



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on March 23, 2023

## With Honduras Now in China's Column, Taiwan Runs Short on Allies

Taiwan finds itself walking on unsolid ground, its list of allies shrinking.

The pressure on the small island nation, officially called the Republic of China, has intensified as Honduras — one of the few nations that recognized Taiwan's sovereignty — has now forsaken Taipei and instead established relations with Communist China.

Beijing claims Taiwan and refuses to maintain relations with any country that doesn't respect that claim. In announcing last week that her country would create ties with Beijing, Honduran President Xiomara Castro simultaneously abandoned Taiwan — a move that not only worries Taipei, but American officials concerned that yet another Latin American country is getting close to China.



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As Reuters [reports](#), Foreign Minister Eduardo Enrique Reina said Honduras' decision to establish formal relations with Beijing was driven by financial considerations — the country is “up to its neck” in debt, including \$600 million owed to Taiwan.

“We need investment, we need cooperation,” Reina said, adding that the move was about “pragmatism, not ideology.”

In short, Beijing is simply capable of signing a bigger check to Honduras than Taiwan is.

“Honduras' needs are enormous, and we haven't seen that answer from Taiwan,” said Reina. The foreign minister claimed that Honduras asked Taiwan to double the annual aid to them, but that Taiwan never replied. He also said that Honduras tried to renegotiate their debt with Taiwan, but to no avail.

Currently, Honduras has external debts of approximately \$8 billion.

Meanwhile, Taiwan's foreign ministry said in a statement that Taipei has “actively and continuously” negotiated cooperation plans with Honduras since Castro assumed the presidency last year.

Reuters further reported:

Taiwan “expressed to Honduras many times that our country is willing, within its capabilities, to assist Honduras to promote construction and development, and at the same time, we repeatedly reminded Honduras to pay attention to China's false promises,” it said, without mentioning the debt issue.

Taiwan is “trying its best to maintain the friendship” with Honduras, the ministry added.



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The news puts pressure on Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen ahead of an April visit to the U.S. and Central America, and comes after Honduras said it was negotiating with China to build a hydroelectric dam, Patuca II — part of a plan for three dams.

China has made a series of strategic investments in recent years in the Latin American countries that currently support Taiwan, including El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic.

In fact, China has already put money into Honduras, pouring \$298 million into a dam in the eastern part of the country in January 2021.

In the wake of Honduras' actions, Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen [will visit](#) allies Guatemala and Belize next week. She may also meet with U.S. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) in Los Angeles.

Argentina is another key state China is working to bring into its orbit.

As [The New American](#) previously reported, Argentina's embassy to China recently said Buenos Aires is considering the purchase of JF-17 "Thunder" fighter jets from Beijing.

A social media post from the embassy announced that Ambassador Sabino Vaca Narvaja and Argentine Defense Minister Jorge Taiana are in the process of working out a defense integration with China that would prospectively include buying Chinese military vehicles and fighter jets, and even engaging in an exchange of military personnel with Beijing.

Part of the appeal for Argentina is the fact that China gives Argentina its support for the "legitimate claim to exercise full sovereignty over the Malvinas [Falkland] Islands," which it unsuccessfully tried to take from the United Kingdom during the Falklands War in 1982.

There's also the fact that Chinese warplanes are less expensive than the alternatives.

China already has firm allies in Latin America in Venezuela and Nicaragua, led by socialist dictators Nicolas Maduro and Daniel Ortega, respectively.

During an online meeting held by the Chinese Communist Party last week, Maduro said he would work with Beijing toward the creation of an "alternative to capitalism."

The event was titled "High-Level Dialogue with the Communist Party of China and Political Parties of the World." It was hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping himself, and also participating were Ortega, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, and Le Hoai Trung — who leads the Foreign Relations Commission of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

"I send you all our commitment in the work and in the daily struggle to build, as we are building, an alternative to savage capitalism, to neoliberal capitalism, to imperialist hegemonism. An independent, sovereign alternative," Maduro said at the event.

Sadly, Taiwan is quickly learning a painful reality: No matter how noble one's cause, other countries are only "friends" so long as they believe you are beneficial to them.

In this case, Beijing financially has much more to offer poor, indebted Latin American countries than does Taipei — and is more than happy to open up the coffers if it means wearing down what's left of Taiwan's support.

If Taiwan doesn't move quickly, it will soon find itself alone. When that happens, China won't hesitate to invade.



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