors that of Taiwanese activist Yang Chih-yuan (楊智淵), who was previously sentenced to nine years in prison and designated a “major national security threat.” International human rights watchdog Safeguard Defenders has warned of China’s systemic abuse of legal mechanisms to target dissenters and intimidate Taiwanese citizens.

Other recent incidents underscore the growing danger: a 19-year-old from Changhua was detained in China on fraud charges, prompting Taiwanese government intervention. A Taiwanese businessman was arrested in Hong Kong during a visit led by KMT caucus whip Fu Kun-chi. Meanwhile, two members of the Unification Church were reportedly detained in China, raising

concerns about the suppression of religious freedom and civil liberties for Taiwanese in the mainland.

## **5. Espionage Cases and Legal Hurdles: Strengthening National Security Frameworks**

In late February, Taiwan's High Court Kaohsiung Branch acquitted four suspects in a high-profile Chinese espionage case (孫海濤案), raising concerns about evidentiary thresholds under current national security laws. Other notable convictions include Lin Hsien-yuan and Su Yun-hua, who were found guilty of receiving Chinese funding to conduct political polling, marking a rare successful application of the *Anti-Infiltration Act*. However, not all cases have ended with convictions. Kaohsiung village representatives accused of accepting Chinese hospitality and organizing election events were acquitted due to insufficient evidence.

## **China's Expanding Transnational Coercion: Escalating Diplomatic Suppression and Overseas Infiltration**

### **1. China Expands Overseas Repression: Rising Risks for Taiwanese in Third Countries**

According to Reuters, China has ordered its diplomatic missions and overseas police stations in Cambodia, Laos, and several African nations to monitor, intimidate, or potentially detain Taiwanese nationals under the pretext of "combating Taiwan independence." The directive, reportedly issued during Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Work Conference on February 25–26 and led by Politburo Standing Committee member Wang Huning, highlights a strategic expansion of Beijing's extraterritorial coercion apparatus. This development raises grave concerns over the safety of Taiwanese travelers, students, and diaspora members in these countries. In response, Taiwan is considering issuing travel warnings and is urging its citizens to carefully assess the risks associated with travel to regions where China's influence operations are increasingly pervasive.

### **2. South Africa Unilaterally Downgrades Taiwan's Representative Office Under Chinese Pressure**

On March 5, South Africa's Department of International Relations and

Cooperation unilaterally renamed Taiwan's official outpost from "Taipei Liaison Office in the Republic of South Africa" to "Taipei Commercial Office," downgrading its diplomatic status without prior consultation. The change reclassified the office as a representative of an "international organization." On March 12, BRICS+ Consulting Group policy advisor [Cole Jackson](#) defended the move in local media, citing Taiwan's alignment with the "One China Principle" and UN Resolution 2758. Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded forcefully on March 16, denouncing South Africa for yielding to Chinese pressure and undermining Taiwan's longstanding partnership and mutual contributions. The ministry further noted that this decision contradicts South Africa's stated democratic values and fails to honor decades of substantive bilateral cooperation.

### **3. Chinese-Linked Crime Syndicates Disrupt Palau's Political Stability to Undermine Ties with Taiwan**

On March 1, 2025, the U.S.-based think tank *Pacific Economics* released a report exposing how transnational criminal groups with ties to China are seeking to influence Palau's political landscape in ways that could destabilize diplomatic ties with Taiwan. These groups, allegedly backed or exploited by Beijing, have funneled illicit funds into resort and land development projects, using shell companies, "friendship organizations," and media content-sharing agreements to gain influence. The report's co-founder, Dr. Baker, told Taiwan's Central News Agency that China, unable to formally intervene in Taiwan-Palau relations, is instead leveraging criminal networks to pursue its geostrategic goals. The report also noted that China is deploying pro-Beijing parties—such as the China Zhi Gong Party—to lobby Palauan officials to change Palau's Taiwan policies. These efforts reflect Beijing's broader ambition to dominate key geostrategic nodes in the Pacific by commercial interests, posing a significant threat to Taiwan's shrinking diplomatic space in the region.

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### **China Intensifies United Front Penetration: Local Networks and Cross-Strait Exchanges as Strategic Vulnerabilities**

#### **■ Tourism Becomes a Battlefield: Beijing's Narrative Gains Ground in Taiwan's Domestic Debate**

In February 2025, cross-strait tourism once again became a flashpoint in

Taiwan's political discourse. The Taiwanese government insisted that any tourism reopening should proceed through official semi-governmental platforms to prevent a repeat of China's past "one-stop-shop" tourism model, which was used to facilitate political influence operations and intelligence gathering. Beijing, however, ignored the formal proposal and instead launched a media offensive via the TAO, accusing Taipei of obstructing people-to-people exchanges.

At the same time, a chorus of voices within Taiwan—including Travel Agent Association honorary chair Yao Ta-kuang, KMT Chairman Eric Chu, and Nantou County Magistrate Hsu Shu-hua—publicly echoed Beijing's talking points. These figures criticized the "ban on tour groups" and accused the central government of undermining Taiwan's economy. Their messaging inadvertently reinforced China's narrative, portraying national security safeguards as economically detrimental, and framing Taipei's measured policy approach as a roadblock to prosperity.

### ■ **KMT Lawmaker's Hong Kong Visit Triggers Alarm**

In mid-February, KMT caucus whip Fu Kun-chi sparked controversy when he skipped an inter-party negotiation session in Taiwan's legislature to attend a travel expo in Hong Kong. During the event, Fu publicly claimed he was "representing the central government"—a statement that drew immediate backlash. He was seated alongside Hong Kong legislators linked to China's united front system, and members of the KMT's Hong Kong-Macau branch were also present. The gathering revealed troubling signs of political convergence between the KMT and Beijing's influence networks.

The visit triggered political uproar and intense media scrutiny. DPP lawmakers questioned whether Fu had acted under Beijing's direction or was seeking support amid growing calls for the recent wave of recalls of nearly 3 dozen KMT legislators. DPP furtherly characterized Fu's behavior as tantamount to acting as a "domestic accomplice," warning it severely compromised Taiwan's political autonomy and national dignity.

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