

**TAIWAN'S NATIONALIST PARTY
IN A RUT**

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Executive Summary

1. Taiwan's Kuomintang (KMT) leaders are worried about the unity of the party while party members do not see hopeful signs of Taiwan's major opposition party making a comeback anytime soon. Some even predict the party will not do well in off-year local elections later in the year or the presidential/legislative election in 2024.
2. The 2016 and 2020 elections constituted major setbacks for the KMT and wins for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). In important ways the KMT has not recovered. At the recent referendums and local or by-elections, the KMT did not perform well.
3. The party is divided about what it stands for. It lacks good issues and a leader the public and voters might fancy. It seems to be groping blindly for an informed vision of the future. It also suffers from lack of oneness.
4. The economy, especially current respectable growth, favours the DPP. So does the equity issue as it relates to wealth and incomes.
5. Surveys measuring national identity show a continuing trend towards Taiwanese as opposed to Chinese identification, which is auspicious for the DPP and not the KMT. The same is true for party identification and the two seem to relate.
6. External relations, especially with China (tense) and the United States (cordial), work in favour of the DPP.
7. While some months away, elections in 2022 and 2024 look to become DPP victories.
8. Some pundits even suggest that Taiwan no longer has a two-party system. It has evolved into a one-party system headed by the DPP, or a one-party dominant multi-party system led by the DPP. The KMT has declined to that degree.
9. While there is time for the KMT to change and gain popular support, there seems to be little hope for any significant change at the present time.