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## Taiwanese not ready for defense: Fukuyama

**THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE: Taiwanese need to be willing to sacrifice and not depend solely on the US for protection as military threats grow, Francis Fukuyama said**

By Lee I-chia / Staff reporter



Renowned US political scientist Francis Fukuyama yesterday said he thinks Ukrainians are much more willing to defend themselves than Taiwanese, which poses a significant threat to Taiwan's future and independence.

Fukuyama, the Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, made the remarks in a speech titled "Threats to Liberalism and the Liberal World Order" in a virtual forum held by the Taipei School of Economics and Political Science Foundation.

Russia attacked Ukraine because it wants to undo the effects after the collapse of communism in 1991, he said, adding that Russian President Vladimir Putin feels threatened by Ukrainian democracy, which could motivate democratic movements in Russia.



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**US political scientist Francis Fukuyama takes part in a video conference yesterday.**

Photo: CNA

"The geopolitical challenge from China is bigger than that from Russia," he said. "Chinese power is much more multidimensional, in terms of economic, political and increasingly in military powers."

One domain where Chinese power is not great is in the social and cultural dimension, as non-Chinese in general do not admire its society and do not want to live in the country, he added.

Since the rise of Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平), China is evolving from an authoritarian to a totalitarian state, with its social credit system being the world's most advanced surveillance network for the purpose of social control, he said.

International relations are now at an important junction, and depend on how the Russian attack on Ukraine plays out, he said, adding that China is observing how the US and other democracies respond.

Fukuyama also spoke of how the crisis relates to Taiwan's relations with China.

"We are entering a geopolitical era in which unfortunately we have to take military threats and military power much more seriously," he said.

"I'm afraid the actions that we thought were unthinkable a few years ago are now thinkable," Fukuyama said regarding the possibility of China moving its military into Taiwan, adding that Taiwan should rethink its defense policy and reinstate mandatory military conscription.

"I think one of the differences between Taiwan and Ukraine is that, in my perception, the Ukrainians are much more willing to fight for themselves than Taiwanese people, and that poses a really big threat to Taiwan's future and independence," he said.

Some Taiwanese believe that the US would protect them in the event of war, but that would only happen if Taiwanese are willing to fight for themselves, he said, adding that the attitudes of Taiwanese and the sacrifices they are willing to make are essential.

Global democracies comprise the greatest share of economic and military power, but a large deficit is that domestic politics in many democratic countries are not supportive of strong international positions, including in the US, he said.

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