

Rt. Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
Westminster
London
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Thursday 27th October

Dear Mr Sunak,

Open Letter from the Taiwan Policy Centre

Congratulations on behalf of everyone at the Taiwan Policy Centre for your appointment as leader of the Conservative Party and the new Prime Minister of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

You come to office at a moment where the UK faces a great many challenges and I know you will have many competing priorities to contend with in your first months in the job.

Whilst the economic challenges that the UK currently faces will doubtless be your top priority, I hope that the significant challenges and threats posed by the People's Republic of China will also feature highly on your list.

I am encouraged by the [readout of your first call with US President Joe Biden](#) in which you focus on the Indo-Pacific region, the importance of the AUKUS pact, and countering the malign influence of China. The recognition that China is a malign influence is important and you are absolutely right to use such language.

I have also taken the opportunity of your appointment as Prime Minister to revisit some of the comments that you made about China during the leadership campaign this summer.

At that time, you rightly described China as “the biggest-long term threat to Britain and the world’s economic and national security” and cited their bullying of Taiwan as just one example of this.

Last month, your predecessor, Liz Truss, [announced plans to update](#) the UK’s Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy and it was [widely reported](#) that this process would see a formal declaration of China as [a threat to the UK](#).

I hope that this remains the plan, in line with your leadership campaign pledges and that you will remain true to your word on other campaign commitments including banning Confucius Institutes, supporting British business and IP, and preventing the acquisition of key British assets by Chinese investors.

Your other key leadership pledge on China was to create a NATO-style international alliance to defend against Chinese technological aggression. This is a very forward-thinking suggestion and one that Taiwan, which is on the front-line of the battle against China and subjected to countless cyber-attacks and bombarded with fake news from across the Taiwan Strait, could provide invaluable support and guidance on.

In the summer, the Taiwan Policy Centre wrote to both leadership campaigns asking eight questions about the UK's policy towards Taiwan. Those questions were:

1. What steps will your government take to deter a PRC invasion of Taiwan?
2. How will your government help Taiwan to acquire the military equipment and expertise it needs to defend itself against the threat of invasion?
3. If the PRC were to invade Taiwan while you were Prime Minister, what would your government's response be?
4. What will your government's position be on the 'One China' policy?
5. What steps will your government take to assist Taiwan's participation in international bodies where its 23 million people are currently unrepresented?
6. Will your government support Taiwan's application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) should the UK's own application be successful?
7. Will Ministerial visits to and from Taiwan be permitted under your government?
8. Do you agree that the Taiwanese people have the right to self-determination under the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and that they alone should decide what the future of Taiwan and their relationship with the PRC should be?

I was grateful to receive a response from your campaign team, albeit a short and perfunctory one. In it, your team reiterated the long-standing UK Government position that you would "maintain the "British Office Taipei" to provide consular assistance and promote commercial, cultural and educational links, and would support Taiwanese participation in international organisations for which statehood is not a prerequisite."

The response also stated that you "want to see [Taiwan's] relationship with China resolved peacefully and in accordance with the wishes of people on both sides of the Strait."

Whilst there is no expectation from Taiwan about the UK's diplomatic stance towards Taiwan changing in the short-term, the stance that Taiwan's future is a matter for people "on both sides of the Taiwan Strait" is a stance that completely overlooks the Taiwanese people's right to self-determination as laid out by the United Nations and International law.

The Taiwan Policy Centre is about to publish a report on this very matter which I shall, of course, share with you and your relevant advisors and members of your Cabinet and Ministerial team. In it, we urge the UK government to amend this stance to recognise the rights of the Taiwanese people to decide their own future.

[Writing in the Spectator](#) recently, James Forsyth described Taiwan as "the most important geo-strategic issue of this decade." He is absolutely correct and the Taiwan Policy Centre believes that it is vital that UK policy towards Taiwan, which has remained largely unchanged since the UK switched diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing in 1950.

Both Taiwan and China have changed massively since then and it is high time UK policy caught up. The update of the Integrated Review, which originally included no mention of Taiwan at all, provides the perfect opportunity.

As an independent organisation with no formal ties to Taiwan or the Taiwanese Government, we at the Taiwan Policy Centre would be more than happy to engage with your Foreign Affairs SpAd John Bew and relevant members of the FCDO staff to advise on this.

We believe that the recent escalation of cross-straits tensions by the PRC this summer and the subsequent hostile statements made at the recent Chinese Communist Party Congress, provides a stark illustration that the policy of strategic ambiguity towards Taiwan, which has long determined the UK's policy and those of our allies, is no longer fit for purpose.

While a unilateral shift to a policy of strategic clarity might not be in anyone's interests, doing so on a multilateral basis and sending a clear message to the PRC of what the consequences of an invasion or blockade of Taiwan would be.

One thing is for sure. If we continue along the path we are currently on, the future for a free and democratic Taiwan, its 23 million citizens, and its sizable economy, is growing increasingly bleak.

I would be delighted to engage on these issues further with the appropriate members of your team, once they are all in place, and also with any relevant FCDO staff.

I would also like to extend my very best wishes to you in your new role. I hope your time in office proves successful for the UK, and I pray that China and Taiwan remains at the forefront of your mind throughout your time in office.

Kind Regards,



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cc. Rt. Hon James Cleverly MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs