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s22(1)(a)(ii)

Title: Taiwan: presidential and legislative elections: one day to go, what should we watch for?

MRN: s 47E(d) s22(1)(a)(ii)

To: Canberra

Cc: RR : Indo-Pacific Posts

From: Taipei

From File:

EDRMS

Files:

References: s 47E(d)

Response: Routine, Information Only

Summary

Taiwan will elect a new president and vice president, and 113 legislators, on Saturday. DPP candidate William Lai remains the frontrunner for the presidency, but an upset victory by KMT's Hou Yu-ih remains an outside chance. While the presidency is beyond reach for Ko Wen-je, TPP may be able to secure the balance of power in the legislature with around 8–12 seats. s 33(a)(iii)

Taiwan's people will go to the polls on Saturday, 13 January. s 33(a)(iii), s 47E(d)

The latest updates from the campaign

3. As reported s 47E(d)), the final public opinion polls released in early January showed DPP's Lai maintaining a small but consistent lead over his rivals for the presidency. But, KMT's Hou was close behind, trailing within the margin of error in some polls. And while Ko was lagging about ten points behind in third, s 33(a)(iii), s 33(b) . All three parties have been campaigning hard in the final week, with large rallies across Taiwan demonstrating strong support.

4. A national emergency alert sent to all mobile phones in Taiwan by the Ministry of National Defense on 9 January highlighted the complex interplay between domestic politics and perceptions of Chinese electoral interference. The alert warned, in English, of a 'missile flyover Taiwan airspace', when it had actually been a satellite launch (the Chinese

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text correctly identified it as a satellite). MND subsequently apologised for the mistranslation, but KMT and TPP seized on the alert to accuse the DPP government of overhyping the China threat to improve its election chances (s 33(a)(iii)

). The incident coincides with an increasing number of Chinese balloons crossing Taiwan, publicised by MND together with ADIZ incursions by ships and planes. The balloons had been seen before, but had not been publicised by MND.

5. For Taiwan's legislature, DPP is expected to lose its majority, and each of the parties have told post they do not expect to obtain a majority. This will be new ground for Taiwan.

What should we watch for in the election results?

Will William Lai secure an unprecedented third consecutive presidential term for DPP?

6. Since Taiwan's first democratic presidential elections in 1996, no incumbent president has successfully passed the presidency to their party's nominee. Since 2000, Taiwan's presidential politics have proven metronomic: Chen Shui-bian (DPP, 2000–2008); Ma Ying-jeou (KMT, 2008–2016) and Tsai Ing-wen (DPP, 2016–2024). If Lai wins the presidency, he would break this precedent by giving the DPP an unprecedented third consecutive term in the presidential office and the KMT its longest period ever out of office.

s 33(a)(iii)

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s 33(a)(iii)

Sent by: s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Prepared
by:**

Approved HOP Fergusson
by:

Topics: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC/Domestic Political

▼ New Distribution

s22(1)(a)(ii)

s 47E(d)

Title: Canada: Taiwan Elections: Initial reactions
MRN: s 47E(d) s22(1)(a)(ii)
To: Canberra
Cc: s 47E(d)
Ministers: Foreign Minister
From: Ottawa
From File:
EDRMS
Files:
References:
Response: Routine, Information Only

Summary

Global Affairs Canada released a statement congratulating the people of Taiwan on the conclusion of the election process and emphasising Canada's intention to advance people-to-people, science, trade and investment ties. In response, the Embassy of China in Ottawa called GAC's actions a 'violation of the one-China principle' and urged Canada to 'handle the Taiwan issue prudently and properly to avoid further damage to China-Canada relations'. Opposition Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Michael Chong MP released a statement congratulating Dr Lai Ching-te and the DPP and stating the future of Taiwan can only be determined with the Taiwan people's consent.

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2. Global Affairs Canada issued a departmental tweet on 13 January: "*Canada congratulates the people of #Taiwan on the conclusion of their recent elections. Guided by the pillars of #democracy, #humanrights & #peace, Canada looks forward to advance its people-to-people, science, trade & investment ties.*"

3. In response, the Embassy of China in Ottawa released a statement the next day (14 January): "*After the election results in Taiwan were announced, the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its so-called congratulations. The relevant practices seriously violate the one-China principle. China expresses strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to this, and has lodged stern representations with Canada. The Taiwan issue is China's internal affairs, and the Taiwan region's elections are China's local affairs and do not tolerate any external interference. The one-China principle is the basic norm of international relations and the general consensus of the international community. It is also the political foundation of China-Canada relations. China once again urges Canada to recognize the high sensitivity of the Taiwan issue, earnestly abide by the one-China principle, immediately stop erroneous words and deeds on Taiwan-related issues, stop interfering in China's internal affairs in any form, and stop sending any wrong signals to "Taiwan independence" separatist forces, handle the Taiwan issue prudently and properly to avoid further damage to China-Canada relation.*"

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4. Separately, Opposition Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs Michael Chong MP released a statement (14 January): "*Conservatives congratulate the people of Taiwan on another free and fair election. We congratulate Dr. Lai Ching-te and the DPP for winning Taiwan's presidential election. The future of Taiwan can only be determined with the consent of the people of Taiwan.*"

text ends

Sent by: s22(1)(a)(ii)

**Prepared
by:**

Approved HOM
by:

Topics: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC/International Political

▼ New Distribution

s 47E(d)

[REDACTED]

s22(1)(a)(ii)

Title: Taiwan: DPP's Lai wins the presidency, no party wins a majority in the Legislative Yuan

MRN: s 47E(d) s22(1)(a)(ii)

To: Canberra

Cc: RR : Indo-Pacific Posts

From: Taipei

From File:

EDRMS

Files:

References: s 47E(d)

Response: Routine, Information Only

Summary

DPP candidate William Lai has won Taiwan's presidency with a seven per cent margin over Hou Yu-ih of the KMT. The TPP's s 33(a)(iii) Ko Wen-je came third but performed stronger than expected with around 26 per cent of the vote. No party won a majority in the Legislative Yuan giving the TPP the balance of power. The conduct of elections was smooth, with turnout nearly 72 per cent. US and Japanese delegations will arrive tomorrow for meetings with Lai and others.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate William Lai has won Taiwan's 2024 presidential election with approximately 40 per cent of the vote. This gives the DPP an unprecedented third consecutive term in the presidential office and marks the first time since the advent of Taiwan's democracy that an outgoing president has successfully ushered in their party's new candidate.

2. Lai defeated the Chinese Nationalist Party's (KMT's) Hou Yu-ih by seven per cent (Hou received 33.5 per cent of the vote), with the Taiwan People's Party's (TPP's) Ko taking third place (26.5 per cent of the vote).

3. While DPP has been denied an outright majority, which it enjoyed in the last two elections (in 2020 it won 57.13 per cent and in 2016 it won 56.1 per cent of the vote in effectively two horse races), the fact that Lai defeated the opposition's Hou by such a clear margin (seven percent and larger than expected) will boost Lai's political mandate when he enters office in May.

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A divided legislature...

5. s 33(a)(iii) , no party won a majority in the Legislative Yuan (LY). At time of reporting, DPP has won 51 seats (losing 11), the KMT 52 (gaining 15) and TPP eight (gaining three). Two independents (both thought to be leaning KMT) have secured seats. The KMT has done well in picking up district seats, taking advantage of retiring DPP representatives and a split in the green vote in a number of seats. TPP has said it will vote along issue rather than party lines, leaving collaboration with the DPP open.

6. The conduct of elections was smooth, calm and orderly. Polling booths were well run and there were no serious reports of irregularities. Counting was efficient and transparent. Turnout was about 71.8 per cent, lower than last time (74.9 per cent), but higher than in 2016 (66 per cent, the lowest turnout to date). Good weather and former KMT President Ma's comments that Xi could be 'trusted' on cross-strait relations may have encouraged more out to vote.

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s 33(a)(iii)

text ends

Sent by: s22(1)(a)(ii)
Prepared by:
Approved by: HOP
Topics: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC/Domestic Political
▼ New Distribution

s 47E(d)



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MEDIA TALKING POINTS DISTRIBUTION: STANDARD

Topic: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC

Originating Division: NAD

Subject: Taiwan Presidential and Legislative Elections

Version Date: 19/1/2024

Reason for Update: Includes reactions to the elections

Version: 4

Expiry: 11/04/2024

Talking Points

- Australia congratulates the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights
 - the smooth conduct of the elections is a testament to the maturity of Taiwan's democracy.
- We look forward to continuing to work with Taiwan to advance our important trade and investment relationship, as well as our education, science, cultural and people-to-people ties.
- Australia has a longstanding, bipartisan one-China policy, which has not changed.
- Peace and stability is in all our interests.
- We do not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait.

s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii)

Any use or disclosure of personal information about individuals and the incidents contained in this background should not be made public. To do so may constitute a breach of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Background

Taiwan's Presidential and Legislative Elections

Taiwan's presidential election took place on 13 January 2024. With the incumbent Tsai Ing-wen ineligible for a third term, Taiwan has elected a new leader.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate Dr William Lai won the presidential election with a seven per cent margin (approximately 40 per cent of the vote) over Hou Yu-ih of the Kuomintang (KMT), on 33.5 per cent. The Taiwan People's Party (TPP) candidate, Ko Wen-je, came third s 33(a)(iii)

with around 26 per cent of the vote. s
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President-Elect Dr William Lai and Vice President-Elect Hsiao Bi-kim

President-Elect Dr William Lai was most recently Taiwan's Vice President from May 2020 and DPP Chair from January 2023. He previously served as Premier (September 2017 to January 2019), Tainan Mayor (December 2010 to September 2017), legislator (February 1999 to December 2010) and National Assembly Member (May 1996 to January 1999). Lai was a medical doctor before entering politics.

Vice President-Elect Hsiao Bi-kim was recently Taiwan's Representative to the United States (July 2020 to November 2023). She previously served four terms as legislator (2000-2008 and 2012-2020). s 33(a)(iii)

Legislative elections

No party won a majority in the Legislative Yuan, s 33(a)(iii). The DPP won 51 seats (losing 11), the KMT 52 (gaining 15) and TPP eight (gaining three). Two independents also secured seats. s 33(a)(iii)

Australia's response

On 14 January, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) issued the following statement:

'Australia congratulates Dr Lai Ching-te on his victory in the Taiwan elections held on 13 January. We also congratulate the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights. The smooth conduct of the elections is a testament to the maturity and strength of Taiwan's democracy. Australia looks forward to continuing to work with Taiwan to advance our important trade and investment relationship, as well as our deep and longstanding educational, scientific, cultural and people-to-people ties.'

The statement was reposted by Foreign Minister Wong and DFAT social media accounts. Australia's Representative in Taipei has also issued messages of congratulations to social media (Twitter X and Facebook).

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In an article published in *The Age* on 13 January, a spokesperson for Foreign Minister Penny Wong said that Canberra would continue to build its unofficial relationship with Taiwan. 'It is important that everyone respects the outcome of democratic elections,' the spokesperson said. 'Peace and stability is in all our interests. Australia does not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait'.

Prime Minister's comments

At a press conference in Adelaide (17 January), the Prime Minister said 'The political party that was in power [in Taiwan] is still in power and our position has not changed. We congratulate the new leadership, the transition that has occurred through a democratic process, and we respect democratic processes. We do that whilst maintaining our clear bipartisan position, which is there in place for a one China policy'.

On ABC RN (15 January) the Prime Minister said 'we support democratic processes, and we congratulate Mr Lai on his election, as we would have congratulated whoever came out of that democratic process. Australia's position is we respect these processes and we support the outcomes. We'll continue to support the status quo when it comes to the position of Taiwan, consistent with our bipartisan one China policy'.

Other Australian responses

On 14 January, Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham congratulated Dr Lai Ching-te on his election in a social media post. On 14 January, the Hon. Peter Dutton MP, congratulated the incoming President and said that most Australians 'want to see a status quo in relation to the relationship between Taiwan and China'. The Hon. Dan Tehan MP, speaking to SkyNews on 15 January said 'its wonderful that democracy is allowed to act and speak in Taiwan. What the world wants to see is good, close interaction between both Taiwan and China'.

Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) comments

On 15 January, TECO Representative Douglas Hsu, commented in an op ed published in the Australian: 'It is also our unwavering commitment to work with like-minded partners to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and the Indo-Pacific region. As events transpire as a result of Taiwan's election, I urge Australians to open their eyes to the many - values and ways of life we share, which can bring us closer together despite the geographical distance between Taiwan and Australia'.

On 18 January, TECO Representative Douglas Hsu was interviewed on Radio National where he said the Taiwanese government welcomed statements from the Australian Government, including the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, following the election.

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Other International Reactions

The US has sent a delegation—lead by former US deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg and US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and including Chair of the American

Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Laura Rosenberger—to Taiwan to extend congratulations to the new administration.

In comments to media asking for a reaction to Taiwan's election, *Reuters* reported on 13 January that President Joe Biden said '*we do not support independence for Taiwan*'.

US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, issued *a statement on 13 January congratulating Dr. Lai Ching-te on his victory and the Taiwanese people for of their robust democratic system and electoral process and noted the United States is committed to maintaining cross-Strait peace and stability.*

Japan also sent a senior delegation to Taiwan immediately after the election.

Over 50 countries have issued congratulatory messages. Beyond Taiwan's diplomatic allies, representatives from the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, France, Germany, the European Union, Lithuania, Czechia, Italy, the Netherlands, the Philippines, and Singapore have provided messages of congratulations, acknowledging the results of the election.

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Media Interest

There has been strong Australian media interest in Taiwan's elections and potential Chinese reactions, s 33(a)(iii)

Approval	
Consultation	GPD, OTP
Author	s22(1)(a)(ii) , NAD; s22(1)(a)
Cleared by	Daniel Sloper, First Assistant Secretary, EAD

Distribution
s 47E(d)



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MEDIA TALKING POINTS DISTRIBUTION: STANDARD

Topic: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC

Originating Division: NAD

Subject: Taiwan Presidential and Legislative Elections

Version Date: 15/1/2024

Reason for Update: Includes reactions to the elections

Version: 3

Expiry: 11/04/2024

Talking Points

- Australia welcomes Taiwan's elections outcome and congratulates the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights
 - the smooth conduct of the elections is a testament to the maturity of Taiwan's democracy.
- We look forward to continuing to work with Taiwan to advance our important trade and investment relationship, as well as our education, science, cultural and people-to-people ties.
- Australia has a longstanding, bipartisan one-China policy, which has not changed.
- Peace and stability is in all our interests.
- We do not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait.

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Background

Taiwan's Presidential and Legislative Elections

Taiwan's presidential election took place on 13 January 2024. With the incumbent Tsai Ing-wen ineligible for a third term, Taiwan has elected a new leader.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate Dr William Lai won the presidential election with a seven per cent margin (approximately 40 per cent of the vote) over Hou Yu-ih of the Kuomintang (KMT), on 33.5 per cent. The Taiwan People's Party (TPP) candidate, Ko Wen-je, came third s 33(a)(iii) with around 26 per cent of the vote. s

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President-Elect Dr William Lai and Vice President-Elect Hsiao Bi-kim

President-Elect Dr William Lai was most recently Taiwan's Vice President from May 2020 and DPP Chair from January 2023. He previously served as Premier (September 2017 to January 2019), Tainan Mayor (December 2010 to September 2017), legislator (February 1999 to December 2010) and National Assembly Member (May 1996 to January 1999). Lai was a medical doctor before entering politics.

Vice President-Elect Hsiao Bi-kim was recently Taiwan's Representative to the United States (July 2020 to November 2023). She previously served four terms as legislator (2000-2008 and 2012-2020). s 33(a)(iii)

Legislative Elections

No party won a majority in the Legislative Yuan, s 33(a)(iii). On the count so far, DPP has won 51 seats (losing 11), the KMT 52 (gaining 15) and TPP eight (gaining three). Two independents also secured seats. s 33(a)(iii)

Australia's response

On 14 January, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) issued the following statement:

'Australia congratulates Dr Lai Ching-te on his victory in the Taiwan elections held on 13 January. We also congratulate the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights. The smooth conduct of the elections is a testament to the maturity and strength of Taiwan's democracy. Australia looks forward to continuing to work with Taiwan to advance our important trade and investment relationship, as well as our deep and longstanding educational, scientific, cultural and people-to-people ties.'

The statement was reposted by Foreign Minister Wong and DFAT social media accounts. Australia's Representative in Taipei has also issued messages of congratulations to social media (Twitter X and Facebook).

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In an article published in *The Age* on 13 January, a spokesperson for Foreign Minister Penny Wong said that Canberra would continue to build its unofficial relationship with Taiwan. 'It is important that everyone respects the outcome of democratic elections,' the spokesperson said. 'Peace and stability is in all our interests. Australia does not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait'.

Prime Minister's comments

On ABC RN (15 January) the Prime Minister said 'we support democratic processes, and we congratulate Mr Lai on his election, as we would have congratulated whoever came out of that democratic process. Australia's position is we respect these processes and we support the outcomes. We'll continue to support the status quo when it comes to the position of Taiwan, consistent with our bipartisan one China policy'.

On 9 January, on *Sky News*, in a response to a question about the importance of Taiwan's election and Beijing's respect for the outcome, the Prime Minister said:

'..it's important that democratic elections take place and there are more taking place with people voting this year than in any previous year in human history. That's a good thing. And one of those elections is in Taiwan. It is important that everyone respect the outcome of democratic elections. That's a matter for the people of Taiwan and that is certainly the Australian Government's position will be to respect any outcome, and that should be the decision of every government because we need to respect these democratic processes.'

Other Australian responses

On 14 January, Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham congratulated Dr Lai Ching-te on his election in a social media post. On 14 January, the Hon. Peter Dutton MP, congratulated the incoming President and said that most Australians 'want to see a status quo in relation to the relationship between Taiwan and China'. The Hon. Dan Tehan MP, speaking to SkyNews on 15 January said 'its wonderful that democracy is allowed to act and speak in Taiwan. What the world wants to see is good, close interaction between both Taiwan and China'.

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United States

The US has sent a delegation—lead by former US deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg and US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley and including Chair of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Laura Rosenberger—to Taiwan to extend congratulations to the new administration.

In comments to media asking for a reaction to Taiwan's election, *Reuters* reported on 13 January that President Joe Biden said 'we do not support independence for Taiwan'.

US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, issued the following statement on 13 January:

'The United States congratulates Dr. Lai Ching-te on his victory in Taiwan's presidential election. We also congratulate the Taiwan people for once again demonstrating the strength of their robust democratic system and electoral process.

The United States is committed to maintaining cross-Strait peace and stability, and the peaceful resolution of differences, free from coercion and pressure. The partnership between the American people and the people on Taiwan, rooted in democratic values, continues to broaden and deepen across economic, cultural, and people-to-people ties.

We look forward to working with Dr. Lai and Taiwan's leaders of all parties to advance our shared interests and values, and to further our longstanding unofficial relationship, consistent with the U.S. one China policy as guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances. We are confident that Taiwan will continue to serve as an example for all who strive for freedom, democracy, and prosperity.'

Secretary of State Blinken also issued the following to Twitter X:

'We congratulate Dr. Lai Ching-te on his victory in Taiwan's presidential election. We also congratulate the Taiwan people for participating in free and fair elections and demonstrating the strength of their democratic system.'

US House Speaker Mike Johnson issued a statement in which he underscored the ongoing commitment of Congress:

'We congratulate William Lai on his election as the next President of Taiwan and we are happy to see democracy thriving among the Taiwanese people. The United States is eager to work with President-elect Lai and build on the strong partnership we've enjoyed with President Tsai. To underscore the ongoing commitment of Congress to security and democracy, I will be asking the chairs of the relevant House Committees to lead a delegation to Taipei following Lai's inauguration in May. I am hopeful the United States and Taiwan together will continue promoting the principles of liberty, opportunity and security for all freedom-loving countries and our partners in the Indo-Pacific.'

United Kingdom

On 13 January, UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron offered his congratulations to Dr Lai Ching-te following presidential and legislative elections in Taiwan. The statement read:

'The elections today are testament to Taiwan's vibrant democracy. I offer warm congratulations to the people of Taiwan on the smooth conduct of those elections and to Dr Lai Ching-te and his party on his election. I hope that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait will renew efforts to resolve differences peacefully through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion.'

Canada

On 14 January, on Twitter X, Foreign Policy Canada congratulated the people of Taiwan on the conclusion of their elections. The statement read '...Guided by the pillars of democracy, human rights and peace, Canada looks forward to advance its people-to-people, science, trade and investment ties.'

New Zealand

On 14 January, New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted the following message to its website:

'NZ welcomes the successful conclusion of elections in Taiwan on 13 January and congratulates the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights. We look forward to further enhancing NZ and Taiwan's vibrant trade, economic and cultural links'.

Japan

Japan has sent a delegation—lead by Keiji Furuya, chair of the Japan-ROC Diet Members' Consultative Council—to Taiwan to congratulate the new administration.

Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko issued the following statement:

'On January 13, Mr. Lai Ching-te was elected in the presidential election in Taiwan. The Government of Japan congratulates the smooth implementation of the democratic election and Mr. Lai on his victory. For Japan, Taiwan is an extremely crucial partner and an important friend, with which it shares fundamental values and enjoys close economic relations and people to people exchanges. The Government of Japan will work toward further deepening cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Taiwan, based on its position to maintain working relationship on the non-governmental basis. We expect that the issue surrounding Taiwan will be resolved peacefully through dialogue, thereby contributing to the peace and stability in the region.'

France

On 13 January, France's Foreign Ministry issued the following statement:

'Saturday's election in Taiwan took place freely and democratically. It demonstrated the commitment of the Taiwanese people to local democracy, the rule of law and human rights. France extends its congratulations to all those elected. It very much hopes for peace and the continuation of dialogue and cooperation between the two shores of the Taiwan Strait.'

European Union

On 13 January, the European Union External Action Service spokesperson issued the following statement:

'The European Union welcomes the elections held in Taiwan on 13 January, and congratulates all the voters who participated in this democratic exercise. Our respective systems of governance are founded on a shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The European Union underlines that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are key to regional and global security and prosperity. The EU remains concerned about growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and opposes any unilateral attempt to change the status quo.'

Singapore

On 14 January, a spokesperson for Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the following comments in response to media queries, posted to the departmental website:

'We welcome the successful conclusion of the elections and congratulate Dr William Lai and his party on their victory. Singapore shares a close and longstanding friendship with Taiwan and the Taiwanese people, and will continue to grow this relationship based on our 'One China' policy. Singapore has consistently supported the peaceful development of cross-strait relations. Dialogue, building trust, and pursuing cooperation will be beneficial for both sides of the Strait. This will contribute to the stability and prosperity of the wider region and be welcomed by Singapore and the international community.'

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Handling Notes

Talking points and background will be updated to reflect further international reactions in the coming days. s 33(a)(iii)

Media Interest

There has been strong Australian media interest in Taiwan's elections and potential Chinese reactions, s 33(a)(iii)

Approval	
Consultation	GPD, OTP
Author	s22(1)(a)(ii) , NAD; s22(1)(a)
Cleared by	Daniel Sloper, First Assistant Secretary, EAD

Distribution	
s 47E(d)	



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MEDIA TALKING POINTS DISTRIBUTION: STANDARD

Topic: POLITICAL-ECONOMIC

Originating Division: NAD

Subject: Taiwan Presidential and Legislative Elections

Version Date: 14/1/2024

Reason for Update: New
talking points

Version: 2

Expiry: 11/04/2024

Talking Points

- Australia welcomes Taiwan's elections outcome and congratulates the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights
 - the smooth conduct of the elections is a testament to the maturity of Taiwan's democracy.
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- Peace and stability is in all our interests.
- We do not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait.

s 33(a)(iii)

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Background

Taiwan's Presidential and Legislative Elections

Taiwan's presidential election took place on 13 January 2024. With the incumbent Tsai Ing-wen ineligible for a third term, Taiwan has elected a new leader.

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate Dr William Lai won the presidential election with a seven per cent margin (approximately 40 per cent of the vote) over Hou Yu-ih of the Kuomintang (KMT), on 33.5 per cent. The Taiwan People's Party (TPP) candidate, Ko Wen-je, came third s 33(a)(iii) with around 26 per cent of the vote. s

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President-Elect Dr William Lai and Vice President-Elect Hsiao Bhi-kim

President-Elect Dr William Lai was most recently Taiwan's Vice President from May 2020 and DPP Chair from January 2023. He previously served as Premier (September 2017 to January 2019), Tainan Mayor (December 2010 to September 2017), legislator (February 1999 to December 2010) and National Assembly Member (May 1996 to January 1999). Lai was a medical doctor before entering politics.

Vice President-Elect Hsiao Bi-khim was recently Taiwan's Representative to the United States (July 2020 to November 2023). She previously served four terms as legislator (2000-2008 and 2012-2020). s 33(a)(iii)

Legislative Elections

No party won a majority in the Legislative Yuan, s 33(a)(iii). On the count so far, DPP has won 51 seats (losing 11), the KMT 52 (gaining 15) and TPP eight (gaining three). Two independents also secured seats. s 33(a)(iii)

Australia's response

On 14 January, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) issued the following statement:

'Australia congratulates Dr Lai Ching-te on his victory in the Taiwan elections held on 13 January. We also congratulate the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights. The smooth conduct of the elections is a testament to the maturity and strength of Taiwan's democracy. Australia looks forward to continuing to work with Taiwan to advance our important trade and investment relationship, as well as our deep and longstanding educational, scientific, cultural and people-to-people ties.'

The statement will be reposted to DFAT social media accounts. Australia's Representative in Taipei will issue messages of congratulations to social media (Twitter X and Facebook).

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In an article published in *The Age* on 13 January, a spokesperson for Foreign Minister Penny Wong said that Canberra would continue to build its unofficial relationship with Taiwan. 'It is important that everyone respects the outcome of democratic elections,' the spokesperson said. 'Peace and stability is in all our interests. Australia does not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait'.

On 13 January, responding to Chinese Ambassador Xiao Qian's op-ed in *The Australian* (see details below) Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham (Shadow Minister Foreign Affairs) issued a statement to Twitter X: 'A stable and successful region is in Australia's interest, as is engagement with partners like Taiwan. It is inappropriate for any nation to seek to dictate how Australia should engage with our partners'. In a separate post, he wished Taiwanese voters well as they headed to the polls and acknowledged the Australia-Taiwan economic and trade relationship.

Prime Minister's comments

On 9 January, on *Sky News*, in a response to a question about the importance of Taiwan's election and Beijing's respect for the outcome, the Prime Minister said:

'..it's important that democratic elections take place and there are more taking place with people voting this year than in any previous year in human history. That's a good thing. And one of those elections is in Taiwan. It is important that everyone respect the outcome of democratic elections. That's a matter for the people of Taiwan and that is certainly the Australian Government's position will be to respect any outcome, and that should be the decision of every government because we need to respect these democratic processes.'

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International reactions:

United States

In comments to media asking for a reaction to Taiwan's election, *Reuters* reported on 13 January that President Joe Biden said 'we do not support independence for Taiwan'.

US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, issued the following statement on 13 January:

'The United States congratulates Dr. Lai Ching-te on his victory in Taiwan's presidential election. We also congratulate the Taiwan people for once again demonstrating the strength of their robust democratic system and electoral process.'

The United States is committed to maintaining cross-Strait peace and stability, and the peaceful resolution of differences, free from coercion and pressure. The partnership between

the American people and the people on Taiwan, rooted in democratic values, continues to broaden and deepen across economic, cultural, and people-to-people ties.

We look forward to working with Dr. Lai and Taiwan's leaders of all parties to advance our shared interests and values, and to further our longstanding unofficial relationship, consistent with the U.S. one China policy as guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances. We are confident that Taiwan will continue to serve as an example for all who strive for freedom, democracy, and prosperity.'

Secretary of State Blinken also issued the following to Twitter X:

'We congratulate Dr. Lai Ching-te on his victory in Taiwan's presidential election. We also congratulate the Taiwan people for participating in free and fair elections and demonstrating the strength of their democratic system.'

US House Speaker Mike Johnson issued a statement in which he underscored the ongoing commitment of Congress:

'We congratulate William Lai on his election as the next President of Taiwan and we are happy to see democracy thriving among the Taiwanese people. The United States is eager to work with President-elect Lai and build on the strong partnership we've enjoyed with President Tsai. To underscore the ongoing commitment of Congress to security and democracy, I will be asking the chairs of the relevant House Committees to lead a delegation to Taipei following Lai's inauguration in May. I am hopeful the United States and Taiwan together will continue promoting the principles of liberty, opportunity and security for all freedom-loving countries and our partners in the Indo-Pacific.'

United Kingdom

On 13 January, UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron offered his congratulations to Dr Lai Ching-te following presidential and legislative elections in Taiwan. The statement read:

'The elections today are testament to Taiwan's vibrant democracy. I offer warm congratulations to the people of Taiwan on the smooth conduct of those elections and to Dr Lai Ching-te and his party on his election. I hope that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait will renew efforts to resolve differences peacefully through constructive dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion.'

Canada

On 14 January, on Twitter X, Foreign Policy Canada congratulated the people of Taiwan on the conclusion of their elections. The statement read '...Guided by the pillars of democracy, human rights and peace, Canada looks forward to advance its people-to-people, science, trade and investment ties.'

New Zealand

On 14 January, New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted the following message to its website:

'NZ welcomes the successful conclusion of elections in Taiwan on 13 January and congratulates the people of Taiwan on the peaceful exercise of their democratic rights. We look forward to further enhancing NZ and Taiwan's vibrant trade, economic and cultural links'.

Japan

Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko issued the following statement:

'On January 13, Mr. Lai Ching-te was elected in the presidential election in Taiwan. The Government of Japan congratulates the smooth implementation of the democratic election and Mr. Lai on his victory. For Japan, Taiwan is an extremely crucial partner and an important friend, with which it shares fundamental values and enjoys close economic relations and people to people exchanges. The Government of Japan will work toward further deepening cooperation and exchanges between Japan and Taiwan, based on its position to maintain working relationship on the non-governmental basis. We expect that the issue surrounding Taiwan will be resolved peacefully through dialogue, thereby contributing to the peace and stability in the region.'

France

On 13 January, France's Foreign Ministry issued the following statement:

'Saturday's election in Taiwan took place freely and democratically. It demonstrated the commitment of the Taiwanese people to local democracy, the rule of law and human rights. France extends its congratulations to all those elected. It very much hopes for peace and the continuation of dialogue and cooperation between the two shores of the Taiwan Strait.'

European Union

On 13 January, the European Union External Action Service spokesperson issued the following statement:

'The European Union welcomes the elections held in Taiwan on 13 January, and congratulates all the voters who participated in this democratic exercise. Our respective systems of governance are founded on a shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights. The European Union underlines that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait are key to regional and global security and prosperity. The EU remains concerned about growing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and opposes any unilateral attempt to change the status quo.'

Singapore

On 14 January, a spokesperson for Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs made the following comments in response to media queries, posted to the departmental website:

‘We welcome the successful conclusion of the elections and congratulate Dr William Lai and his party on their victory. Singapore shares a close and longstanding friendship with Taiwan and the Taiwanese people, and will continue to grow this relationship based on our ‘One China’ policy. Singapore has consistently supported the peaceful development of cross-strait relations. Dialogue, building trust, and pursuing cooperation will be beneficial for both sides of the Strait. This will contribute to the stability and prosperity of the wider region and be welcomed by Singapore and the international community.’

s 33(a)(iii)

Handling Notes

Talking points and background will be updated to reflect further international reactions in the coming days.

Media Interest

There has been strong Australian media interest in Taiwan’s elections and potential Chinese reactions.

Approval	
Consultation	GPD
Author	s22(1)(a)(ii) , NAD;s22(1)(a)
Cleared by	Daniel Sloper, First Assistant Secretary, EAD

Distribution

s 47E(d)



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MEDIA TALKING POINTS DISTRIBUTION: STANDARD

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Originating Division: NAD

Subject: Taiwan Presidential and Legislative Elections

Version Date: 11/1/2024

**Reason for Update: New
talking points**

Version: 1

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Talking Points

- Taiwan is a vibrant democracy and its elections on 13 January are a matter for the people of Taiwan.
- Australia looks forward to working with whomever the Taiwan voters elect.
- Australia has a longstanding, bipartisan one-China policy, which has not changed
 - we will continue to build our productive unofficial economic, cultural and people-to-people relationship with Taiwan.
- Peace and stability is in all our interest
 - we do not want to see any unilateral change to the status quo across the Taiwan Strait

s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii)

Any use or disclosure of personal information about individuals and the incidents contained in this background should not be made public. To do so may constitute a breach of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Background

Taiwan's Presidential and Legislative Elections

Taiwan's presidential election will take place on 13 January 2024. With the incumbent Tsai Ing-wen ineligible for a third term owing to a two-term limit, Taiwan will have a new leader.

s 33(a)(iii)

Taiwan's legislative election will also be held on 13 January 2024. s 33(a)(iii)

Prime Minister's comments

On 9 January, on Sky News, in a response to a question about the importance of Taiwan's election and Beijing's respect for the outcome, the Prime Minister said:

'..it's important that democratic elections take place and there are more taking place with people voting this year than in any previous year in human history. That's a good thing. And one of those elections is in Taiwan. It is important that everyone respect the outcome of democratic elections. That's a matter for the people of Taiwan and that is certainly the Australian Government's position will be to respect any outcome, and that should be the decision of every government because we need to respect these democratic processes.'

s 33(a)(iii)

Handling Notes

Talking points and background will be updated once the election result is known.

Media Interest

There has been strong Australian media interest in Taiwan's elections and potential Chinese reactions.

Approval	
Consultation	GPD
Author	s22(1)(a)(ii) , NAD; s22(1)(a)
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Summary

Lai Ching-te's victory provides policy continuity as DPP starts an unprecedented third term in the presidential office in May. s 33(a)(iii)

As reported (s 47E(d)), the Democratic Progressive Party's Lai Ching-te (William Lai) won Taiwan's presidential election on 13 January with 40.05 per cent of the vote, defeating the Chinese Nationalist Party's Hou Yu-ih (33.49 per cent) and the Taiwan People's Party's Ko Wen-je (26.46 per cent). Cable reports on early implications for Taiwan's politics and for Australia.

The first challenge - who controls Taiwan's legislature?

2. While focus is on Lai's historic victory, he must wait until 20 May to take office. s 33(a)(iii)

3. The legislature has a vital role in Taiwan's government, passing legislation (the president does not have a veto power), approving government budgets and convening committee hearings on all aspects of policy. The last time the legislature and presidency were controlled by opposing parties was during the administration of DPP President Chen Shui-bian (2000–2008), when a KMT-controlled legislature blocked many of his policies, particularly on defence acquisitions and reform.

4. As reported, no party has won the required 57 seats for a majority in the 113 seat legislature: KMT won 52 seats; DPP won 51 seats; TPP won 8 seats; and there will be two

KMT-leaning independents. s 33(a)(iii)

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5. Both DPP and KMT will enter horse-trading with TPP to try to secure control of the legislature. s 33(b)

. s 33(a)(iii)

9. s 33(a)(iii), s 33(b)

s 33(a)(iii)



s22(1)(a)(ii)

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