



## Taiwan's Opposition Kuomintang Party Sends Delegation to Mainland China

### Description

**TAIWAN/CHINA:** Taiwan's main opposition party Kuomintang (KMT), has sent a delegation to mainland China amid heightened tensions, a move that has drawn criticism from the island's ruling party, the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, the chair of the DPP, said the trip disappointed the people of Taiwan and sent the wrong message to the international community. The trip comes after China held unprecedented military exercises around Taiwan, a response to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visiting the island.

KMT vice-chair Andrew Hsiam, who is leading the delegation, defended the trip to the mainland. In a press release, the KMT said the focus of the trip will be meeting with the Taiwanese business community in the mainland and that there are no plans to hold political talks with Beijing, although Hsiam left open the possibility of meeting with Chinese officials.

"We have not made any plans to meet with Chinese officials, although it is, of course, possible that they will reach out or we might encounter them in the context of our meetings with Taiwanese businesses," Hsiam told *Financial Times* before leaving for the mainland.

A KMT source told the Taiwanese newspaper *Liberty Times* that the delegation was originally supposed to meet with top Chinese officials in charge of Taiwan relations, but the plans were scrapped after the itinerary was leaked.

Hsiam's trip has also faced criticism from other KMT members, who are unhappy that it comes after China's military exercises near Taiwan. But ultimately, the delegation represents the major split between the KMT and the DPP and how they view relations with Beijing.

The DPP leans toward independence and wants Taiwan to be a separate country from the mainland. However, Tsai says Taiwan is a de facto independent state and doesn't need to officially declare independence, a move that would likely spark intervention from Beijing.

On the other hand, the KMT agrees with the one-China principle and leans more toward unifying with

the mainland but has come under political pressure for its contacts with Beijing. The last time the KMT sent a delegation to the mainland was in 2019.

Hsaim's delegation to the mainland came as China released a new white paper for Taiwan, which it hasn't done since 2000. In the document, Beijing reaffirmed that its main goal is "peaceful reunification" with Taiwan but won't rule out military action if "separatist elements" or "external forces" cross red lines.

In the document, China slams the DPP for its view of independence. "The independence-seeking behavior of the DPP authorities has led to tensions across the Taiwan Strait, endangered the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait, undermined the prospect of peaceful reunification, squeezed the space for peaceful reunification, and is a barrier for peaceful reunification that must be removed," the document says.

China seeks a "one country, two systems" arrangement with Taiwan, that would grant the island autonomy, but it would accept that it is part of the People's Republic of China.

The KMT is the party of Chiang Kai-shek, who the US backed against Mao Zedong during the Chinese Civil War. Chiang and the KMT fled to Taiwan in 1949, and the US recognized his government as the sole government of China until 1979, when Washington formally severed relations with Taipei to open up with Beijing.

by Dave DeCamp

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