

TAIWAN'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS 2021/22

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EAI Background Brief No. 1626

Date of Publication: 3 February 2022

Executive Summary

1. Taiwan's external relations in 2021 were characterised by two contrasting trends: rising tensions with China and improving relations with the United States, Japan and some central and eastern European countries.
2. In 2021, military pressure became the most applied and visible part of China's policy towards Taiwan. Chinese military aircraft entered Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) for 238 days and 961 sorties were reported in 2021, twice as many as in 2019 and 2020 combined.
3. Non-military pressures exerted by China on Taiwan in 2021 include banning imports of Taiwanese pineapple, wax apple and sugar apple, blacklisting of Taiwan's premier, foreign minister and legislative president, fining Taiwan's Far East Group in China and wooing Nicaragua away from Taiwan.
4. Meanwhile, China continues to promote one-way integration by consolidating Taiwan's trade dependence on China, sharing more benefits and opportunities with Taiwanese people and business in China, maintaining non-governmental exchanges with Taiwan and so on.
5. Compared to public opinion surveys' findings in previous years, in 2021 more Taiwanese believed China would attack Taiwan eventually; fewer wanted to go to China for business, work and study; and the impression of China had worsened for more Taiwanese.
6. The year 2021 was an important year for the internationalisation of the Taiwan issue as more countries followed the United States in expressing their concerns on the Taiwan issue and supporting Taiwan in various ways.