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A policy paper

Securing the Future: Why Taiwan Must Join Trans-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific Defence Networks

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Summary

In the past three decades, the world has witnessed a spectacular rise of the People's Republic of China from a nation in poverty to a global economic powerhouse. As China's international weight grows, it is expanding its military capabilities and conducting military operations in close proximity to (or even within) the territorial waters of its neighbouring states.

At the forefront of China's military ambitions is Taiwan, a democratic state that China claims as part of its territory, threatening to use force as a legitimate option to achieve "unification." This is significant because the threat of war has, in recent years become more salient. As China turns more authoritarian, its pressure on Taiwan grows. Moreover, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has reminded the world that autocrats may initiate wars that are considered highly unlikely by Western leaders and experts.

A potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait has brought attention to how the United States and its Indo-Pacific partners (including Japan and Australia) should act in order to prepare for and prevent a cross-Strait contingency. As Europe is increasing its interest in the security of the Taiwan Strait, this paper argues that there is a need for Europe to support coordination for security contingencies with Taiwan in multilateral security platforms.

Several platforms offer opportunities for multilateral coordination on defence and security issues. Existing Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Pacific platforms, which are the subject of this paper, include the AUKUS alliance on submarine technology; NATO, which has increasingly become interested in the Indo-Pacific; and joint military exercises such as the bi-annual RIMPAC exercise hosted by the US.

However, the main target of China's aggression, Taiwan, is often excluded from such defence conversations between the US and both its Indo-Pacific and European partners. Incorporating Taiwan into these conversations is, thus, a logical next step in transforming the rhetorical support for Taiwan professed by several of these states into concrete actions.



There are two main reasons why incorporating Taiwan into these defence talks should become part of the overall strategy by the West to deter further escalation by China in the Taiwan Strait, especially considering the increasing centrality of a potential Cross-Strait contingency in these talks. Firstly, it would enable early preparation for interoperability and coordination between the states involved. The early preparation would then not only lower the risk of confusion but it would also enable Taiwanese assets to be better deployed in case of war. Secondly, including Taiwan would send important political signals that would, on the one hand, help garner public support in the US, Europe, and the broader Indo-Pacific for protecting Taiwan and, on the other, deter Beijing from attacking in the first place.

This paper recommends policymakers in the US, Europe, and the broader Indo-Pacific to:

- Invite Taiwanese representatives to consultations on AUKUS Pillar II.
- Invite Taiwanese representatives to non-binding talks at NATO.
- Invite Taiwan to participate in the RIMPAC exercises.

These conversations do not need to begin with lofty goals of admitting Taiwan as a formal member; they can simply begin with operational-level dialogues similar to those conducted as part of unpublicised joint exercises between the US and Taiwan.¹ Moreover, the UK and the rest of Europe do not need to publicly initiate or spearhead efforts at including Taiwan in the defence conversations; instead, they can signal their support for such an initiative led by the US.

¹ Reuters, “Exclusive: U.S. and Taiwan navies quietly held Pacific drills in April,” May 14, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-taiwan-navies-quietly-held-pacific-drills-april-sources-say-2024-05-14/>

Introduction

In recent years, the United States, Europe, and other Indo-Pacific partners have all begun shifting their China policies. Their focus has changed from engagement and economic links to competition (even rivalry) and the security implications of China's military expansionism.

The shift in the respective states' China policies has been, in part, due to the increase in Chinese aggressive behaviour, especially militarily, in the region.² The party bearing the largest pressure from this increase in Chinese aggression is Taiwan. China has always claimed sovereignty over Taiwan and has done everything in its power to prevent other states in the world from recognising Taiwanese sovereignty. Chinese military intimidation towards Taiwan has intensified in recent years.³ For instance, in 2021, Taiwan reported 972 Chinese military aircraft in its air defence identification zone, and in 2022, that number increased by 79% to 1,737.⁴ The average number of monthly and daily aircraft likewise saw a significant increase to 144.75 (from 81) and 6.48 (from 4.05), respectively.⁵

Russia's unprovoked all-out invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has further changed how the cross-Strait situation is perceived.⁶ It has reminded policymakers in the US and Europe that threats of invasion, however unthinkable two years ago, are now in the realm of possibility. Similarly, policies must change to reflect a potential Chinese-initiated conflict in Taiwan, the damage of which would eclipse the Ukraine conflict with far-reaching consequences for the global economy.⁷

A potential conflict between Taiwan and China has long been thought of as a primarily American issue, as the US has military alliances with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Australia. However, Europe has several significant interests in the Taiwan issue as well. The first area of interest is economic - a crisis in the Taiwan Strait would have dire consequences for global supply chains, as many of these include Taiwan. According to a report by the Körber-Stiftung International Dialogue and Chatham House, the

² 2023 Report to Congress of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Nov. 2023, p. 519. https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2023-11/2023_Annual_Report_to_Congress.pdf

³ Lindsay Maizland, "Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense," *Council on Foreign Relations*, Feb. 8, 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-relations-tension-us-policy-biden>

⁴ Ben Lewis, "2022 in ADIZ Violations: China Dials Up the Pressure on Taiwan", *China Power*, Mar. 23, 2023. <https://chinapower.csis.org/analysis/2022-adiz-violations-china-dials-up-pressure-on-taiwan/>

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid* note 2, p. 520.

⁷ David Stringer, "War Over Taiwan Would Cost World Economy \$10 Trillion", *Bloomberg*, Jan. 9, 2024, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/newsletters/2024-01-09/war-over-taiwan-would-cost-world-economy-10-trillion-big-take>.

consequences of a Taiwan crisis for national economies and global trade, especially in vulnerable sectors like the semiconductor industry, would be very concerning to Europe.⁸ The second area of interest concerns the stability of the liberal world order, which is built on the US and European values, namely democracy and respect for international norms. The Körber-Stiftung report claims that Europe would acknowledge that a unilateral change in the status quo between China and Taiwan would constitute a fundamental challenge to the rules-based global order and the US-led alliance system. Furthermore, it would also lead to the consolidation of China's regional and global political and military power.”⁹

The UK and other European stakeholders have realised that in order to protect these interests, military intervention may need to be taken, and in order to prevent such an active military scenario, all efforts must be made to deter China from taking military action in the first place.¹⁰ The US, UK and Europe must project the message that while they do not seek to go to war with China, they are ready to fight and win should China make the wrong choice. However, providing rhetorical support for Taiwan is not enough; this support needs to be bolstered with concrete actions. One example of concrete action is to include Taiwan in joint defence conversations such as the AUKUS (the US-UK-Australia) talks on submarines, ad-hoc NATO partner dialogues with non-members such as the Individually Tailored Partnership Programmes (ITPPs) with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea,¹¹ and RIMPAC (the Rim of the Pacific) joint military exercises.

As Taiwan is currently not part of these multilateral defence discussions, this may cause problems with early preparation for joint operability and send the wrong political signals to both the Western public and China, namely that the respective states are not serious about supporting Taiwan. Including Taiwan in such discussions would alleviate these problems; at a practical level, it would ensure that there is ample time for allies and partners to prepare for Taiwan's defence, and at a symbolic level, it would show the world and China that there is a firm will to oppose Chinese military aggression towards Taiwan on the part of the respective states.

Early preparation

⁸ *Escalation in the Taiwan Strait: What to Expect from Europe?* Körber-Stiftung International Dialogue and Chatham House, 2021.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Stuart Lau, “Von der Leyen vows to stop China from invading Taiwan,” *Politico*, Jul. 18, 2024. <https://www.politico.eu/article/ursula-von-der-leyen-vows-to-stop-china-from-invading-taiwan/>

¹¹ Individually Tailored Partnership Programmes, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_225037.htm

Generally, it is understood that when states enter into multilateral defence cooperation arrangements, whether they are formal alliances, ad-hoc coalitions, or low-level interoperability dialogues, it increases their power to deter adversaries. However, simply agreeing to cooperate on defence is not enough - security cooperation arrangements must be actively planned, rehearsed, and executed. Different states have different armies, levels of training, equipment, and logistical practices. The extent to which various armed forces can cooperate will determine the real strength of an emerging alliance or coalition, as cooperation can even cause the overall force to be less effective than if their members operated on their own¹²: for example, if communication systems were incompatible between coalition members, causing uncertainty in information flows and increasing the risk of friendly fire incidents.

In the case of Ukraine, the US and Europe have found themselves unprepared for Russia's full-scale invasion. Arms packages had to be expedited to Ukraine, and Ukrainian troops had to learn how to use such equipment in a noticeably short amount of time. Given the looming threat of Russia on Ukraine's border, many steps could have been taken before the invasion to help prepare for such a contingency and perhaps even deter Russia in the first place.¹³

Compared to Ukraine, a conflict in Taiwan would have even more grave consequences. Currently, world powers such as the US, as well as its partners like Europe, have expressed strong support for Taiwan's defence.^{14,15} President Biden has made several statements affirming the US's willingness to send troops to defend Taiwan.¹⁶ However, these statements must be buttressed by actual planning and sharing at the operational level; in other words, there has to be an ongoing process for Taiwan to discuss its own defence with its partners, who would potentially need to operate together in case of a crisis.

¹² Ole R. Holsti, Philip T. Hopmann, and John D. Sullivan, *Unity, and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies*, Wiley (1973).

¹³ Alexander Vindman, "America Could Have Done So Much More to Protect Ukraine," *The Atlantic*, Feb. 24, 2022, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/02/ukraine-russia-war-nato-biden-deterrence/622873/>

¹⁴ *Ibid* note 10.

¹⁵ Edward Wong, "In Dealing with China, U.S. and Europe Take Different Tacks," *The New York Times*, Apr. 7, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/us/politics/china-us-europe.html>

¹⁶ Liu Tzu-hsuan, "Biden 'willing to use force' to help allies," May 27, 2024, <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2024/05/27/2003818447>

A report published by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies¹⁷ lists 24 scenarios for a potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait. Not surprisingly, as more allied coordination is added to the base scenario (such as the use of bases in Japan and the Philippines), the prospect of a victory by the US and Taiwan becomes more probable. The starkest conclusion from this report is that if Taiwan stands alone without help from the US or its other allies, China's victory is all but certain.¹⁸ The report's recommendations then include strengthening diplomatic and military ties with partners, alongside strengthening the Taiwanese ground forces.¹⁹ To achieve these goals, ongoing conversations with Taiwanese defence and diplomatic counterparts are needed.

The Körber-Stiftung and Chatham House report²⁰ mentions further relevant points. First, it notes that a common European stance is crucial in responding to a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. Second, it emphasises the importance for Europe to build closer working relationships with partners in the Indo-Pacific. This is particularly true for France, which acts as a military supplier to the region, and for the UK, which is involved both economically and culturally in the region.²¹ The report recommends close coordination between Europe and their Indo-Pacific partners as well as greater investment into security partnerships so as to enable monitoring of the cross-Strait situation on the one hand and coordinated, joint responses to potential crises on the other.²²

Again, Taiwan's inclusion in the ongoing defence conversations between Europe and Indo-Pacific partners would be invaluable for the goals of monitoring the Taiwan Strait and enabling coordinated joint responses to potential crises. Taiwan's direct interaction with the UK and the rest of Europe would go a long way to help its partners gain a deeper understanding of the cross-Strait situation. For Europe to engage and strengthen relations with the Indo-Pacific partners, it would be illogical to leave Taiwan out of these conversations.

In a paper²³ by Lieutenant Colonel Jason J. Kim for the United States Army War College, Kim specifically mentions the importance of integrating Taiwan's allies and partners before contingencies occur, with one of the most pressing contingencies being the Taiwan

¹⁷ Mark Cancian, Matthew Cancian, and Eric Heginbotham, *The First Battle of the Next War: Wargaming a Chinese Invasion of Taiwan*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Jan. 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/first-battle-next-war-wargaming-chinese-invasion-taiwan>.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 96.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 122.

²⁰ *Ibid* note 8.

²¹ *Ibid* note 2, 2.

²² *Ibid*, 3.

²³ Jason J. Kim, *Security Cooperation Evolved: Integrating Allies and Partners for Contingencies*, U.S. Army War College, Apr. 6, 2023.

Strait scenario. As Kim notes, in a great power conflict in the Indo-Pacific, forming a coalition haphazardly only after the crisis had started will be “too little, too late.”²⁴ Not only do allies need to form and execute their coalition before it’s too late, but Taiwan must be included in the process to ensure that the efforts of such a coalition match the needs and challenges of Taiwan.

Political signalling to the public and to China

In a crisis, the states’ military strength is often based on public support for the war effort. According to Bonnie Glaser from the German Marshall Fund, even before a conflict begins, public support is necessary to sustain the preparation and deterrence efforts, both in terms of government spending and to demonstrate the states’ commitments to their overseas partners.²⁵ This is supported by the Körber-Stiftung report, which cites public support as a crucial element of the overall European support for Taiwan that is important to increase awareness among the public across different European countries as to why a crisis over Taiwan would matter.²⁶

Public support and the sustained debate mentioned by the Körber-Stiftung report do not exist in a vacuum. A decision on whether to include Taiwan in security dialogues would certainly invite the kind of sustained debate cited by the Körber-Stiftung report in Washington, London, and other European capitals. Furthermore, including Taiwan in security dialogues would send a strong message from the various governments to their respective publics that Taiwan is worthy of their support.

Moreover, including Taiwan in multilateral security and defence talks sends a message to China that Europe is serious about deterring Chinese aggression towards Taiwan. In his speech in Cambridge, UK, in April this year, Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström spoke of Russia’s threatening attitude towards Sweden. Even prior to the invasion of Ukraine, Russia issued demands that Sweden and Finland should accept their positions as part of a Russian sphere of influence and would never be “allowed” to join NATO.²⁷ In response, Sweden joined NATO in an important, symbolic rebuke to Russia.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Bonnie S. Glaser and Mathew P. Funaiolo, “Poll Shows Increase in American Support for Defending Taiwan,” *The Diplomat*, Oct. 23, 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/poll-shows-increase-in-american-support-for-defending-taiwan/>

²⁶ *Ibid* note 2, 3.

²⁷ Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström at Selwyn College, Cambridge, April 16, 2024. <https://www.government.se/speeches/2024/04/why-sweden-joined-nato---a-paradigm-shift-in-swedens-foreign-and-security-policy/>

Similarly, in a recently signed US-Ukraine Bilateral Security Agreement, the White House declared that one of the main purposes of the agreement is to demonstrate the US's support for Ukraine.²⁸ In a piece for *Foreign Affairs*, former US Deputy National Security Adviser Matt Pottinger, along with former US Representative Mike Gallagher, cited historian Richard Pipes's argument that pressures that make a communist dictatorship weaker will make the regime more manageable.²⁹ One of these pressures is a strong public message that should be delivered in unison with the other world powers. Including Taiwan in defence coordination talks is a clear, unequivocal kind of such a strong public message that is needed.

Taiwan, in partnership with AUKUS, NATO and RIMPAC

In order to bolster Europe's professed support for Taiwan, as well as send a clear message to the global public and decision-makers in Beijing, Taiwan's participation in security dialogues with Europe is essential.

The three major, high-profile security and defence conversations that connect the US and Europe to the Indo-Pacific are AUKUS, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the Rim of the Pacific exercises (RIMPAC), all of which are steadily recognising security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.³⁰ AUKUS is an enhanced trilateral security partnership with a focus on the sharing of nuclear submarine propulsion technology and other technologies, including cyber, artificial intelligence, and quantum technologies.³¹ In recent months, there have been talks of Japan and New Zealand expressing interest in joining the platform.^{32, 33} NATO has also begun to comment more on the Indo-Pacific³⁴,

²⁸ FACT SHEET: U.S.-Ukraine Bilateral Security Agreement, June 13, 2024. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/06/13/fact-sheet-u-s-ukraine-bilateral-security-agreement/>

²⁹ Rush Doshi; Jessica Chen Weiss and James B. Steinberg; Paul Heer; Matt Pottinger and Mike Gallagher, "What Does America Want from China?" *Foreign Affairs*, August 2024, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/responses/what-does-america-want-china>

³⁰ Michael Martina and David Brunnstrom, "Senior US diplomat links AUKUS submarine pact to Taiwan," *Reuters*, Apr. 3, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/senior-us-diplomat-links-aukus-submarine-pact-taiwan-2024-04-03/>

³¹ Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS, Sep. 15, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>

³² "A New Era of U.S.-Japan Relations," by Rahm Immanuel, *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 3, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-new-era-of-u-s-japan-relations-defence-asia-ebd4813a>

³³ "New Zealand Takes Step Toward Joining Aukus Security Pact," by Ben Westcott, *Bloomberg*, Jan. 31, 2024, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-01/new-zealand-takes-step-toward-joining-aukus-security-pact>

³⁴ "NDC Outlook 02-2024: NATO and a Taiwan contingency", by James Lee, Apr. 15, 2024, <https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1921>; Closing Press Conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the end of the 2024 NATO Summit in Washington, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_227439.htm

whereas the RIMPAC Exercise held every other year in Hawaii is a high-profile international maritime joint exercise involving the UK and various European navies.³⁵

Taiwan's involvement will have some direct benefits for Europe. For example, bringing Taiwan in as a partner for AUKUS will come at a time when the UK is already transferring certain submarine parts and technologies to Taiwan bilaterally.³⁶ Having some parts of this technology transfer be conducted under the umbrella of AUKUS allows for the US and Australia to share the burden of supporting Taiwan's submarine development. In the case of NATO, Taiwan's Academia Sinica Assistant Research Fellow James Lee points out that even if NATO member states are not directly involved in a Taiwan Strait conflict, there are still several areas for NATO to play a supporting role.³⁷ Those supporting roles include maintaining enough force to compensate for the US, increasing its presence in the Indo-Pacific and therefore reducing its commitments in Europe, as well as supporting the US in providing Taiwan with defensive capabilities, such as joint production of drones by French and Taiwanese companies.³⁸ Having an open channel of communication between Taiwan and NATO will improve the effectiveness of NATO's support for the US and Taiwan. Finally, the US Congress had authorised the US Defence Department to invite Taiwan to the RIMPAC exercises in both 2022 and 2024.^{39, 40} Support from Europe to invite Taiwan in some capacity would go a long way in signalling Europe's commitment to contributing to the stability of the Indo-Pacific region.⁴¹

To incorporate Taiwan into such security and defence talks could be a gradual process that begins with lower-level operational interactions. In April 2024, the US conducted an unofficial joint exercise with Taiwan,⁴² as part of which Taiwan's navy chief visited the

³⁵ Shogo Akagawa and Takero Minami, "Germany, France to send naval and air forces to Indo-Pacific," *Nikkei Asia*, May 8, 2024, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Germany-France-to-send-naval-and-air-forces-to-Indo-Pacific>

³⁶ Andrew Macaskill and Elizabeth Piper, "Exclusive: UK approves increased submarine-related exports to Taiwan, risking angering China," *Reuters*, Mar. 13, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-approves-increased-submarine-related-exports-taiwan-risking-angering-china-2023-03-13/>

³⁷ *Ibid* note 34.

³⁸ Keoni Everington, "Taiwan and France Sign Spy Drone Partnership Deal," *Taiwan News*, Apr. 26, 2023, [https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4874730#:~:text=TAIPEI%20\(Taiwan%20News\)%20%E2%80%94%20Taiwanese,red%20supply%20chain%20from%20China](https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4874730#:~:text=TAIPEI%20(Taiwan%20News)%20%E2%80%94%20Taiwanese,red%20supply%20chain%20from%20China).

³⁹ Brad Lendon, "Invite Taiwan to massive RIMPAC naval exercises, US defence act says," *CNN*, Dec. 29, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/28/asia/taiwan-us-military-rimpac-exercise-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>

⁴⁰ Keoni Everington, "US House passes act supporting Taiwan's participation in 2024 RIMPAC," *Taiwan News*, Jul. 11, 2022, <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/news/4597466>.

⁴¹ Marcin Jerzewski, "A Play with a Clear Villain? RIMPAC 2024 and an Inter-Theater Approach to Deterrence and Alliances," *European Values Center for Security Policy*, Jul. 9, 2024, <https://europeanvalues.cz/en/a-play-with-a-clear-villain-rimpac-2024-and-an-inter-theater-approach-to-deterrence-and-alliances/>

⁴² *Ibid* note 1.

Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii and met the US military officials outside Washington.⁴³ These events, while not officially confirmed or publicised, do pave the way for deepening conversations concerning Taiwan’s involvement in the existing security and defence talks between the US and its allies.

Taiwan’s involvement with AUKUS, NATO and RIMPAC may begin with a similar approach, as ad-hoc joint consultations at the same level as that of the current US-Taiwan bilateral cooperation, with Taiwan becoming a case-by-case invitee to discuss specific security scenarios. The US would likely be the party to initiate AUKUS, NATO or RIMPAC to include Taiwan in defence talks with Europe, and the role of Europe in this case would be to support the US’s initiative to begin partnerships with Taiwan.

Conclusion

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said at a press conference in Tokyo, along with Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, that Beijing and Moscow are pushing back against the international rules-based order and that what is happening in Europe today could happen in East Asia tomorrow.⁴⁴ Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström further stated that the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions are increasingly closely linked in security terms and that Sweden welcomes the deepening of NATO cooperation with partners such as Japan, Australia, South Korea and New Zealand.⁴⁵

There is every reason to include Taiwan as one of the abovementioned Indo-Pacific partners listed by Stoltenberg. Taiwan’s inclusion would enable early preparation, help garner support from the public, and enhance deterrence by sending a political message to China that the US, UK, and Europe are serious about Taiwan’s defence.

Therefore, this paper recommends that decision-makers in Europe consider the following:

- Invite Taiwanese representatives to consultations on AUKUS.
- Invite Taiwanese representatives to non-binding talks at NATO.
- Invite Taiwan to participate in the RIMPAC exercises.

⁴³ Idrees Ali and Ben Blanchard, “Exclusive: Taiwan’s navy chief to visit U.S. next week, sources say,” Mar 29, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/taiwans-navy-chief-visit-us-next-week-sources-say-2024-03-29/>

⁴⁴ Joint press point by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Jan. 31, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_210901.htm

⁴⁵ Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström at Selwyn College, Cambridge, “Why Sweden joined NATO - a paradigm shift in Sweden’s foreign and security policy,” Apr 16, 2024, <https://www.government.se/speeches/2024/04/why-sweden-joined-nato---a-paradigm-shift-in-swedens-foreign-and-security-policy/>



These actions are designed to further maintain the balance of power and deterrence in the Taiwan Strait. Continuing to exclude Taiwan from access to the abovementioned security platforms sends the message that the Western powers do not grant Taiwan the right to speak up for its own defence, which is effectively equivalent to agreeing with Beijing's position that Taiwan is merely a disputed region of China, which it insists is fully within its rights to subjugate by force.

To begin the process of including Taiwan, Europe should play the role of supporting a US-led initiative to bring Taiwan into AUKUS, NATO, and RIMPAC conversations. If the UK and Europe are serious about their professed commitments to peace and security in the Indo-Pacific, it is time to take concrete steps to ensure this vision becomes a reality.



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