

Opening Remarks for the EVC European Values Summit

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Distinguished participants;

Dear friends:

Greetings from Taipei!

It a great pleasure to be addressing the European Values Summit 2022. I would like to extend my thanks to the European Values Center for Security Policy for, again, inviting me to share my views on the global challenges that we face.

Today, the world is gripped by a struggle between authoritarianism and democracy. In light of this situation, I would like to talk about the responsibility of the international community to respond to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the parallels with China's threat to Taiwan and the world, and the importance of defending Taiwan from authoritarian expansion.

1. As a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan stands with Ukraine

Seeing the Ukrainian people fight for their freedom and witnessing how European countries have stood in solidarity with Ukraine has been a huge encouragement and inspiration to me. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has not only caused death and destruction but has also brought European countries together in solidarity. They are united in defense of the common values of democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law.

Taiwan shares the same ideals and goals. We recognize our responsibility as a member of the international community to support those who are on the front lines of defense of the democratic order. We are cooperating closely with international efforts to assist Ukraine by providing material, financial, and humanitarian aid. We have also allocated a budget of roughly 56 million US dollars, which is ready to contribute to the postwar reconstruction of Ukraine.

2. China's threat to Taiwan and its wider ambitions

Though geographically and culturally distant, Taiwan and Ukraine have much in common. While the Russian army has been ravaging Ukraine in Europe, on this side of the

world, China has not stopped intimidating the Taiwanese people. In the same way that Russia is making an illegal grab for Ukraine, the PRC wants to make Taiwan part of its territory, despite never having ruled Taiwan for a single day. Taiwan and Ukraine have much to learn from each other. And our countries have much to share with the rest of the free world on how to uphold our cherished way of life.

For over 70 years, China has continually intimidated Taiwan. Beijing made its ambitions crystal clear in August when it launched unprecedented military drills around Taiwan, sending fighter jets and naval vessels into Taiwan's air and sea space and crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait. It even fired ballistic missiles over Taiwan. This aggression was an attempt to change the status quo and claim the Taiwan Strait as its internal waters.

According to Xi Jinping's own words at the recent 20th Communist Party Congress, China has no intention to renounce the use of force against Taiwan. But China's ambitions do not stop at Taiwan. Amendments of the CCP constitution to support the Global Security Initiative and Global Development Initiative point to China's intention to impose its influence on the whole world. Beijing has a well-planned strategy that extends from the East China

Sea, the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, to the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Step by step, it aims to go beyond the first island chain and consolidate an exclusive sphere of influence in the region.

In April, China signed a security cooperation agreement with Solomon Islands. The deal may allow China to build infrastructure for its vessels or make stopovers in Solomon Islands' ports. Under the Belt and Road Initiative, PLA forces can potentially station across the entire Indo-Pacific region, from Kiribati to Djibouti. The Chinese navy constantly shadows Australian warships conducting routine patrols in international waters, which intimidates other countries from exercising their legal rights according to international law. China is flexing its muscles in the Indo-Pacific and seeking to extend its influence across the globe.

3. The importance of defending Taiwan

I want to stress that China may try to claim that Taiwan is part of its territory, it is only pursuing its national interests, and the outside world should not interfere. But China's wider vision of "grand unification" has seismic consequences for regional peace and security and the rules-based international order. If Taiwan falls, it will not

be the only country to suffer. Other nations in the region and beyond will be unable to escape the impact.

When authoritarian regimes try to expand their sphere of influence, it is the responsibility of the democratic community to defend freedom and stability. Taiwan recognizes the need to strengthen its defense capability, upgrade its military equipment, and prepare strategic plans. At the same time, we continue to call on the international community to vocally support us. We need our friends to send a clear and strong message that any unilateral attempt by China to undermine the status quo will be met with strong opposition. This is the greatest deterrence that democracies can present to China.

We are grateful that more and more like-minded countries in Europe are standing with us and supporting our resolve to preserve and protect freedom and democracy. In a significant show of support this year, the Vice President of the European Parliament led an official delegation to Taiwan. One after another, we have received visits from Germany, France, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Sweden, to name just a few. We also appreciate the backing of the Czech government in listing Taiwan as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region in its policy statement.

I would like to thank the EVC and other Czech civil society organizations and thinktanks for continuing to invite me to speak at public events. It is worth restating that allowing Taiwan's Foreign Minister to take part in public events is no easy matter. I am heartened to see all sectors of Czech society resisting tangible and intangible pressure from China. I must say again, the Czech Republic is a courageous moral giant.

My friends, when authoritarianism spreads somewhere, freedom and democracy suffer everywhere. To deter the dictators, we need to work together in solidarity. United by our common values and beliefs, I am confident that we will prevail. We must push back against expansionism, defend democracy, and uphold the standards that we all share and love. Thank you.