



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on August 25, 2023

Central American Parliament Expels Taiwan as Permanent Observer in Favor of China

SINGAPORE — On August 21, the Central American Parliament (Parlacen) voted to expel Taiwan as a permanent observer — a position it had held for more than two decades — and replace it with mainland China, whose rising economic clout in Latin America has increasingly alienated Taipei. Parlacen's reason for the move was Taipei's alleged lack of sovereignty under international law.

The Central American group, which comprises Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, made the decision to expel Taiwan during a session in the Nicaraguan capital, Managua. A group of Nicaraguan legislators tabled the motion, stating that Taiwan's observer status was "illegitimate" because Taipei "lacks the recognition as a sovereign state by the United Nations."



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Moreover, the lawmakers pointed out that the UN "considers Taiwan a province of mainland China," referring to the UN's 1971 expulsion of Taiwan in favor of China. Among the six Parlacen members, only Guatemala presently has formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Belize and Paraguay also have relations with Taiwan, though U.S. officials think Paraguay could be the next country in the Americas to switch sides to China.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office voiced its support of Parlacen's "correct decision." Mainland China vehemently objects to any type of diplomatic recognition of Taiwan, which has been ruled by a separate government since the late 1940s. Beijing views Taiwan as part of China's territory, to be taken over by military force, if necessary. With the UN recognizing the People's Republic of China as the only representative of China in the globalist alliance, most countries have since maintained a "one-China" policy, refraining from forging formal ties with Taiwan. Beijing, however, has slammed the United States for breaching this policy by selling arms to Taipei.

In response to Parlacen's decision, the Taiwanese Foreign Ministry labeled the vote to oust the self-governing island as a "conspiracy" by Beijing against Taipei, adding that Taiwan would back out from Parlacen "with immediate effect to uphold national dignity." Subsequently, the ministry maintained the local government's stance that neither Taiwan nor Beijing "are subordinate to the other."

U.S. Senators Tim Kaine, a Democrat, and Marco Rubio, a Republican, who lead a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, denounced the vote.



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“Since 1999, Taiwan has served as a strong partner in its role as a permanent observer of the Central American Parliament, encouraging good governance and economic development in our Hemisphere,” the senators declared in a joint statement.

Both senators also singled China out for jeopardizing “democracy,” obstructing regional growth and mistreating Uyghurs in its Xinjiang region, even allegedly resorting to genocide.

China has dismissed claims that it has committed any abuses in Xinjiang. Its embassy in the United States did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Recently, China’s Foreign Ministry also lambasted a visit to the United States on Saturday by Taiwan’s pro-independence Vice President William Lai, and pledged that it will retaliate.

In a statement in response to Lai’s U.S. visit, Beijing reiterated its disapproval of any type of diplomatic communication between Washington and Taipei. The statement said that Beijing “firmly opposes any visit by ‘Taiwan independence’ separatists to the US in any name or under whatever pretext.”

Furthermore, the statement then accused Lai for being a “troublemaker through and through” and that his arrival in the United States “seriously violates the One China principle” and “gravely undermines China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.”

It added that “China is closely following the developments” and that “resolute and strong measures” will be taken to protect its national interests.

Lai, who is regarded as a strong candidate to win Taiwan’s presidential election in January, arrived in New York for what was officially labeled a brief stopover before traveling to Paraguay for the inauguration of the South American country’s new president.

Sources indicated that Lai had meant to keep his New York visit “low key” and did not hold any formal talks with U.S. lawmakers. Lai’s brief visit to the United States came as Beijing and Washington sought to boost ties following longstanding hostilities between the world’s two biggest economies.

However, Washington’s recent approval of a \$345 million military aid package for Taipei would transform the island into an “ammunition depot,” China said in July this year.

“No matter how much of the ordinary people’s taxpayer money the ... Taiwanese separatist forces spend, no matter how many US weapons, it will not shake our resolve to solve the Taiwan problem,” Chen Binhua, spokesperson for Beijing’s Taiwan Affairs Office, declared in a statement. “Or shake our firm will to realize the reunification of our motherland.”

Chen elaborated that Washington’s persistent military assistance is “turning Taiwan into a powder keg and ammunition depot, aggravating the threat of war in the Taiwan Strait.”

The White House said that the military aid package would include defense and education training for Taiwanese citizens.

Besides, the package would include MANPADS surface-to-air missile systems and other weaponry to enhance Taiwan’s military capabilities, the Associated Press reported, quoting an anonymous source.

Unlike some previous military aid packages, the latest comes as part of a presidential authority that was approved by the U.S. Congress last year, meaning that the weapons will be supplied directly from the United States to facilitate their arrival.

Taiwan has previously bought around \$19 billion worth of equipment from the United States — some of which has not yet arrived on the island yet. According to the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act



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authorized by the Carter administration in 1979, Washington is legally obligated to supply Taiwan with weapons of a defensive nature.

China has regularly staged military exercises in and around the Taiwan Strait at times of increased cooperation between Washington and Taipei.

In light of the U.S.-Taiwan alliance, Beijing's Defense Ministry spokesperson, Tan Kefei, criticized Washington for "crudely interfering" in its domestic affairs.

"This is tantamount to accelerating the transformation of Taiwan into a 'powder keg' and pushing the Taiwanese people into the abyss of disaster," Tan said at a press briefing, based on a statement posted on the ministry's website.

Tan also called on Washington to "immediately stop selling arms to Taiwan" and cease "any form of US-Taiwan military collusion." He also cautioned that any moves to "use force to seek independence" would be "doomed to failure."

Earlier this month, however, in an apparent attempt to salvage deteriorating Sino-U.S. ties, Washington gave a formal invitation to China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a move thought to be a prelude to a meeting between leaders Joe Biden and Xi Jinping later this year.



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