

MP-IDSA *Issue Brief*

The Recall Campaign and Political Polarisation in Taiwan

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Summary

The deep political polarisation in Taiwan as a result of the ongoing recall campaign is not conducive to Taiwan's social and political stability and security. It is difficult to ignore that the core political and ideological question of the nature of the relationship with China, and the consequent reshaping of Taiwanese politics and society, lies at the heart of the ongoing recall tussle. Taiwan's security needs the broadest possible unity of the public. Hopefully, Taiwanese democracy will prove its resilience in dealing with the recall campaign.

Taiwan’s democracy is quite young. It saw its first multi-party direct presidential election based on universal suffrage in 1996 after decades of one-party authoritarian rule and martial law under the Kuomintang (KMT). The peaceful and orderly operation of high-quality democratic mechanisms has made it an archetype of successful democratisation in a Confucian society. It has been successful in managing the cacophonous diversity of opposing political forces seeking to score political points, as seen in any other democracy.

Yet, developments of the last year have placed Taiwanese democracy under duress as it seeks to manage sharp polarisation between the ruling and the opposing formations. These developments have culminated in a formal recall campaign that seeks the ouster of a large number of opposition legislators, and also some ruling party legislators, from the Legislative Yuan (LY, or parliament). The campaign is still ongoing and its results will take some more time to come out. In the meantime, its unprecedented scale has revealed a deep political polarisation in Taiwan, which is not conducive to its social and political stability and security.

Fractured Domestic Political Landscape

While the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which rejects the One China principle, rules from the presidential office, the KMT, which believes in ‘One China with respective interpretations’, together with the Taiwan People’s Party (TPP, a smaller party which does not have a categorical position on the One China issue unlike the two leading protagonists), dominate the parliament. The DPP won the presidential office in 2016 under the leadership of Tsai Ing-wen and has retained the office since then, with a second term for Tsai in 2020 followed by Lai Ching-te in 2024. However, its vote share fell significantly in 2024 in comparison to the two previous occasions.

Furthermore, the DPP, which had secured an impressive majority in the LY in the 2016 and 2020 parliamentary elections, failed to cross the majority mark in 2024. The 2024 parliamentary elections saw the KMT’s resurgence and the TPP’s continuation as a third force. The KMT secured a plurality. The KMT and the TPP together now command the parliamentary majority. Han Kuo-yu and Johnny Chiang from the KMT lead the LY as its president (speaker) and vice-president (deputy speaker), respectively.

Table 1. Vote Percent of Top Three Presidential Candidates

2024			2020			2016		
Candidate	Party	%	Candidate	Party	%	Candidate	Party	%
Lai Ching-te	DPP	40.05	Tsai Ing-wen	DPP	57.13	Tsai Ing-wen	DPP	56.12

Hou Yu-ih	KMT	33.49	Daniel K. Y. Han	KMT	38.61	Liluan Chu	KMT	31.04
Ko Wen-je	TPP	26.46	James C. Y. Soong	PFP	4.25	James Soong	PFP	12.83

Source: Taiwan’s [Central Election Commission](#)

Table 2. Party’s Comparative Legislative Strength

2024		2020		2016	
Party	Seats	Name	Seats	Name	Seats
KMT	52	DPP	61	DPP	68
DPP	51	KMT	38	KMT	35
TPP	8	TPP	5	NPP	5
None	2	Independent	5	PFP	3
XXX	xxx	NPP	3	NPSU	1
XXX	xxx	TSP	1	Independent	1

Source: Taiwan’s [Central Election Commission](#) and open source for the year 2016.

Abbreviations for Tables 1 and 2: DPP: Democratic Progressive Party, KMT: Kuomintang, PFP: People First Party, TPP: Taiwan People's Party, NPP: New Power Party, TSP: Taiwan Statebuilding Party, NPSU: Non-Partisan Solidarity Union, Independent: nonpartisan and non-party nominated party (as per official terminology)

In addition, the DPP, which gained control of Taiwan’s local governments in November 2014¹ in the run up to its victory in the January 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections, lost badly in the local elections, mainly to the KMT, in November 2018² and November 2022.³ While the losses in the November 2018 local elections proved inconsequential for the January 2020 presidential and parliamentary elections, defeat in the November 2022 local elections reflected in the fall in the vote share in the presidential election and the loss of its majority in the parliament in January 2024. At present, the KMT controls a majority of the city and county governments, including important cities such as Taipei, New Taipei, Taoyuan and Taichung.

¹ Jacqueline Vitello and Bonnie S. Glaser, “[An Analysis of Taiwan’s Nine-in-One Local Elections](#)”, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 1 December 2014.

² Richard C. Bush, “[Taiwan’s Local Elections, Explained](#)”, *Brookings*, 5 December 2018.

³ Kayleigh Madjar, “[2022 Elections: DPP Routed across the Board](#)”, *Taipei Times*, 27 November 2022.

Finally, the opposition that remained on the margins for eight years from 2016 to 2024 under President Tsai, shows signs of buoyancy. Lai thus has to deal with a combative opposition, which is making its presence profoundly felt through legislative interventions on policy matters, creating constraints for his administration.

The Three Contentious Amendments

In December 2024, the KMT and the TPP effectively used their parliamentary majority to amend the Public Officials Election and Recall Act, the Constitutional Court Procedure Act, and the Act Governing the Allocation of Government Revenues and Expenditures, overruling the government’s and ruling DPP’s objections.

The amendment to the Public Officials Election and Recall Act introduced the requirement for “individuals initiating a recall petition and those who sign up to such an initiative to provide photocopies of their identification cards when submitting their petition signatures”.⁴ Before the amendment, “campaigners only have to present the ID numbers and registered addresses of endorsers of the recall petition to local election commissions”.⁵ The amended law stipulates five years of imprisonment or “a fine of up to NT\$1 million (US\$30,592)” for forging identification documents.⁶

After the amendment to the Constitutional Court Procedure Act (CCPA), the Constitutional Court would need “a minimum of 10 justices to hear and rule on a case” and if any existing legal provision is to be pronounced as unconstitutional, it must “be backed by at least nine justices”.⁷ Earlier, the requirement was a two-thirds of sitting justices, who could decide the case “by a simple majority vote”.⁸ Further, normally, the strength of the Constitutional Court is 15 judges. However, seven judges retired in October 2024. Lai nominated their replacements but his nominations were ‘rejected’ by the LY in December 2024.⁹ Thus, the effective strength of the Constitutional Court is now eight. Hence, there is ambiguity whether after this amendment, the Constitutional Court, with its current strength, can hear and decide

⁴ Kuo Chien-shen, Wang Yang-yu et al., [“Legislature Approves Measures to Tighten Recall Petition Requirements”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 20 December 2024.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Teng Pei-ju, [“President Lai Signs Constitutional Court Bill into Law”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 23 January 2025.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Teng Pei-ju, [“Constitutional Court in a Bind after Justice Nominees Rejected”](#), *Taiwan Focus*, 24 December 2024.

constitutional cases including the challenges to the aforementioned three amendments.¹⁰

As a *Taipei Times* news story explained, until 1999, the central government would receive 60 per cent and local governments would receive 40 per cent of Taiwan’s total funds available in its annual budget. However, after that year, the allocation formula was changed to 75 per cent to the central government and 25 per cent to local governments. The December 2024 amendment to the Act Governing the Allocation of Government Revenues and Expenditures basically sought to restore the old formula that was in place until 1999. It has increased local governments’ shares in income tax revenue from 10 per cent to 11 per cent. They would earlier receive “40 percent of business tax revenue after deduction of uniform invoice prizes”,¹¹ but now after the amendment, all of “business tax revenue after uniform invoice lottery prize payouts”¹² would go to them.

Additionally, prior to the amendment, the central government would share only “20 percent of land value increment tax revenue” with local governments.¹³ However, now the opposition believes that “the growth in land value results from efforts made by local governments”, therefore, “land value increment tax belongs to special municipality and county and county-level city taxes”. Hence, its amendment stipulates that “the tax revenue from it should completely go to local governments”.¹⁴ In total, the amendment ensures an additional NT\$ 375.3 billion allocation to local government.¹⁵ Discharging his constitutional duty, Lai has promulgated all three amendments.¹⁶

Arguments and Counter-Arguments on the Merit of the Amendments

Both sides have their own arguments regarding the merits of the amendments. The DPP government criticises the amendment to the Public Officials Election and Recall Act as “exceedingly restrictive”, which would ‘significantly increase the burden’ of

¹⁰ Teng Pei-ju, “[President Lai Signs Constitutional Court Bill into Law](#)”, no. 7.

¹¹ “[Controversial Revenue Bill Passed by Legislature](#)”, *Taipei Times*, 22 December 2024.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “[Lai Promulgates Election and Recall Act Amendments](#)”, *Taipei Times*, 20 February 2025; Teng Pei-ju, “[President Lai Signs Constitutional Court Bill into Law](#)”, no. 7; Lery Hiciano, “[Lai Promulgates This Year’s Budget and Law Changes](#)”, *Taipei Times*, 22 March 2025.

local electoral authorities.¹⁷ Premier Cho Jung-tai termed it as violating “the electoral contract between the people and their representatives” and “the spirit of constitutional government”, which would “limit the people’s right to recall elected officials”.¹⁸ On the other hand, the KMT believes that the amendment would “ensure a ‘more rigorous and fairer’ recall petition process” and “actually facilitate electoral authorities’ vetting of petition signatures”¹⁹ as previously the process had faced the charges of manipulation.

The government terms the amendments to the CCPA as an encroachment upon judicial power and “an attempt... to immobilise the Constitutional Court”.²⁰ Premier Cho has expressed concern that “due to the Legislature's failure to approve any of the recent Constitutional Court justice nominees, the amendments in the Constitutional Court Procedure Act will effectively prevent the Constitutional Court from functioning”.²¹ The opposition contends that now the Constitutional Court would follow a much more rigorous review process and cases will no longer be “decided by only a handful of justices”.²²

The amendment to the Act Governing the Allocation of Government Revenues and Expenditures has the potential to have an immediate and direct impact on the functioning of the various government agencies. Premier Cho remarked that it would have “severe consequences for the finances of the central government”.²³ He criticised the amendment as one that “focuses only on money allocation without addressing authority or responsibilities”, and said that “its rushed passage with no detailed calculations was a major flaw in the legislative process”.²⁴ On the other hand, the KMT maintains that “the reallocation of funding would instead reward fiscally responsible local governments and encourage them to promote economic development and create jobs, rather than relying on central government handouts”.²⁵ It can also be concluded that its domination of the majority of city and county governments also motivated it to amend this law.

¹⁷ Teng Pei-ju, “[Legislature Votes to Uphold Bill Tightening Recall Petition Rules](#)”, *Focus Taiwan*, 11 February 2025.

¹⁸ “[Executive Yuan to Seek Remedies for Amendments to Three Major Laws](#)”, *Executive Yuan Press Release*, 26 December 2024.

¹⁹ Teng Pei-ju, “[Legislature Votes to Uphold Bill Tightening Recall Petition Rules](#)”, no. 17.

²⁰ Teng Pei-ju, “[President Lai Signs Constitutional Court Bill into Law](#)”, no. 7.

²¹ “[Executive Yuan to Seek Remedies for Amendments to Three Major Laws](#)”, no. 18.

²² Teng Pei-ju, “[President Lai Signs Constitutional Court Bill into Law](#)”, no. 7.

²³ “[Executive Yuan to Seek Remedies for Amendments to Three Major Laws](#)”, no. 18.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ James Thompson and Wang Cheng-chung, “[KMT Defends Funding Allocation Law Revisions Following DPP Outcry](#)”, *Focus Taiwan*, 23 December 2024.

The Recall Campaign

In the backdrop of these three contentious amendments, an avalanche of recall petitions was unleashed against KMT legislators by some civil-society groups. These groups deny any affiliations with the ruling DPP, but the source of inspiration for their actions is hard to ignore. On 20 December 2024, the DPP issued a press release stating that “the last resort to stop the KMT’s destruction of the constitution and their totalitarianism is to directly exercise the right of recall against public officials...”.²⁶ Moreover, the campaign gained momentum from January 2025 onwards when the DPP legislative caucus whip Ker Chien-ming openly supported it.²⁷ After some delay, the KMT launched its counter-campaign to recall DPP legislators.

Taiwan’s Public officials Election and Recall Act allows the recall of legislators by popular vote. The recall process has a three-stage process. In the first stage, Article 76 of the Act requires the initiator(s) to collect one per cent of voters in the concerned legislative constituency to submit the recall petition to the Central Election Commission (CEC). If the petition passes vetting, a further collection of 10 per cent of voters is required to clear the second stage as per Article 81. If the second stage successfully clears the CEC’s scrutiny, it will conduct a public vote on the recall petition in the third stage.

As per Article 90 of the law, if “the number of ballots that agree with the recall are greater than the number of ballots that do not agree with the recall, and the number of ballots that agree with the recall number one-quarter or greater of the total number of voters” in the legislative seat, the recall will be accepted.²⁸ The recall provision is only applicable to 73 legislative seats out of total 113 which elect their representatives using the First-Past-the-Post system. It does not apply to the 34 seats which are “allocated through party-list Proportional Representation (PR)”.²⁹ Therefore, there is no recall petition against TPP legislators, who received eight legislative seats through the PR system.

The ongoing recall campaign is a de-centralised campaign by disparate civil-society groups scattered across Taiwan. The campaign is targeting around 35 KMT and 15

²⁶ [“To Block KMT's Three Political Chaos Bills, It was Necessary to Enter the Legislative Chamber to Protect Democracy”](#), Press Release, DPP Website, 20 December 2024; Kuo Chien-shen, Liu Kuan-ting and Teng Pei-ju, [“Senior DPP Lawmaker Calls for Mass Ousting of KMT Lawmakers”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 4 January 2025; Teng Pei-ju, [“Taiwan’s Recall Movement: Power Play or Popular Outrage?”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 27 March 2025.

²⁷ Teng Pei-ju, [“Taiwan’s Recall Movement: Power Play or Popular Outrage?”](#), no. 26.

²⁸ [“Public Officials Election and Recall Act”](#).

²⁹ [“The Continuing Recall Saga”](#), *Frozen Garlic*, 25 April 2025; Olimpia Kot and Sarah Jiang, [“Cut Too Deep? Widespread Recall Efforts Against Taiwanese Legislators”](#), European Values Center for Security Policy, 11 March 2025.

DPP legislators.³⁰ Some petitions are in the first stage; some have cleared it and reached the second stage. Some of them may reach the third and final stage soon. Since the KMT-supported groups started their recall campaign late, their petitions are considerably delayed.

Taiwan has been witnessing intense political rhetoric around the recall campaign. The DPP has accused the opposition of introducing bills that are “friendly toward China or would weaken Taiwan”.³¹ Particularly referring to the amendment to the Act Governing the Allocation of Government Revenues and Expenditures, it has accused the opposition of aligning with China’s objectives and harming “national security by cutting military spending, blocking efforts to bolster defence and pandering to Beijing’s interest through China-friendly bills”.³² It accuses the KMT of bringing back martial law through parliament.³³ The DPP-inspired recall campaigners view the campaign as “a battle against ‘pro-China lawmakers who seek to sell out Taiwan’ [and who are] ‘a Trojan horse,’ undermining Taiwan’s security”.³⁴

In return, the KMT advises the DPP to reconcile with the fact that it is in the parliamentary minority. It accuses the DPP of seeking to impose its own flavour of undemocratic rule. It alleges that the government is misusing the judiciary and other government agencies to target the opposition. It threatens to hold a referendum or a recall motion against President Lai. The opposition labels the DPP-backed recall campaign as the “suppression” of the opposition.³⁵

Incidentally, it should be noted that the confrontation between the ruling party and the opposition did not begin with the three contentious laws. It had been in the making even before Lai was sworn in as president in May 2024. The opposition began working on a controversial “contempt of parliament” bill, which it felt was “badly needed to redress the power imbalance between the legislature and Taiwan’s very powerful presidency”,³⁶ sometime around March 2024.³⁷ The bill was passed in May

³⁰ Karen Hui and Steve Zhu, “[Taiwan Rocked by Mass Recall Battle Between Leading Political Parties](#)”, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 19 May 2025.

³¹ Chen Yun and Jason Pan, “[Opposition Party Lawmakers Harming Taiwan’s National Security, DPP Says](#)”, *Taipei Times*, 13 May 2025.

³² Ibid.

³³ “[Condemning KMT’s Destruction of Democracy and Implementation of Parliamentary Martial Law](#)”, Press Release, DPP Website, 16 December 2024.

³⁴ Teng Pei-ju, “[Taiwan’s Recall Movement: Power Play or Popular Outrage?](#)”, no. 26.

³⁵ Lawrence Chung, “[Taiwan Opposition Summit Aims to Confront DPP ‘Suppression’ amid Recall Battle](#)”, *South China Morning Post*, 21 April 2025.

³⁶ Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, “[Taiwan Braces for Fresh Protests over Controversial New Law](#)”, *BBC*, 21 June 2024.

³⁷ Carol Lin, “[‘Contempt of the Legislature’ Absurd](#)”, *Taipei Times*, 15 March 2024.

2024,³⁸ but it could not withstand the scrutiny of the Constitutional Court.³⁹ The DPP saw it as “an unconstitutional power grab, aimed at taking revenge on the DPP government led by President William Lai Ching-te”.⁴⁰

In the middle of 2024, Taiwan saw public showdowns over this law. On the other hand, it should also be pointed out that seeing that the DPP had lost the majority in the LY, the DPP legislative caucus whip Ker Chien-ming had reportedly floated “the idea of a recall campaign against the opposition” immediately after the presidential and legislative elections in 2024.⁴¹ Thus, the present jostling appears to be an inescapable result of the electoral outcome in 2024 and both sides have been in pre-emptive mode since the beginning.

Civil-society groups have been divided on party lines.⁴² However, surveys suggest that the public in general is not very supportive of the recall campaign.⁴³ Meanwhile, Lai has proposed talks with the opposition “amid protracted tensions and disputes” between the government and the opposition.⁴⁴ However, there has been no indication yet that the recall campaign may be suspended or cancelled.

A Wider Security-Political Scenario

That the opposition’s resurgence reflects Taiwan’s changed domestic political landscape and the consequent resumption of combative jostling over policy matters is one point. To many, it may also point to Taiwan’s politics turning inward-looking, searching for incendiary issues, in the absence of a positive preoccupation with improving relations with China.⁴⁵ More importantly, the three contentious amendments, read alongside the opposition’s other interventions, also possibly speak to its response to the rise of national security discourse in Taiwan, which it

³⁸ [“Amendment Criminalizing Contempt of Legislature Passes into Law”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 28 May 2024.

³⁹ Matthew Strong, [“Taiwan Constitutional Court Quashes Most Expansions of Legislative Powers”](#), *Taiwan News*, 25 October 2024.

⁴⁰ Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, [“Taiwan Braces for Fresh Protests over Controversial New Law”](#), *BBC*, 21 June 2024.

⁴¹ Teng Pei-ju, [“Taiwan’s Recall Movement: Power Play or Popular Outrage?”](#), no. 26.

⁴² Duc Quang Ly, [“Taiwan: Large Protest Over Recall Campaigns”](#), an *Asia in Review* article available at LinkedIn, 23 April 2025; [“Civic Groups Call on People to Fight against Recall Campaigns”](#), ICRT, 26 February 2025.

⁴³ Sean Scanlan, [“Poll Finds Majority Disapproval for Taiwan’s Legislative Recall Campaigns”](#), *Taiwan News*, 15 April 2025; Ilham Issak, [“Political Parties in Taiwan Recall Dozens of MPs Just One Year after Election”](#), *ABC News*, 10 May 2025.

⁴⁴ Teng Pei-ju, [“President Lai Calls for Opposition Talks as Political Discord Grows”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 20 May 2024.

⁴⁵ Vincent Cheng, [“Challenges ahead for DPP’s Third Term”](#), *Commonwealth Magazine*, 13 January 2024.

seems to view as having implications for Taiwanese politics, society and security as well.

Taiwan has seen the rise of national security discourse in response to a possible Chinese threat. Since 2016, China has been unwavering in its position that it will not have any dialogue with the DPP governments in any format unless it unequivocally declares its support for the One China principle. In addition to shunning DPP governments, it has increased pressure on Taiwan through various military and non-military elements of grey zone warfare, as well. This situation has understandably led Taiwan to focus on security, which has been a centrepiece of the DPP governments’ work. Laws such as the Anti-Infiltration Act of 2020 and the amendment to the National Security Act in 2019 are important examples in this regard. Thus, a notable feature of the Tsai and Lai governments have been their assessment of what they view as China’s ‘united front’ strategy and their response to it. Taiwan under them has focused on creating the legal architecture to handle ‘united front’ threats.

Although government authorities have sought to reassure the public that in the specific context of the laws enacted to counter the ‘united front’ threats, criminal collaboration is well-defined, allegations of “collaboration” and being a “collaborator” is also part of political rhetoric and mobilisation. In such matters, however, government agencies everywhere enjoy a wide latitude in interpreting laws and an element of selectivity is always implicitly present. Therefore, considering the scale of cross-Strait social, cultural, religious and economic integration, concerned political and opinion-making circles have become worried about the unintended consequences of the counter-‘united front’ legal measures, though no mass dissatisfaction against the government on this issue appears to be emerging.

The government’s preference for maintaining political and ideological correctness when it comes to articulations on cross-Strait relations also raise questions. People affiliated with the opposition frequently note that “you can’t label someone an agent of some entity just because they hold a different view”, and that the fear of being labelled “a CCP collaborator’ [and] ...pro-Beijing—even for holding moderate or dissenting views—is a recurring theme” in discussions.⁴⁶

The 17 strategies to counter the ‘united front’ threats, recently announced by President Lai, add a further dimension to these debates. In these strategies, China is termed as a “hostile foreign force”, which is seeking collaboration with ‘local

⁴⁶ Ilham Issak, “[Political Parties in Taiwan Recall Dozens of MPs Just One Year after Election](#)”, *ABC News*, 10 May 2025.

collaborators’.⁴⁷ The strategies propose to ‘streamline’ cross-Strait exchanges, which is viewed as ‘tightening’ cross-Strait exchanges among many concerned stakeholders. The strategies are quite comprehensive and cover several aspects of people-to-people exchanges such as employment, scholarly and professional contacts. This has invited pushback from certain sections of society.⁴⁸

Furthermore, it has also been perceived that the ruling DPP probably wants cross-Strait relations or China policy to be regarded as an exclusive preserve of the government, which is difficult for the opposition parties to accept as they see themselves as stakeholders in cross-Strait relations. The combined KMT-TPP opposition voted down a bill proposed by DPP lawmakers requiring “elected officials to seek approval before visiting China” and stipulating “prison sentences of up to three years”, and a fine of NT\$ 10 million (US\$ 309,041).⁴⁹ The KMT has been assertively pursuing its policy of maintaining civil contacts with its counterparts across the Taiwan Strait. Its leaders regularly travel to China and invite guests from there.

Similarly, the opposition led by the KMT is also not inclined to toe the DPP government’s line on security issues. Notably, it has reservations against openly terming China as a “foreign adversary” as they find it too provocative. It accuses the Lai government of pushing Taiwan into a dangerous situation of “quasi war”, jeopardising Taiwan’s security.⁵⁰ The KMT strikes a discordant note on the government’s concerns about China’s ‘united front’ infiltration, by bringing up the putative stigmatisation of the military,⁵¹ the Anti Infiltration Act 2020,⁵² and restrictions on retired high-ranking civil and military officials’ visits to China.⁵³

How much of the KMT’s actions are driven by genuine concerns regarding the state of democracy in Taiwan as opposed to narrower considerations of political gain is indeterminable. What is certain is that it is not inclined to leave China policy and the security policy to the government and the ruling party.

⁴⁷ [“President Lai Holds Press Conference Following High-level National Security Meeting”](#), Office of the President, Republic of China (Taiwan), 13 March 2025.

⁴⁸ Kuo Chien-shen, Liu Kuan-ting and Shih Hsiu-chuan, [“75 Scholars Criticize Lai’s Populism, Freedom of Speech Erosion”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 26 March 2025.

⁴⁹ Lin Hsin-han, Lee Wen-hsin and Jake Chung, [“KMT and TPP Lawmakers Vote against DPP Proposal”](#), *Taipei Times*, 4 May 2024.

⁵⁰ Liu Kuan-ting, Wang Yang-yu and Matthew Mazzetta, [“KMT to Seek Referendums against Death Penalty Abolition, ‘Martial Law’”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 17 March 2025.

⁵¹ Lin Ching-yin, Wen Kuei-hsiang et al., [“KMT Discusses Possible Referendum on Military Tribunal Revival”](#), *Focus Taiwan*, 14 March 2025.

⁵² Michael Nakhiengchanh, [“Taiwan’s Democratic Progressive Party Opposes Change to Anti-infiltration Law”](#), *Taiwan News*, 22 April 2024.

⁵³ Lee Wen-hsin and Jason Pan, [“DPP Lawmakers Call Out KMT Proposal as Treasonous”](#), *Taipei Times*, 14 November 2024.

Conclusion

It is difficult to ignore that the core political and ideological question of the nature of the relationship with China, and the consequent reshaping of Taiwanese politics and society, lies at the heart of the ongoing recall tussle. As support for One China was at the core of the KMT's decades-long authoritarianism, apprehensions that 'oppose One China' may become a new hegemonic ideological formula with implications for political freedom and personal liberty, which may be at the back of the mind among concerned circles, including the opposition. Hence, it may have pushed the three contentious amendments with the motive of self-preservation against perceived executive heft and to preserve its say in cross-Straits relations *inter alia*, inviting the retaliatory recall campaign against it.⁵⁴

A polarised and raucous polity may have implications for Taiwan's stability and security. Aspiring to establish 'oppose One China' as a hegemonic formula, taking a leaf out of the old KMT's book, will not yield results as the historical conditions are completely different. Furthermore, that the KMT suppressed Taiwanese during its authoritarian decades did not matter to China as the party believed in One China. However, any supposed suppression of Taiwanese in order to force them to oppose One China can potentially provide Beijing with an unwelcome excuse to intervene in unpredictable ways, which no one in Taiwan can possibly prefer. Further, how the mercurial Trump administration would react to unchecked political and social chaos in Taiwan should also be a concern, as the US remains its sole 'security guarantor'. Taiwan's security needs the broadest possible unity of the public. Hopefully, Taiwanese democracy will prove its resilience in dealing with the recall campaign.

⁵⁴ Sonny Lo Shiu Hing, [“The Perils of Taiwan's Anti-opposition, Anti-mainland and Pro-US Policies: Toward a Showdown?”](#), *Macau News Agency*, 22 March 2025.

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