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民主進步黨
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan


China Influence Tracker (XVI)

**TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION
THREATENS TAIWAN'S COMMUNITIES**

TRAVEL DETENTION CASES SURGE

**KMT MESSAGING ALIGNS
WITH BEIJING'S FRAMEWORK**

CHINA INFLUENCE TRACKER XVI
DPP Mission in the U.S.



February 27th, 2026

Happy Friday, and welcome back to the CIT. February showed Beijing converting party access into policy demands: KMT messaging increasingly mirrors CCP talking points, red paint hits a Hong Kong resident's gym in Taipei, and detention numbers for Taiwanese in China **TRIPLE** year-over-year. Here's what happened.

February's Toplines

KMT messaging aligns with Beijing's framework: Following the CCP-KMT think tank forum, KMT Chair Cheng Li-wen promoted the "1992 Consensus," called on the DPP to drop its "pro-independence" platform, and maintained signals toward a potential Cheng-Xi meeting, which Beijing is dangling as leverage.

Transnational repression reaches Taiwan's communities: A Hong Kong resident's Muay Thai gym was attacked twice with red paint in what civil society groups called textbook intimidation, exploiting legal gaps for repeatable gray-zone pressure.

Travel detention cases surge: MAC disclosed 296 cases involving Taiwanese nationals who experienced loss of contact, detention, or restrictions in China, up sharply from 55 in all of 2024.

PARTY CHANNELS AS POLICY VEHICLES: On February 4th, CPPCC Chairman Wang Huning met with KMT Vice Chairman Hsiao Hsu-tsen and National Policy Foundation Vice Chairman Lee Hung-yuen, reiterating the "1992 Consensus," opposition to Taiwan independence, "integrated development," and the claim that "people on both sides of the Strait are all Chinese." What was billed as a think tank exchange became a high-level political endorsement. The TAO touted these "achievements" at its February 5th briefing, extending pressure aimed at dividing Taiwan's domestic discourse. That same day, KMT Chair Cheng Li-wen praised the forum and argued Taiwan should "reciprocate" by hosting a similar event. She claimed the "1992 Consensus isn't that frightening," called on the DPP to drop its "pro-independence" platform in exchange for improved cross-strait ties, and insisted Taiwan does not need to "pick a side between China and the

United States." In practice, these points translate the PRC's political thresholds into domestic pressure on Taiwan's policy debate.

The "Cheng-Xi meeting" remains a manipulable lever. On February 23rd, Cheng responded to media questions by saying "progress hasn't changed after the New Year" and "there's no point asking every day." Hsiao announced the party would sue the Liberty Times over reporting "blocking U.S. arms sales as one of the conditions for the Cheng-Xi meeting." Earlier, Cheng had repeatedly said she hoped a meeting with Xi Jinping could happen in the first half of the year while emphasizing no schedule had been finalized. When specific claims circulated that March 12th might be the date, the KMT publicly rejected that report on February 25th as "groundless." The party maintains a directional "first-half" signal while denying concrete dates, and **Beijing has not publicly endorsed any arrangement.** This leaves the issue in prolonged political signaling, ***allowing Beijing to use uncertainty and the promise of access to shape Taiwan's political agenda without offering reciprocity.***

Beijing-aligned narratives surface in international media. In an Economist interview from late January, Cheng said she hoped to visit China in the first half of the year, argued that accepting the "1992 Consensus" would significantly reduce the risk of military confrontation, and linked claims that U.S. support for Taiwan is "wavering" to messaging that can fuel anti-U.S. sentiment. She also advanced a threat-laden scenario that PRC leaders could "lose patience" if the DPP wins again in 2028, echoing long-running PRC psychological pressure narratives.

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION HITS HOME: From February 4th-5th, Hong Konger Henry Tong reported that his Muay Thai gym in Taiwan was splashed with red paint twice. The vandalism was widely viewed as politically motivated intimidation, with perpetrators framing it as a "private dispute" to lower public vigilance while imposing real operational pressure.

MAC Deputy Minister Liang Wen-chieh noted the attacks were carried out by different individuals but followed a consistent pattern: entering Taiwan, committing the act, and leaving immediately. Such cases often fall under relatively minor property-damage offenses, limiting deterrence and exposing how adversaries exploit legal gaps for gray-zone intimidation. Amnesty International Taiwan and multiple civil society groups described the incident as textbook transnational repression, showing how PRC-linked operations bring fear to Taiwan's streets through deniable, repeatable scare tactics.

NATIONALITY DISPUTES AS COERCION: On February 5th, the TAO addressed the nationality dispute involving naturalized mainland spouse Legislator Li Zhenxiu, insisting "there is only one China" and denying the premise of "renouncing PRC nationality," while accusing Taiwan of "suppressing mainland spouses in Taiwan." The messaging sought to reframe Taiwan's law-based governance and national security considerations as political persecution. On February 11th, the TAO escalated further by warning of "lifelong accountability" against those allegedly "persecuting" mainland spouses, turning questions of nationality and loyalty into a coercive instrument aimed at intimidation and polarization.

TRAVEL RISKS SURGE: Late last month, Deputy Minister Liang disclosed that two newly appointed prosecutors traveling in Henan were approached and questioned by PRC state security personnel at their hotel. The officers probed their roles and pressed them to add WeChat to maintain contact, while already holding personal information such as their posting agency and job titles. Liang said this reflects the PRC's efforts to build a database on Taiwan's public servants and expand leverage through contact and profiling.

Earlier this month, the MAC reiterated that its travel alert for Hong Kong and Macau remains at orange, warning that electronic devices may be searched or confiscated and noting a rise in problematic cases. On February 12th, Minister Chiu Chui-cheng updated the tally: since January 2024 to February 2026, a cumulative **296 cases** have involved loss of contact, detention for questioning, or restrictions on personal liberty. That's up sharply from 55 cases in all of 2024 and 221 cases in 2025—roughly **four times** the amount reported in all of 2024, underscoring how ***the PRC's localization of enforcement continues to raise the cost of cross-strait travel.***

LAWFARE EXPANDS INTERNATIONALLY: On February 14th, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi claimed at the Munich Security Conference that "Taiwan has been returned to China" as part of the post-World War II international order, attempting to legitimize the PRC's sovereignty claim through false legal-historical narrative. Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi rebutted the claim that day as inconsistent with facts. Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement on February 15th calling Wang's remarks inappropriate, while Taiwan Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung strongly rejected the PRC's claim, reaffirming that the ROC and PRC are not subordinate to each other.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute released a report on February 10th showing that detentions of Taiwanese by PRC law enforcement have risen dramatically. The report assessed that the PRC is using "law enforcement" as a pretext for political coercion and asserting extraterritorial jurisdiction. It warned that PRC authorities may seek to internationalize these legal processes through INTERPOL Red Notices, attempted extraditions, and pressuring third countries to accept PRC domestic law as enforceable beyond China's borders.

Overseas surveillance of Taiwanese officials escalates. On February 11th, the U.S. sentenced Sun Yaoning, 65, for acting as an illegal PRC agent. Court filings revealed that Sun closely monitored the itinerary of former President Tsai Ing-wen during her April 2023 visit to Southern California, reported her movements directly to PRC officials, and photographed both pro and anti-Tsai protest activities, illustrating how CCP-linked proxy networks pull Taiwanese political figures' overseas travel into a manipulable gray-zone risk environment.

February's Throughline? February demonstrated the CCP's layered approach: dangling party access to shape opposition messaging, inspiring transnational intimidation on Taiwan's streets, all while detention cases rose and travel risks escalated. Taiwan's course? Continue adapting its defenses against these mounting diplomatic, legal, and domestic challenges—all at once.

In collaboration with the DPP China Affairs Department, the latest DPP U.S. Mission report provides key updates on the evolving cross-strait situation, detailing the escalation of China's military intimidation, gray zone activities, cognitive warfare, and United Front infiltration targeting Taiwan. Enclosed are the recent developments, offering a comprehensive overview of the current threat landscape, Taiwan's countermeasures, and emerging public opinion trends shaping the strategic environment.

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民主進步黨
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

Meet & Greet with Special Guest, I-Lin Liu



MEET & GREET

I-LIN LIU

DATE
FEB 19, 2026

TIME
4PM-6PM

HOSTED BY THE DPP MISSION TO THE U.S.

February 13, 2026




Dear Friends,

Meet Our Special Guest, Ms. I-Lin Liu!

I-Lin Liu is a senior parliamentary policy professional and Chief of Staff to MP Fan Yun in Taiwan's Legislative Yuan. Her work focuses on legislative strategy, democratic resilience, and policy responses to the PRC's political warfare and transnational repression—with regular engagement with U.S. and European policy communities. In 2024, Ms. Liu participated in the DPP U.S. Mission's inaugural Diplomacy Empowerment Program.

Ms. Liu is currently visiting D.C. as a fellow with the Jamestown Foundation, and the Mission invites you to meet her at a Happy Hour reception. Join us for an engaging evening with colleagues across the Taiwan policy and international affairs communities!

Event Details

 Thursday, February 19  4:00 PM
 1717 K St NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20006

Registration

RSVP by February 18 via Eventbrite. Plus-ones are welcome, and registration is required.

For any questions or accommodation requests, please contact **Peng-Hsuan Chen** at phchen@dppusmission.org.

Warm Regards,
Taiwan DPP U.S. Mission

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民主進步黨
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

Lai to Legislature: Pass Defense Budget as Session Resumes



February 11, 2026

“National security can’t wait.”

At a press conference this morning, President Lai Ching-te made a public appeal for the LY to act on Taiwan's stalled defense budget. With opposition lawmakers having **blocked the bill 10 times since November**, Lai warned that further delays threaten not just Taiwan's security, but its standing with international partners and its position in the Indo-Pacific defense architecture.

Taiwan's Defense as a Global Public Good

President Lai framed Cross-Strait peace and stability as essential to global security—a point he said is increasingly accepted internationally. China's expanding military threat has driven Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines to increase their defense spending. **Taiwan cannot be the exception.**

The 8-year, NT\$1.25 trillion special budget is designed to speed delivery of both conventional modernization and asymmetric defense capabilities across seven categories.

Not Provocation, but Responsible Self-Defense

"We have a responsibility to the international community. Increasing our defense spending is not a provocation, but proof of our commitment to self-defense and ensuring global security."

U.S. Support and Procurement Risk

The package has received bipartisan support in the United States. President Lai warned that continued delays risk Taiwan **losing procurement priority, delaying key deliveries**, and **inviting doubts** about Taiwan's commitment to its own defense.

The Ask?

President Lai noted he and Defense Minister Wellington Koo had already briefed the public on the package on Nov. 26. ***His request: once the legislature reconvenes after Lunar New Year, begin immediate substantive review and pass the bill quickly.***

Defense Minister Koo, also addressing the press, warned that delays risk a "rupture" in the joint line of defense against China. "We do not want Taiwan to become the rupture in the Indo-Pacific collective deterrence

posture."

Taipei's Reaction

Following President Lai's remarks, the TPP caucus said it would allow the Cabinet's version to be referred for committee review alongside its own proposal. DPP spokesperson Han Ying welcomed the move but emphasized the key test is whether the TPP actually follows through, and urged the KMT to put national interests first. Parties can compete on politics, but **must unite on national survival.**

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民主進步黨
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

Meet & Greet with Special Guest, I-Lin Liu— RSVP Reminder



MEET & GREET

I-LIN LIU

DATE
FEB 19, 2026

TIME
4PM-6PM

HOSTED BY THE DPP MISSION TO THE U.S.

February 17, 2026

Dear Friends,

A quick reminder to RSVP for our Happy Hour with Ms. I-Lin Liu.


If you've already registered, thank you—we look forward to seeing you!
Feel free to invite colleagues/friends, and kindly ask each guest to RSVP via Eventbrite.

Meet Our Special Guest, Ms. I-Lin Liu!

I-Lin Liu is a senior parliamentary policy professional and Chief of Staff to MP Fan Yun in Taiwan's Legislative Yuan. Her work focuses on legislative strategy, democratic resilience, and policy responses to the PRC's political warfare and transnational repression—with regular engagement with U.S. and European policy communities. In 2024, Ms. Liu participated in the DPP U.S. Mission's inaugural Diplomacy Empowerment Program.

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