

Prospects for Taiwan's Role in the Second Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy

Russell Hsiao

Taiwan's Approach to Materialize the Indo-Pacific Strategies: Building on the New Southbound Policy+

Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao and Alan H. Yang

Strategic Convergence in the Indo-Pacific: South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy Meets Taiwan's New Southbound Policy

Seong-Hyon Lee

Private: Too Small to Lead, Too Big to Ignore?: Poland and Its Indo-Pacific Strategy in the Making

Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis

Strengthening Transregional Resilience and Sustainability: Compatibilities in Germany's Indo-Pacific Guidelines and Taiwan's New Southbound Policy

Sandra Meerwein

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy and Opportunities for Interconnections with Taiwan's New Southbound Policy: Moving Beyond Beijing's Defined Boundaries of Cooperation

Stephen Nagy

Prospects for Taiwan's Role in the Second Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy

By: Russell Hsiao

Russell Hsiao is the executive director of the Global Taiwan Institute and the editor-in-chief of the Global Taiwan Brief.

The Indo-Pacific is a dynamic region and this center of gravity for global economic growth has become the focal point for strategic competition between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC). Governments throughout the Indo-Pacific region are recalibrating how to navigate US foreign policy with the return of President Donald Trump, and the island-nation of Taiwan is no exception. For the Indo-Pacific region, the most transformative event in regional geopolitics over the past decade has been how US foreign policy began under the Obama Administration to "[pivot](#)" to Asia in the mid-2010s. This was followed by the launching of the Trump Administration's *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy*, which the Biden Administration then built on and expanded. Coupled with the 47th president's unpredictable nature, regional actors will naturally wonder what may come with the second Trump Administration. [As Taiwan upgrades its New Southbound Policy \(NPS, 新南向政策\) to "NPS+"](#) under President Lai Ching-te (賴清德)—who was inaugurated in May this year—it is worth thinking about how Trump 2.0 may approach its own IPS and Taiwan's potential role in it.

Past is Prologue ... Perhaps?

While the Obama Administration should take credit for initiating the US "pivot" to Asia and noting Taiwan within that framework, [the extent of it was limited and Taiwan was still tethered to the US-China relationship](#). After adopting the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's *Indo-Pacific Concept*, the first Trump administration noticeably raised the visibility of Taiwan in the United States' *Free and Open Indo-Pacific* (FOIP) strategy. The island democracy was mentioned for the first time in official FOIP strategy documents and repeated in official statements by senior Trump Administration officials. In doing so, Taiwan began to slowly become embedded in a regional strategy—albeit still rhetorically—rather than just within a China context. For example, the 2019 document, [A Free and Open Indo-Pacific](#), produced by the State Department under the first Trump Administration, prominently featured Taiwan as a component of the US FOIP—mentioning Taiwan [10 times](#)—as well as in its *National Security Strategy*. Set within this context, the United States also hosted the first-ever Pacific Island Dialogue in 2019—notably focusing on a region that encompasses a

The Global Taiwan Brief is a bi-weekly publication released every other Wednesday and provides insight into the latest news on Taiwan.

Editor-in-Chief
Russell Hsiao
Associate Editor
John Dotson
Staff Editor
Adrienne Wu

The views and opinions expressed in these articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Global Taiwan Institute.

To view web sources cited in the published papers (underlined in printed text), visit <https://global-taiwan.org/issues/vol-9-issue-23/>.

Global Taiwan Institute
1836 Jefferson Place NW,
Washington DC 20036
contact@globaltaiwan.org

To subscribe, visit
<http://globaltaiwan.org/subscribe/>.

© 2024 · Global Taiwan Institute

quarter of Taiwan's 12 remaining diplomatic partners.

Reflecting the important continuities between the administrations, the Biden Administration's *Indo-Pacific Strategy*—which was released in 2022—also mentioned Taiwan [eight times](#) and Taiwan was also included in its [National Security Strategy](#). After assuming office in 2021, President Biden began building out a “lattice” framework of regional partnerships through the Indo-Pacific that began to institutionalize this regional approach with high-level minilaterals like the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad), AUKUS, US-Japan-South Korea Trilaterals, and multiple other groupings. While these partnerships are not directly about—or more pointedly, with Taiwan—these groupings are at the least very related to Taiwan. Of note, at each of these meetings, leaders have expressed public statements of concern regarding the PRC's destabilizing actions for peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. The internationalization of security across the Taiwan Strait has been an important key for deterrence.

Trump 2.0: Continuities in FOIP but with a Twist

As President Trump prepares to reenter the White House in January 2025, what might we then expect to see from the 47th president of the United States?

First, there will likely be [three broad continuities](#) in Trump's approach toward the Indo-Pacific: (1) a focus on China; (2) burden sharing with allies and partners; and (3) economic security. Second, whereas the two FOIPs of previous administrations have been very focused on China, and emphasized that allies and partners need to do more for both their own and collective security (with US assistance), FOIP 2.0 will prioritize economic security as the key pillar. Third, to design and implement this strategy, President Trump is assembling his national security team [at lightning speed](#). A number of the current nominees stick out for their expertise on the Indo-Pacific and understanding of Taiwan's role in it, showing that the new Trump Administration might bring some serious firepower to the region and be able to retain its strategic focus, despite skepticism otherwise.

Trump's pick for Secretary of State, Senator Marco Rubio, recognizes the importance of the need for deterrence across the Taiwan Strait and appreciates a holistic approach that takes into account the importance of Taiwan's international space for enhancing resiliency. The nominee has a long track record of supporting robust US-Taiwan relations and also has the distinction of having been sanctioned by the PRC. Notably, Rubio

has advocated for the United States to include Taiwan in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)—the regional economic grouping initiated by the Biden Administration. In a letter to the Biden Administration, then-Senator Rubio astutely [noted](#): “It is also critical for U.S. security interests that Taiwan is embedded in the region's economic architecture. The more economic engagement the United States and allies and partners have with Taiwan, the stronger our collective resilience against coercion.” [1]

While every national security council will have its own unique characteristics in terms of hierarchy and divisions of labor, [the selection of Alex Wong](#) as the deputy national security adviser to National Security Adviser nominee Mike Waltz is notable. Wong will be in the same role that Nadia Schadlow and Matt Pottinger filled during the first Trump Administration. As such he will likely lead the crafting and implementation of Trump 2.0's [National Security and Indo-Pacific strategies](#). Moreover, [Alex Wong](#) is a veteran of the first Trump administration and personally handled regional and security affairs for the State Department, including the US Indo-Pacific Strategy. At a seminar hosted by GTI on the connectivity between Taiwan's NSP and the United States' IPS, Alex Wong [stated](#): “The judgment of whether NSP is working, whether the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy is working is whether we are achieving that balance and neutralizing attempts by Beijing to exert dominance in the region.”

Another relevant pick for the implementation of Trump's IPS is his pick to be ambassador to the United Nations. Representative Elise Stefanik, President Trump's pick for ambassador to the United Nations, is [a member of the House Taiwan Caucus](#) and also supportive of Taiwan. Like his picks for security advisor, the position of ambassador to the United Nations will be important when it comes to pushing for Taiwan's inclusion in the international arena, as it has been done in the past by Kelly Craft and Nikki Haley.

Conclusion

Indeed, multiple factors point toward more continuities than change in the US Indo-Pacific strategy and Taiwan's role in it under the second Trump Administration. Yet, the current geopolitical situation is far more complex than just six years during the first Trump Administration—with wars raging in Europe and the Middle East and an emerging “axis of aggressors.” With North Korea's unexpected entry into the Ukraine War, the European and Asian theatres are becoming increasingly interconnected in complex and dangerous

ways. On the upside, many other countries have also launched their own Indo-Pacific strategies, creating the potential for greater synergies of like-minded allies and partners beyond the region to help balance the scales. As [noted](#) by China scholar David Shambaugh: “[T]he [Indo-Pacific] regional balance is dynamic, and the United States needs to remain comprehensively engaged—or else the balance of influence will default to China.”

According to a State Department strategic planning document that outlines a four-year strategy articulating US priorities in a given country, the [Integrated Country Strategy](#) for the American Institute in Taiwan, states: “Taiwan is one of the most vibrant democracies and economies in the Indo-Pacific region and can help the United States promote democratic institutions, economic standards and norms, and the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region.”

While prior US Indo-Pacific strategies have acknowledged the importance of Taiwan’s NSP, it is time for the United States to leverage the NSP more effectively to further its Indo-Pacific strategy. To be clear, NSP is not a defense-focused regional strategy. But, that does not mean the NSP cannot be strategic in multiple ways in the security realm, especially as it bolsters the economic and people-to-people ties that the CCP seeks to weaponize both through economic dependencies and by engaging in other maligned influence activities.

While it may be challenging to directly build relations between Taipei and NSP countries given their concerns about irking Beijing by having high-level contact with Taipei, there are still effective ways to leverage other countries’ Indo-Pacific Strategies in order to pool resources by utilizing the Global Cooperation and Training Framework and other existing platforms. Trump announced FOIP in 2018 at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference—one of the few international fora in which Taiwan can fully participate (without having to adopt the name “Chinese Taipei”). Accordingly, [Trump could upgrade US participation in the APEC platform](#) or utilize existing platforms like the Economic Prosperity Partnership Dialogue (EPPD) to convene commerce and security-focused diplomats throughout the region with Taiwan to discuss long-term strategies and technological standards.

More directly, the second Trump Administration could also elevate US government participation in the Yushan Forum (玉山論壇)—an international platform held annually to showcase the NSP—by sending a cabinet-level or appropriately senior official to its next

meeting [scheduled for March 2025](#). [2] Such a move would show other countries that the United States values Taiwan’s role in its IPS and would encourage other countries to have their own relations with Taiwan. The last US cabinet official to visit Taiwan was [US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar](#) in 2020 during the COVID pandemic. This will also have the important added benefit of [faithfully implementing the TAIPEI Act](#). More heads of US embassies and officials in the region should talk openly about Taiwan’s NSP and [could assist in bringing foreign delegations to Taiwan](#). On the bilateral front, it can build out from the cooperation with the Development Finance Corporation and USAID, and look for new avenues of cooperation-strengthening through the EPPD, Technology, Trade and Investment Collaboration et al. The role of AIT-Taipei would be instrumental in engaging other like-minded allies and partners.

The international order is in a state of geopolitical flux, but there are historic opportunities as other countries have begun formulating and adopting their own strategy toward the IPS. While China will continue to raise the cost of doing business with Taiwan, it is also up to Taiwan to show why engaging it is a risk worth taking.

Taiwan for its part should fully adhere to the status quo, and assure the international community that it is not forcing the world to recognize its *de jure* independence—but simply to assert that the free world supports its dignified representation and agency to determine its own future free from PRC coercion and threats. Taipei also needs to adequately resource and articulate its own Indo-Pacific strategy that complements IPS by more holistically taking into account the Pacific Islands in a broader strategic framework.

The fact that Taiwan [reopened its Guam office](#) in 2020 is an important first step (Taipei’s 13th office in the United States), but it needs strategic direction and the right personnel (in Honolulu as well) who understand strategy, policy, and the US government and military bureaucracy to effectively connect the two regional strategies together.

While the NSP+ is a promising and necessary step, Taiwan needs its own Indo-Pacific strategy.

The main point: Beginning with President Trump’s *Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy*, Taiwan has become an important element of the United States’ Indo-Pacific strategy. Going into the second Trump Administration, the United States could do more to facilitate greater engagement with Taiwan through Taiwan’s inclusion in

regional frameworks and international organizations, and by encouraging coordination between US and Taiwan officials. Additionally, while the NSP+ is a promising and necessary step, Taiwan needs its own Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy.

[1] The [pick of Michael Anton](#), another Trump 1.0 veteran and former deputy assistant to the President for Strategic Communications on the National Security Council, as the lead thinker as head of the State Department's Policy Planning Office, seems to cut against the grain of the forward-leaning posture on Taiwan reflected by the other senior personnel. Anton appears to view US commitments to Taiwan as part of a broader web of foreign entanglements that is not a vital strategic interest for the United States. See, e.g., <https://thefederalist.com/2021/12/20/why-its-clearly-not-in-americas-interest-to-go-to-war-over-taiwan/>. While the position of the director of policy planning varies with each administration, it remains an independent source of policy analysis for the secretary of state. [emp. added]

[2] The highest-ranking official to attend the Yushan Forum was the principal deputy assistant administrator of EPA in 2018. Other keynotes included a member of Congress and more recently sending the APEC envoy (<https://www.yushanforum.org/>).

Taiwan's Approach to Materialize the Indo-Pacific Strategies: Building on the New Southbound Policy+

By: Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao and Alan H. Yang

Hsin-huang Michael Hsiao is the chairman of the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF), as well as a member of the Global Taiwan Institute's Advisory Board.

Alan Hao Yang is the executive director of the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF).

Introduction

In recent years, the Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a focal point of global geopolitics, with major powers actively seeking to engage as stakeholders in the region's evolving dynamics. Notable examples include Japan's [Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy](#) and [Indo-Pacific Vision](#), the United States' [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#), Canada's [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#), India's [Act East Policy](#) and [Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative \(IPOI\)](#), Korea's

[Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific](#), and ASEAN's own [Indo-Pacific Outlook](#). Additionally, countries located in the southern hemisphere portion of the Indo-Pacific—such as New Zealand and Australia—have been developing their own Indo-Pacific strategies, with Australia recently launching its new [Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040](#). Beyond these regional actors, European powers such as the European Union, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania have also formulated their own Indo-Pacific policies.

Key Objectives

While the specific objectives of these Indo-Pacific policies/strategies vary according to their respective national interests, they nevertheless generally prioritize regional peace and stability, as well as promoting regional development and prosperity. In this context, *regional peace* and *economic prosperity* can be seen as key themes (or common denominators) among the contending Indo-Pacific approaches. These objectives reflect underlying risks or challenges, including the great power struggles and intense competition among major powers, various conflicts and crises arising from traditional security issues over territory or sovereignty, and concerns regarding the purposeful expansion of authoritarianism and irrational actions from authoritarian powers. Although most countries refrain from explicitly naming the source of these risks to avoid targeted criticisms, concerns regarding the uncontrollable behavior of an authoritarian China are increasingly evident.

A clear illustration of this is seen in the recent two-plus-two [US-South Korea](#) dialogues, which highlighted Taiwan and the importance of stability across the Taiwan Strait. Additionally, Japan has not only strengthened its [cooperation with NATO](#) but has also recently advanced a security and [defense partnership agreement](#) with the European Union, reflecting the countries' shared concerns regarding China's heightened [assertive maritime activities](#) and a growing consensus that these activities are a source of insecurity in the region. These trends warrant attention regarding the security of the Taiwan Strait and other Indo-Pacific hotspots, such as [the South China Sea](#).

Core Interests and Future-Oriented Approaches

The above mentioned Indo-Pacific policies/strategies clearly embody a vision for the future, aiming to foster a free, peaceful, and prosperous region. This future is not intended to be dominated by any specific hege-

mon (particularly authoritarian powers), but rather to be shared and co-facilitated by all regional actors and stakeholders. For example, the purpose of Canada's Indo-Pacific policy is to ensure that Canada plays an active role in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific region. This purpose applies to other major powers in the Indo-Pacific region. By examining the major powers' shared goals of regional stability and economic prosperity, it is evident that *values*, *security*, and *economy* are three core interests underpinning their Indo-Pacific policies. While approaches to securing these core interests may differ among countries, they generally encompass at least six distinct practices as pillars for a resilient future of the Indo-Pacific region, inclusive of: (1) strengthening partnerships; (2) trade and economic engagement; (3) security and defense cooperation; (4) climate change and environmental sustainability; (5) promoting democratic values; and (6) cultural and people-to-people links.

Regardless of the specifics, a common thread is an emphasis on deepening shared values—especially democracy, freedom, and the principle of avoiding threats of military force against others. Additionally, enhancing the economic and social resilience of respective countries and the entire region is crucial. Ultimately, ensuring security and economic benefits necessitates strengthening cooperation and partnerships among stakeholders.

Different Features among Indo-Pacific Policies in and outside the Region

The Indo-Pacific countries located within the “general admission floor section” have developed relatively concrete Indo-Pacific policies, featuring clear action plans and initiatives. For instance, [Korea's Indo-Pacific policy](#) places significant emphasis on specific objectives and methods related to denuclearization, counter-terrorism, comprehensive security, and economic security cooperation network. This focus undeniably reflects Seoul's priority of ensuring national security, particularly against military threats from North Korea and its economic advantages.

Moreover, [Japan's new plan](#) for a *Free and Open Indo-Pacific* is built on four pillars: (1) the principles of peace and prosperity; (2) addressing challenges in an Indo-Pacific way; (3) multi-layered connectivity; and (4) expanded efforts for security and the open use of the “sea” and the “air” spaces of the region. Meanwhile, [India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative \(IPOI\)](#) clearly outlines seven pillars, highlighting key areas from the perspective of India as a maritime power, including: (1)

maritime security; (2) economic cooperation; (3) sustainable development; (4) disaster risk reduction; (5) scientific research and development; (6) cultural cooperation and enhancing people-to-people ties; and (7) capacity building.

In contrast, European countries, despite positioning themselves as stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific, face limitations due to their geographic distance from the region. Instead, their Indo-Pacific policies often center on calls for cooperation, and they structure their approaches around collaborative appeals. These include *The European Union Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* and *The Czech Republic's Strategy for Cooperation with the Indo-Pacific*. The [EU strategy](#) emphasizes building a strong foundation for mutually beneficial relationships and enhancing engagement, highlighting the importance of the Indian Ocean as Europe's gateway to the Indo-Pacific and supporting ASEAN's central role. It also identifies seven priority areas for collaborative goals: (1) sustainable and inclusive prosperity; (2) green transition; (3) maritime governance; (4) digital governance and partnerships; (5) connectivity; (6) security and defense; and (7) human security.

Similarly, the [Czech Republic's strategy](#) encompasses priority areas such as: (1) focusing on bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation in trade and investment; (2) strengthening security and defense collaboration with Indo-Pacific nations; (3) promoting democratic values and human rights protection in addressing common threats; (4) fostering technological exchange and innovation, particularly in high-tech sectors, green technology, and the digital economy; (5) collaboration on climate change and sustainable development; and (6) cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Moreover, the Czech strategy emphasizes that the Indo-Pacific is “closer than we think,” revealing that Europe's interests as a stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific region are not as distant as they may seem.

Taiwan's Practices

The New Southbound Policy

Since 2016, President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) *New Southbound Policy* (NSP, 新南向政策) has served as Taiwan's [regional strategy for Asia](#), and is positioned [at the core of Taiwan's own Indo-Pacific policy](#). Over the past eight years, the NSP has highlighted Taiwan's strengths and contribution to the region in various sectors—including economic and industrial connections,

education, public health and medical care, and agriculture—which have been fostered by flagship programs led by key ministries (public sector), strengthened by Taiwanese business/production networks in the region (private sector), and promoted via collaboration among civil society organizations/NGOs (people sector)—all together forging a multifaceted and cross-sectoral partnership. Through bi-directional exchanges and cooperation through [the P-P-P-P synergetic approach](#), Taiwan has deepened trust and partnerships with neighboring countries. These efforts, accumulated over the past eight years, have successfully guided Taiwan to navigate through geopolitical crises and global changes, allowing the international community to gain a renewed understanding of Taiwan.

Taiwan’s “people-centered” NSP has emerged as a proactive approach in response to global challenges such as the US-China rivalry, supply chain challenges, and, especially, the COVID-19 pandemic. With the government leading and civil society supporting, the results of the NSP’s implementation [have been significant](#) during Tsai’s presidency. Taiwanese businesses have profited outside of China in various NSP partner countries, and civil society has enhanced mutual understanding and exchanges with more like-minded partners in the region, fulfilling the proactive goals of the NSP to generate benefits and foster decent relationships.

Current international consensus has recognized that completely decoupling from the Chinese economy is not a short-term endeavor. It requires the pragmatic implementation of various “de-risking” measures. While de-risking cannot be achieved overnight, it is a crucial global restructuring process that necessitates time for preparation. However, it must begin now, or else the risks and crises associated with China will never be mitigated or well-managed. Since its beginning in Tsai’s presidency, Taiwan’s NSP has served as a pragmatic means for economic and political de-risking against China—while actively promoting multifaceted connectivity to build solid friendships and partnerships with the [16 NSP partner countries](#) in the Indo-Pacific region, and eight priority countries in particular (Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, India and Australia).

From NSP to NSP+

Since taking office in May of 2024, President Lai Ching-te (賴清德) has approached foreign relations with caution and composure. He has constantly emphasized the significance of “value-based diplomacy” for

Taiwan, summarizing its core elements with the acronym “[DPP](#),” which stands for “democracy,” “peace,” and “prosperity.” We believe that this newly proposed *value-based diplomacy*—or “[Shin-Lai Diplomacy](#)” (“reliable diplomacy”)—has three characteristics:

- First, it deepens cooperation with like-minded partner countries—reinforcing existing relationships with the United States, Japan, Europe, and South-east Asia/South Asia/Australia and New Zealand—based on shared values and common interests.
- Second, it strives for active engagement from “diplomatic allies” to “prosperous allies”—particularly through the initiatives and funds proposed by Minister of Foreign Affairs Lin Chia-lung (林佳龍) under his “[comprehensive diplomacy](#)” concept, providing innovative solutions to meet the development needs of allies.
- Third, in response to the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific, President Lai will undoubtedly continue and innovate the NSP.

President Lai has repeatedly stated his commitment to [extending](#) the NSP—which, based on eight years of effort, has achieved commendable results in addressing the challenges in the Indo-Pacific. He agrees with promoting an innovative “enhanced *New Southbound Policy*,” which could be referred to directly as “[New Southbound Policy+](#).”

We propose that this “+” should align with President Lai’s core goals of value-based diplomacy, further strengthening the existing DPP framework by focusing on “development,” “people-centered (initiatives),” and fostering “partnerships.” Beyond continuing the foundation of past successes, President Lai’s “NSP+” is expected to further advance Taiwan’s indispensable role in global trade.

Upon careful review, these advantages and achievements include government priorities such as high-tech supply chain security and innovative digital solutions, public health and medical services, and resilience and disaster preparedness. Additionally, the Lai Administration’s recent emphasis on “economic and technological diplomacy” will apply simultaneously to like-minded countries under the NSP. Furthermore, civil society and NGOs can also take the lead in materializing the “NSP+” framework: by expanding regional think tank dialogues and cooperation, establishing Taiwan as an NGO training center, and nurturing a new generation of Asian young talents.

For many years, the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF, 財團法人臺灣亞洲交流基金會) has served as a think tank for Taiwan's NSP. We believe that President Lai's "NSP+" can better build on the solid foundation of previous successes while introducing bold and innovative breakthroughs. These could be structured into six [new corridors/strategies](#) for the NSP+, including three already instrumentalized and shouldered by the government: the "NSP Semiconductor and Digital Technology Corridor," which focuses on providing innovative solutions and building resilient supply chains; the expansion of the existing one-country multi-center (OCMC) health program into a "NSP Health Corridor;" and the establishment of an "NSP Resilience Corridor" with the purpose of enhancing disaster preparedness and regional resilience.

On the non-governmental front, another three corridors could be materialized and led by civil society organizations. These efforts would be: (1) expanding regional think tank dialogue and cooperation, in order to craft an "NSP Think Tank Corridor;" (2) establishing Taiwan as an NGO training center through an "NSP NGO Corridor;" and (3) nurturing new generations of Asian talent through an "NSP Youth Corridor." The content of these six "NSP+" corridors/strategies aligns with the aforementioned two DPP values.

Furthermore, the "NSP+" will further demonstrate to the international community that "Taiwan can not only help but is also more than willing to lead." It will also aid in implementing "value-based diplomacy" and enrich President Lai's vision of building up a global Taiwan. Therefore, the Indo-Pacific policy emphasized and practiced through the "*New Southbound Policy+*" aims not just to establish narrowly-defined supply chains for semiconductor chips, but also to craft more interdependent survival chains in other sectors.

Looking Ahead

We argue that Taiwan's approach to the Indo-Pacific policy is a responsive strategy rather than a brand new grand strategy. This policy should emphasize Taiwan's indispensability across the globe, and highlight coordination with other Indo-Pacific policy initiatives. We contend that Taiwan's Indo-Pacific policy is not entirely new: it builds upon the NSP. With that, we advocate the following features:

- First, in response to the increasingly intricate landscape of Indo-Pacific policies, Taiwan needs to engage with like-minded partners through six corridors that connect and respond to their Indo-Pacific

policies/strategies. These corridors highlight the unique features of Taiwan's contributions, emphasizing active leadership and inspiration from civil society rather than a sole focus on government programs. A stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific region must be open and free, grounded in robust partnerships and transnational connectivity among civil societies.

- Second, Taiwan's Indo-Pacific stance will individually emphasize a people-centered and values-based diplomacy, highlighting inclusive development agendas. The NSP+ aims to reinvigorate the interdependent survival chain through the instrumentalization of the value chains, rather than narrowly concentrating on a self-interest-driven semiconductor supply chain.
- Third, cooperation and partnerships should be and will be the key. While some powers' Indo-Pacific policies/strategies focus on collaborative policies, the majority involve international cooperation and regional partnerships on specific issues. Likewise, the international community must recognize that an inclusive international cooperative framework involving Taiwan is healthy, resilient and constructive, and this should be a key priority of Indo-Pacific policies for all.

The NSP/NSP+ has been the core of Taiwan's Indo-Pacific strategy, and it has effectively responded to the central values, objectives and priorities of the world's existing Indo-Pacific strategies with a substantive framework—one built upon Taiwan's strengths and values to create a more resilient and inclusive future for the region.

The main point: The *New Southbound Policy*, which was initiated under the Tsai Administration and has continued under the Lai Administration, is a key component of Taiwan's Indo-Pacific policies. This should be upgraded into a *New Southbound Policy +*, which would add three new policy "corridors": expanding regional think tank dialogue and cooperation, in order to craft an "NSP Think Tank Corridor;" (2) establishing Taiwan as an NGO training center through an "NSP NGO Corridor;" and (3) nurturing new generations of Asian talent through an "NSP Youth Corridor."

Strategic Convergence in the Indo-Pacific: South Korea's *Indo-Pacific Strategy* Meets Taiwan's *New Southbound Policy*

By: Seong-Hyon Lee

Seong-Hyon Lee, PhD, is a senior fellow at the George H. W. Bush Foundation for US-China Relations and an associate at the Harvard University Asia Center.

“The Republic of Korea is an Indo-Pacific nation. Our national interests are directly tied to the stability and prosperity in the region,” reads the opening sentence of [South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy](#). South Korea's *Indo-Pacific Strategy* explicitly integrates the Taiwan Strait into its vision for a “free, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.” This inclusion underscores Seoul's recognition of Taiwan's critical role in regional stability and security. Introduced in December 2022 under President Yoon Suk Yeol (尹錫悅), the strategy represents a significant shift from earlier foreign policy priorities, which largely focused on inter-Korean relations. The deepening US-South Korea alliance, [upgraded](#) in 2022 to a “global comprehensive strategic alliance” (全球全面戰略合作夥伴關係), further reflects this broader strategic alignment. Concurrently, Taiwan's *New Southbound Policy* (NSP, 新南向政策) complements these regional dynamics by fostering closer ties with Southeast Asia and beyond.

South Korea's Indo-Pacific framework, officially titled the [“Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region,”](#) marks the country's first comprehensive regional strategy. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the strategy demonstrates South Korea's commitment to expanding its diplomatic outreach and enhancing its global contributions in line with its elevated international status. Built on three core principles—inclusiveness, trust, and reciprocity—the strategy reflects Seoul's commitment to upholding a rules-based international order. It emphasizes cooperation with like-minded nations to address critical challenges in the region.

Within this strategic context, Taiwan plays a pivotal role. Its strategic location and economic importance, particularly as a global hub for supply chains and semiconductor manufacturing, render it indispensable to regional stability. South Korea's *Indo-Pacific Strategy* explicitly recognizes Taiwan as a key partner for cooperation, stating that it [“reaffirms the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait for the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and for the secu-](#)

[rity and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.”](#)

Taiwan's NSP, introduced in September 2016 under former President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), seeks to deepen the island's diplomatic and economic partnerships with 18 countries across Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Australasia. This policy reflects Taiwan's strategic objective of reducing economic dependence on China while enhancing its global engagement. The NSP emphasizes economic, cultural, and strategic collaboration, with trade and investment as primary areas of focus. Between 2016 and 2022, [bilateral trade between Taiwan and NSP nations grew by approximately 88.2 percent](#), underscoring the policy's economic impact.

Beyond economic issues, the NSP also serves as a strategic component of Taiwan's broader Indo-Pacific engagement. It positions Taiwan as an active regional participant amid escalating tensions with China, enabling the island to cultivate meaningful relationships without directly provoking Beijing. This nuanced approach reflects Taiwan's ability to balance geopolitical challenges while contributing to regional stability. Together, South Korea's *Indo-Pacific Strategy* and Taiwan's NSP illustrate complementary efforts to navigate an increasingly complex regional environment. Both strategies underscore the importance of cooperation, shared values, and economic resilience in securing a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Taiwan's New Southbound Policy and South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy: Opportunities for Collaboration

Taiwan's *New Southbound Policy* and South Korea's *Indo-Pacific Strategy* converge on strategic objectives, including promoting regional cooperation and economic integration. Both initiatives aim to diversify economic partnerships and to reduce reliance on China by fostering stronger ties with Southeast Asian nations. This shared vision highlights opportunities for collaboration in areas such as trade, technology, education, and regional infrastructure projects, contributing to greater economic resilience for both Taiwan and South Korea.

Maritime security is another critical area of convergence, with both approaches emphasizing the importance of freedom of navigation and adherence to international maritime law. These shared priorities underscore a mutual commitment to maintaining stability and openness in the Indo-Pacific region.

South Korea's *Indo-Pacific strategy* [emphasizes expanding economic security](#), with a particular focus on supply chain resilience and high-tech industries.

The semiconductor sector, in particular, stands out as a promising area for collaboration, given that both Taiwan and South Korea hold leading positions in the global market. Despite a history of competition in the semiconductor industry, Taiwan and South Korea are increasingly finding common ground amid shifting geopolitical dynamics. Joint research and development initiatives could capitalize on their complementary strengths—such as Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company’s (TSMC, 台灣積體電路製造股份有限公司) leadership in advanced node production and Samsung’s pioneering advancements in Gate-All-Around (GAA) transistor architecture. Currently, [Samsung and TSMC are collaborating on the development of High Bandwidth Memory 4 \(HBM4\)](#), a bufferless version of GAA. These partnerships hold the potential to drive innovation, facilitate technology exchange, and expand market opportunities for both parties.

In addition to these high-tech collaborations, potential cooperation between South Korea, Taiwan, and other partners in the Indo-Pacific region offers valuable opportunities to enhance regional stability while managing sensitivities with China. While directly incorporating Taiwan into the ROK-US-Japan trilateral security framework could trigger a strong reaction from Beijing, indirect forms of engagement provide practical alternatives. For instance, the trilateral partners could establish mechanisms to share non-sensitive maritime and air traffic data with Taiwan’s coast guard and civil aviation authorities to improve regional transportation safety. Additionally, Taiwan could be invited as an observer to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercises. The approach is particularly relevant, given [Taiwan’s proven expertise in disaster response and management](#).

In the area of development assistance, South Korea and Taiwan, despite the absence of formal diplomatic relations, could align their efforts in Southeast Asia and the Pacific to achieve complementary objectives. Trilateral collaborations involving South Korea, the United States, or Japan could incorporate Taiwanese NGOs or companies as implementing partners. Such arrangements would allow for effective multilateral engagement while circumventing the limitations of direct bilateral coordination. These initiatives could strengthen developmental outcomes in strategically significant regions, advancing mutual goals without provoking unnecessary diplomatic friction.

Cultural and academic exchanges offer a promising avenue for strengthening ties between South Korea and

Taiwan. Building on their robust people-to-people connections, the two sides could explore digital partnerships in key sectors such as e-commerce, fintech, and smart cities. This collaboration could be modeled after South Korea’s existing digital partnership with Singapore. The “Korea-Singapore Digital Partnership” serves as an excellent template for such an initiative. This partnership, highlighted in the *2023 Progress Report of the ROK’s Indo-Pacific Strategy*, represents South Korea’s first bilateral digital trade agreement. By adapting this model to the South Korea-Taiwan relationship, both sides could leverage their technological strengths and foster innovation in the digital realm. Such a partnership would not only deepen economic ties but also promote knowledge sharing and cultural understanding between South Korea and Taiwan.

These initiatives could be facilitated through industry associations, avoiding direct government involvement. Furthermore, the strong existing base of tourism and student exchanges could be expanded through enhanced youth programs led by universities or cultural institutions. By prioritizing indirect security cooperation, complementary development strategies, and enriched cultural exchanges, South Korea and Taiwan can foster a mutually beneficial partnership that bolsters regional security and prosperity while managing the complexities of their geopolitical context.

South Korea’s Evolving Stance on Taiwan

South Korea’s diplomatic position on Taiwan is shaped by a combination of economic and security imperatives. Taiwan ranks as South Korea’s [6th largest export destination](#), and [over 90 percent of South Korea’s maritime trade](#) relies on routes passing through the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. The economic stakes of a potential conflict involving Taiwan are substantial, with projections indicating that South Korea’s gross domestic product (GDP) [could decline by as much as 23.3 percent](#) in such a scenario.

From a security perspective, South Korea views Taiwan’s stability as closely tied to its own. President Yoon underscored this by stating, “[The Taiwan issue is not simply an issue between China and Taiwan but, like the issue of North Korea, it is a global issue.](#)” This statement reflects South Korea’s recognition of the interconnected nature of regional security challenges and its broader commitment to maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific.

A national [public opinion survey in South Korea](#) in 2023 acknowledges the grave implications of a conflict

over Taiwan, particularly regarding national security and the potential actions of North Korea. A vast majority—89.15 percent—believes that a Chinese attack on Taiwan would pose serious threats to South Korea, while 85.85 percent express similar concerns about US non-involvement in Taiwan’s defense. Many South Koreans fear that such a conflict could embolden North Korea to exploit the situation, heightening tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

The same national survey revealed divided views on South Korea’s potential role in supporting Taiwan. While 34.39 percent supported providing military assistance in the event of a Chinese attack, a larger percentage—45.21 percent—favored imposing economic sanctions on China. This preference for economic measures likely stems from the risks of retaliation by China, South Korea’s largest trading partner.

The survey also highlighted stark political divisions. Supporters of the center-right People Power Party (PPP), aligned with President Yoon, were more inclined to support military actions, with 54.35 percent in favor. By contrast, only 27.03 percent of those aligned with the center-left Democratic Party (DP) expressed similar support. These differences underscore the polarization within South Korea regarding its approach to Taiwan. While public support for aiding Taiwan against Chinese aggression is growing, significant apprehension remains over direct military involvement. Many South Koreans advocate for limited roles, such as rear-area support, rather than direct combat participation.

South Korea’s evolving stance on Taiwan demonstrates a cautious yet proactive approach to addressing regional security challenges. By aligning economic and security interests with broader Indo-Pacific strategies, Seoul has signaled its intention to contribute to regional stability while managing the delicate balance between maintaining ties with China and upholding its commitments to allies.

Looking Ahead: Prospect for South Korea’s Indo-Pacific Strategy and South Korea’s Taiwan Policy

Taiwan holds a pivotal role in South Korea’s *Indo-Pacific Strategy*, serving as both an economic and strategic partner in addressing shared regional challenges. Opportunities for deeper collaboration include advancing regional connectivity, resource sharing, and talent exchange. By fostering economic ties independent of China’s influence, South Korea and Taiwan can strategically enhance their partnership. Both nations should prioritize exploring channels for enhanced commu-

nication and collaboration on mutual interests while carefully managing potential diplomatic complexities. Joint economic initiatives that emphasize interdependence could further demonstrate commitments to regional stability and mutual growth.

South Korea’s approach to Taiwan, while less explicit than Japan’s, marks a significant shift from the policies of previous administrations. Japan’s engagement with Taiwan is partly shaped by its colonial history, whereas South Korea’s stance is primarily driven by concerns over regional stability and economic interests. The inclusion of Taiwan in South Korea’s *Indo-Pacific Strategy* underscores an evolving recognition of the island’s strategic importance and reflects Seoul’s ambition to take on a more proactive role in regional security dynamics.

South Korea’s *Indo-Pacific Strategy* also aligns closely with US priorities. During the May 2022 summit with US President Joseph Biden, President Yoon [committed to developing South Korea’s own Indo-Pacific framework](#) in response to US initiatives. By December 2022, South Korea unveiled its strategy, reflecting a deliberate pivot to the “Indo-Pacific” terminology, emphasizing engagement with Southeast and South Asia. This strategic alignment underscores Seoul’s acknowledgment of the region’s importance within the US-China rivalry and positions South Korea’s efforts within the broader US-led framework, including its commitment to Taiwan. The strategy further reflects a nuanced stance on China, identifying Beijing as both “a key partner” () and a potential security challenge. This dual approach highlights Seoul’s effort to navigate a complex regional landscape.

A second Trump Administration’s foreign policy is likely to introduce new complexities into regional strategic calculations—emphasizing “America First” foreign policy, transactional relationships with allies, and creating greater uncertainty across the Indo-Pacific. The prospect of Trump’s return to the White House has already heightened concerns among US allies about the unpredictability of American foreign policy. President-elect Trump’s tendency to blur the lines between allies and adversaries has reignited discussions on hedging strategies amid the intensifying US-China rivalry. Notably, Trump’s reelection positions the United States—not China—as the dominant external force influencing South Korea’s stance on Taiwan.

President Yoon’s rhetoric has also evolved in response to Trump’s victory, signaling a more balanced approach. Yoon recently remarked that South Korea’s re-

relationships with the United States and China are [not about “choosing sides,”](#) but about engaging constructively with both powers. This shift has led some South Korean media to [speculate](#) whether Yoon is transitioning from a values-based foreign policy to a more pragmatic stance.

The Indo-Pacific region is undergoing a profound transformation, shaped by strategic realignments and emerging economic partnerships. China’s expanding influence and the fluidity of US foreign policy are driving this evolution. Within this context, the deepening relationship between South Korea and Taiwan exemplifies the region’s delicate balance between competition and cooperation, offering a glimpse into the shifting dynamics of an increasingly complex geopolitical landscape.

The main point: South Korea’s *Indo-Pacific Strategy* and Taiwan’s *New Southbound Policy* reflect complementary efforts to navigate regional security challenges and economic diversification—emphasizing shared values, economic resilience, and strategic cooperation in the rapidly evolving Indo-Pacific landscape.

Private: Too Small to Lead, Too Big to Ignore?: Poland and Its Indo-Pacific Strategy in the Making

By: Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis

Dr. Antonina Luszczkiewicz-Mendis is an assistant professor at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, a research fellow of the Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS) in Bratislava, Slovakia, and as an associate fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science.

Since the [adoption](#) of the *EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* by the European Union in 2021, several member-states have also published their own strategy documents. However, some could easily argue that Central and Eastern European (CEE) states—such as Poland—are too small, and their global impact is too limited, to design their Indo-Pacific strategies singlehandedly.

Nonetheless, Poland is the fifth most populous member of the EU and its sixth largest economy. Additionally, two other neighboring countries of Poland, [Czechia](#) and [Lithuania](#), published their own Indo-Pacific strategy documents in 2022 and 2023. In this light, why has

Warsaw not yet produced its own Indo-Pacific strategy? And, if Poland were to formulate its own policy, what could it include—especially with regard to China (People’s Republic of China, PRC) and Taiwan (Republic of China, ROC)?

EU and NATO Indo-Pacific Strategies—and What They Mean for Poland

As a member of the EU since 2004, Poland is naturally expected to follow the guidelines set out by Brussels. The most important document to date, the *EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* of September 2021, [described](#) India and Japan as the EU’s “connectivity partners” and highlighted the role of ASEAN. Only then did Brussels recommend increasing collaboration with other partners such as Australia and the Republic of Korea. Moreover, the EU’s priority is to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific. While the EU clarified its [approach](#) to China as non-confrontational, it also declared its readiness to pursue a deep trade and investment relationship with Taiwan.

In October 2021, the [European Parliament Recommendation of 21 October 2021](#) further elaborated on the European Union’s stance on Taiwan. The document encouraged EU members to intensify their political contacts with Taipei—even though they do not have official diplomatic relations. As a follow-up, the EU Parliament concluded in a [Resolution of 28 February 2024](#) that “only Taiwan’s democratically elected government can represent the Taiwanese people on the international stage.” It was an expression of the European Union’s unprecedented support for Taiwan as the European community indirectly [rejected](#) China’s [narratives](#) about *United Nations Resolution 2758* (passed in 1971) and Beijing’s claims that it has the right to speak and act on behalf of the Taiwanese people.

The Indo-Pacific strategy of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), of which Poland has been a member since 1999, is of equal importance to Warsaw. The key takeaways of this strategy were included in the *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept* adopted in June at the NATO Summit in Madrid. The document [underscores](#) that China’s ambitions and coercive policies pose a challenge to EU interests, security, and values. It is also straightforward about the threat of China’s “malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation,” which aim to “subvert the rules-based international order, including in the space, cyber and maritime domains.” During the first debate dedicated to Taiwan in September 2022, NATO openly [recognized](#) the rising threat of China to the

democratic island-nation.

Notwithstanding, to what extent can a middle power like Poland actually follow these guidelines? And, could Warsaw develop its own Indo-Pacific strategy like some other EU member-states?

China: The Elephant in the Room

In recent years, China has become a somewhat puzzling case for Polish policymakers. On the one hand, there is a common [conviction](#) that Beijing cannot be simply ignored, and that Poland should not antagonize it. The example of neighboring Lithuania, which has experienced severe retaliations from China after opening the *Taiwanese* Representative Office—instead of a *Taipei* Representative Office—in Vilnius, surely did not go unnoticed in Warsaw.

On the other hand, trade relations with China are highly unfavorable to Poland. Whereas the level of trade has been growing in absolute numbers, Poland has been [suffering](#) from one of the world's largest trade deficits with China. Moreover, it appears that the Polish connection to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, formerly known as “One Belt, One Road,” 一帶一路), which Poland was one of the first European countries to [join](#), went off half-cocked and did not fulfill Polish people's expectations. Finally, the ongoing foreign capital [exodus](#) from China is another source of discouragement for the Polish business community.

The situation got even more complicated in February 2022. Acting as a neutral country and a prospective peace broker, China has been accused of quietly [supporting](#) Russia in its [invasion](#) of Ukraine. Moreover, Beijing has been developing an all-weather friendship with Minsk—most recently cemented by Belarusian accession to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In July 2024, China and Belarus [carried out](#) joint military exercises barely a few kilometers from the Polish border—which also serves as the eastern border of both NATO and the European Union.

Furthermore, Belarus has been responsible for manufacturing a border crisis with Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia since 2021, as it coordinated an influx of immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East who then attempted to illegally cross the border with the EU. However, Bloomberg News recently [claimed](#) that during his official visit to China in June 2024, Polish President Andrzej Duda threatened to block a key Polish border crossing—and, by default, paralyze the main cargo train connection from China to the Europe-

an Union. Bloomberg suggested that Duda's pressure on Beijing did work, as it was later [confirmed](#) that the number of attempted border crossings from Belarus to Poland dropped by 70 percent over one month.

The Taiwan Issue: Will Poland Follow Czechia and Lithuania?

Poland's national security and territorial integrity depends primarily on the strength of NATO—and the American involvement in global affairs in particular. If negotiations on the future of Ukraine were to take place in the near future, Warsaw's desired endgame would be to keep Russian troops as far away as possible from the Polish borders and to secure Ukrainian sovereignty and democratic governance.

From a global perspective, the preservation of the current liberal world order, including peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, is what allows Poland to [thrive](#). It would be a very challenging situation for Poland if its powerful American ally became involved in yet another crisis in addition to those in Ukraine and the Middle East—or if Washington was to withdraw from supporting Kyiv without giving security guarantees for the entire CEE region.

It is no coincidence that Czechia and Lithuania published their own Indo-Pacific strategy documents after their pro-Taiwanese shift and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The first factor is reflected in the above-mentioned documents—which, when contrasted with other Indo-Pacific agendas published across Europe, seem more eager to openly [describe](#) Taiwan as a partner. Lithuania, living in the shadow of Russia, might have additionally wanted to send a crystal clear—though indirect—message to Moscow that it would not [succumb](#) to the autocratic practices of its giant neighbor.

Although the “China factor” is always to be considered, Taiwan has a lot to offer to Poland in various dimensions. Despite the absence of official diplomatic relations, Poland and Taiwan have been developing a host of mutual connections between academic and scientific communities, including in the field of [semi-conductors](#). In addition, Poland has also benefited from Taiwan's health diplomacy as it received a [donation](#) of 500,000 masks (later raised to one million) in April 2020 when the demand for this item sky-rocketed worldwide. As a gesture of solidarity, Poland later [donated](#) 400,000 doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to Taiwan, becoming the third largest vaccine donor to the ROC at that time. Presumably under Chinese pressure, two days after the Polish donation arrived in

Taiwan, then-Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau [clarified](#) that Poland recognizes a “One China Policy” and does not maintain diplomatic relations with Taipei.

This episode illustrates Poland’s attempts to carefully navigate the dangerous waters of diplomacy. However, dark clouds seem to be now accumulating over both NATO and the EU, which may have a direct—and decisive—impact on Warsaw.

Poland amidst the Turbulence in NATO and the EU

Former President Donald Trump’s upcoming return to the White House in January 2025 has prompted many observers to question the US commitment to NATO and its support for Ukraine. Trump famously [re-marked](#) that if NATO allies failed to meet their defense spending obligations, he will “encourage” Russia “to do whatever the hell they want.” However, Poland has already passed this test with flying colors—[spending](#) more than 4 percent of its GDP (USD \$35 billion) on defense. In 2024, this made Poland the alliance’s highest spender in relative GDP terms, and the fifth highest contributor in absolute terms.

At the same time, the EU has been undergoing an internal crisis. One of the most serious challenges has been the lack of unanimity to support Ukraine. The future of the European community appears to be a little hazy in light of Germany’s lukewarm approach toward military support for Ukraine, and unconcealed admiration for Russia and China among the leaders of Hungary and (more recently) Slovakia.

Against this backdrop, Warsaw has begun to look for alternatives. Most recently, Poland participated as a special guest in a Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) summit. The [photographs](#) of Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson rowing a boat with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk went viral. On the serious side, the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) and the Nordic states (including Sweden and Finland, which have recently joined NATO) have all been highly concerned about Russia’s growing involvement in the Baltic Sea. The NB8 may be a significant group that could voice a common opinion not only concerning the Russian threat, but also about the Taiwan issue and the China challenge. The latter has been reflected in the mysterious yet most likely deliberate cutting of two undersea cables in the Baltic Sea by a Chinese ship in mid-November. However, the motives behind this incident remain unclear, as China has [denied](#) its role in a reported “sabotage.”

Does Poland Really Need Its Own Indo-Pacific Strategy?

In the ensuing years, the dynamics of NATO under the leadership of President Trump and the internal commotion within the EU will surely impact on Poland’s role in Europe and transatlantic relations—and, possibly, policy towards the Indo-Pacific region, as well. In January 2025, Poland will assume the six-month presidency of the Council of the European Union, which might not only give it a stronger voice on the international stage, but also an additional push for expanding its own foreign policy agenda.

In the first place, however, Poland seems to be occupied with its own internal dynamics as it is preparing for the presidential election that is scheduled to take place in May 2025. For the centrist Civic Platform, in power for a year now, it is a “to be or not to be” question: a victory by the conservative Law and Justice Party candidate could continue the practices of current President Duda: vetoing all key legislation, and obstructing the appointments of ambassadors. However, a victory by the Civic Platform candidate in the election could increase the confidence of the Polish leadership to formulate strategies beyond Europe and transatlantic relations.

Indeed, there are a host of issues in the Indo-Pacific region that the Polish government may wish to address, irrespective of the broader NATO and EU frameworks. For example, Warsaw could learn from and share its experiences with like-minded partners, such as Japan, in the field of cybersecurity. After all, Poland itself has become a target of cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns conducted mainly by Russia and Belarus. Second, Poland could make some additional efforts to attract more tourists—and, given the declining birth-rate, students from the Indo-Pacific region. Finally, the Polish authorities could outline a long term strategy with regard to its [diplomatic posts](#). In addition to supporting the currently understaffed diplomatic offices abroad, Warsaw could plan opening new ones, as needed—for example, in countries like Sri Lanka, where the number of Polish tourists has been dynamically [increasing](#).

Conclusion

Without a doubt, Poland is too small to become a key player in the Indo-Pacific region, in either the military or economic domains. However, Poland is definitely big enough to play a significant role in developing multi-platform partnerships with like-minded coun-

tries. With its increasing position on the international stage, Poland may finally consider clarifying its goals in the Indo-Pacific—not just to implement the Indo-Pacific strategies of the European Union and NATO, but also to promote its own national policy initiatives.

The main point: Poland has been an increasingly important and influential member of the European Union and NATO—both because of its economic growth, and its involvement in supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression. Unlike neighboring Czechia and Lithuania, Poland has not yet published its own Indo-Pacific strategy document. However, Poland might consider clarifying its national priorities in the Indo-Pacific with regard to trade, security, and people-to-people exchanges in the near future. Despite being a middle power, Poland can significantly contribute to the protection of the liberal world order—which includes strengthening cooperation with like-minded democratic countries, as well as keeping peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

Strengthening Transregional Resilience and Sustainability: Compatibilities in Germany's Indo-Pacific Guidelines and Taiwan's New Southbound Policy

By: Sandra Meerwein

Sandra Meerwein is a PhD candidate, lecturer and research assistant for Transnational American Studies at the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz. Her research focuses on maritime security and ocean governance in the Indo-Pacific at the intersection of geostrategic, economic, and socio-ecological concerns.

Since the implementation of Germany's [Indo-Pacific Guidelines](#) (hereafter "Guidelines") in 2020, the Federal Government has increased its efforts to define the nation's position in and toward the region more explicitly. Whereas this process is still a work in progress, the formulation of Germany's [Strategy on China](#) and a [National Security Strategy](#) (NSS) in 2023 provided valuable insights into the position and direction Berlin is taking. As the *Guidelines* point out, the Indo-Pacific is a significant region for Germany's economic interests, and the assurance of open maritime trade routes under principles of the rules-based international order is essential in order to guarantee the resilience of supply chains and stable trade relations with regional partners. The interests and goals of Berlin's agenda

thereby align with the European Union's approaches to the region. Overall, Germany's increasing attention toward the Indo-Pacific has created the potential for deepening economic and diplomatic relations with regional partners—while also raising questions about Berlin's position and approaches toward regional challenges that impact its overall economic and strategic interests, like China's rising assertiveness in the South China Sea.

In its orientation toward the Indo-Pacific, Taiwan and Germany's economic and diplomatic ties have visibly deepened—mostly in the areas of people-to-people exchanges, as well as trade and investment. The potential for enhanced relations between Germany and Taiwan is evident in the many overlaps of the principles and interests defined in Germany's *Indo-Pacific Guidelines* and Taiwan's [New Southbound Policy \(NSP, 新南向政策\)](#). They indicate various opportunities for expanded cooperation and collaboration: specifically in the fields of trade and investment, research and development (R&D), technology, environmental concerns, and people-to-people exchanges. However, challenges to international law and order both in Europe and Asia, and uncertainty about Germany's future regional responsibilities and capabilities—due both to the outcome of the US presidential elections, and Chancellor Scholz's request for a confidence vote in late 2024—require nuanced and balanced approaches to the enhancement of Taiwan and Germany's relations.

Germany's Indo-Pacific Interests and the Enhancement of Relations with Taiwan

The principles and interests formulated in Germany's *Indo-Pacific Guidelines* complement various points that are outlined in Taiwan's NSP. Initiated under the first Tsai Administration in 2016, the NSP is an initiative to enhance relations with regional neighbors and under aspects of advanced collaboration and connectivity in the areas of [trade, people-to-people exchanges, resource sharing, technology, and services](#). Similar to Germany's *Guidelines*, the NSP thereby emphasizes the diversification and reliability of trade partnerships, stable and secure supply chains, investments in digital transformation and connectivity, as well as innovations of green technology. The overall high compatibility of their regional policies presents a valuable basis for the continuation and enhancement of relations between Taiwan and Germany.

Taiwan's engagement with Germany, as well as the European Union (EU), has [increased remarkably during recent years](#), especially in the economic sector of trade

and investment. The interest in enhancing trade ties with Taiwan is also evident in advancing measures like the establishment of the [EU-Taiwan Trade and Investment Dialogue](#), the first meeting of which was held in June 2022. According to the EU Directorate-General for Trade, the total trade in goods between Taiwan and the European Union [reached a record in 2022 with €84.2 billion](#) (approx. USD \$88.5 billion). Moreover, Axel Limburg, chief representative and executive director of the German Trade Office in Taipei, has stated that [Taiwan offers great opportunities of investment and innovation in its high-tech industries, especially under consideration of high quality and high legal protection](#).

The European Union, Germany, and Taiwan hold significant trade relations in the areas of high-tech goods such as semiconductors and electronic products, and cooperate in areas of green technologies and digitization. In this framework, investments and collaborations in areas of science and technology (S&T) research and development (R&D) play a critical role. The [signing of the first Scientific and Technological Cooperation Arrangement \(STA\)](#) between Taiwan's National Science and Technology Council Minister Tsung-Tsong Wu (吳政忠) and Germany's Federal Minister Bettina Stark-Watzinger on March 21, 2023, stressed mutual interest in advancing their cooperation in S&T—with a focus on semiconductors, hydrogen, batteries, and AI. In addition, in 2023 critical industries like Bosch, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC, 台灣半導體股份有限公司), Infineon, and NXP semiconductors announced their investment [plans to build the joint venture “European Semiconductors Manufacturing Company \(ESMC\) GmbH” in Dresden](#). The €10billion (approx. USD \$ 10.56 billion) project is backed with €5 billion (approx. USD \$5.3 billion) aid by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action—under the approval [of the European Union, under the framework of the European Chips Act—officially started in August 2024, with prospects for beginning production in 2027](#). The project not only presents another significant step to deepen Taiwan and Germany's ties in trade and scientific exchange, but also enhances strategic efforts to strengthen Europe's [resilience structure of supply chains and production, and to enhance access to critical technologies like semiconductors](#).

Regarding supply chain resilience and access to critical technologies, joint investments between Germany, Taiwan, and other European partners aligns with Berlin's overall “de-risking” approach, in terms of strategic

interests in both diplomacy and trade. The enhancement of trade relations with regional partners in the Asia-Pacific like Taiwan—including interregional trade agreements within the framework of EU and ASEAN relations—supports the Federal Government's ambitions for greater economic diversification with the goal [“to increase the resilience of Germany's global supply chains and to \[...\] strengthen sustainable local added value.”](#) This approach is also reflected in Berlin's 2023 NSS and *Strategy on China*, which emphasize the need to apply de-risking strategies in political, economic and social areas in contrast to any pursuits of economic decoupling. Part of such de-risking strategies include cybersecurity concerns and that [“\[c\]ompanies and civil society must enhance their risk awareness, assume responsibility for their cybersecurity and build the necessary capabilities, also with a view to being properly prepared and able to help themselves.”](#) In this regard, enhanced cooperation with Taipei concerning issues of media literacy is especially valuable due to Taiwan's experiences in coping with dis- and misinformation strategies, particularly after [successful deterrence measures by Taiwanese civil society organizations during the presidential election period in 2023](#).

Aside from high-tech investment and cybersecurity, there are further opportunities to strengthen economic, social, and cultural ties in the areas of infrastructure, communication, digitization, education, and tourism. Such fields have the potential to align with general aspects of sustainability and resilience, as outlined in both Germany's *Indo-Pacific Guidelines* and Taiwan's NSP. Moreover, they create the potential for intersectional and collaborative R&D/S&T projects in, for example, sustainable urban planning and legal and ecological protective measures of marine ecosystems—especially among marine biodiversity research centers, such as [Taipei's Biodiversity Research Center](#) (生物多樣性研究中心) or Germany's [Senckenberg Biodiversity and Climate Research Center](#).

Challenges: Uncertainties about Germany's Future Regional Responsibilities in Europe and Asia

Despite the enhancement of economic, socio-cultural, and diplomatic ties between Germany, Taiwan, and the European Union, there are challenges that darken prospects of further cooperation. Developments in the war in Ukraine put growing pressure on Berlin to increase its commitment to regional security matters in accordance with other European partners and NATO. However, [uncertainty about the United States' future commitment to NATO and support of Ukraine after the](#)

[outcome of the 2024 presidential elections](#), as well as the untimely election of a new German government after [Chancellor Scholz's request for a confidence vote in early November 2024](#), leave Germany in a [current state of paralysis](#). These developments entail the risk of a temporary halt in Berlin's growing attention toward Indo-Pacific affairs. Rising regional tensions due to the war in Ukraine generally force European countries to amplify their diplomatic and military focus on European and transatlantic issues. Consequently, this diminishes the capacities of European countries, including Germany, to counter security risks in the Indo-Pacific—such as those resulting from [China's rising assertiveness in the region through economic coercion, disinformation, grey-zone activities, and improving military capabilities](#).

Even though Berlin signaled stronger commitment in the Indo-Pacific in 2024 by deploying the [German Air Force and Navy in the region to participate in multinational exercises in the Indo-Pacific](#) that were meant to strengthen the rules-based international order, the [current status of German military and defense capabilities](#) are insufficient to cover an increasing involvement of Germany in security matters in both Europe and Asia. Although the 2024 [Progress Report](#) of the Federal Government's *Indo-Pacific Guidelines* clearly states "[that the status quo in the Taiwan Strait may only be changed by peaceful means and mutual consent \[and\] Germany is committed to de-escalation](#)," the question remains as to whether Germany has the means to contribute to an effective deterrence of China's coercive actions in the East and South China Seas.

Conclusion

To strengthen their ties in alignment with each other's regional policies, Germany and Taiwan should continue to focus on the advancement of trade investments and collaborative research projects in the fields of green technology, sustainable infrastructures, resilient and sustainable ocean economies, and educational exchanges. Such investments and collaborations have the high potential to attract further support by multinational organizations like the European Union in the framework of investment and funding projects such as the [EU Global Gateway](#). This would also enhance both parties' integration into international efforts to jointly promote sustainable and resilient structures of interregional trade and investment. In this framework, both Germany and Taiwan should continue their strategies of regional diversification by enhancing economic, diplomatic, and socio-cultural ties with Indo-Pacific

partners, especially in Southeast Asia and with Pacific Island nations. Infrastructure projects, R&D collaborations in sustainable technologies and ecological resilience, contributions to policies of sustainable tourism, enhancing people-to-people exchanges, and multinational efforts to share green energy, all create further trust among partners.

At the same time, Germany has to tackle the issues of its lack of military capacities, and to consider more specifically how to react to challenges to the rules-based international order in both Europe and Asia. Whereas the direction of Berlin's regional orientations and responsibilities are currently on halt due to uncertainty about the outcome of Germany's upcoming elections in 2025 and unclear consequences of the 2024 US presidential elections, recent developments of its Indo-Pacific policies suggest continued efforts to commit to the region in strong alignment with the European Union's interests. Taking into account the transregional impact of China's increasing assertiveness and Russia's aggressions, the new Federal Government of 2025 should continue to focus on joint policies in accordance with European and Indo-Pacific partners—like Taiwan, the United States, and Japan—that enhance trade and strengthen diplomatic and military involvement. By means of collective resilience, this direction bolsters the security of important trade and supply chain routes, enhances the potential for regional stability, and creates multilayered resilience in economic, geostrategic, and ecological structures of transregional connectivity.

The main point: Germany's approach to the Indo-Pacific, as formulated in its 2020 *Indo-Pacific Guidelines*, is very compatible with Taiwan's *New Southbound Policy*. This creates opportunities for enhancing relations between the two sides, and for advancing stable structures of transregional resilience and sustainability—specifically in the areas of trade, scientific research and development, and people-to-people exchanges. However, uncertainties about Germany's future regional responsibilities, as affected by domestic politics as well as rising geopolitical competition in both Europe and Asia, could potentially impede approaches to enhanced cooperation between Berlin and Taipei.

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy and Opportunities for Interconnections with Taiwan's New Southbound Policy: Moving Beyond Beijing's Defined Boundaries of Cooperation

Copy

By: Stephen Nagy

Stephen Nagy is a professor at International Christian University (Tokyo), and a senior fellow with the Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada.

Introduction

The Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a focal point of global geopolitical dynamics, characterized by rising economic interdependence and security challenges. It is home to the world's most populated countries—India, China, and Indonesia, in particular—growing middle classes, and a host of traditional and non-traditional security challenges. These traditional security challenges include weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation on the Korean peninsula, the potential for kinetic conflict across the Taiwan Strait, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and military coordination between Russia, China and North Korea. Non-traditional security challenges such as climate change, piracy, human trafficking, disinformation, and cybersecurity add to the region's importance.

To manage these dual challenges and seek opportunity in the Indo-Pacific region, Canada put forth an *Indo-Pacific Strategy* (IPS) in late 2022. [Global Affairs Canada](#) (GAC) asserts that the IPS aims to “seize opportunities in the national interest of Canadians, while defending the values they hold dear, Canada will invest in building capacity to engage with countries across the region, while paying particular attention to Australia, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, China, India, Japan, Pacific Island Countries, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand.”

This overlaps with Taiwan's *New Southbound Policy* (NSP, 新南向政策), which was introduced by then-President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016. According to the [Center of Strategic and International Studies](#) (CSIS), the “NSP is designed to strengthen Taipei's relationships with the ten countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), six states in South Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. The policy aims to leverage Taiwan's cultural, educational, technological, agricultural, and economic assets to enhance Taiwan's regional integration

and promote the broader development of the Indo-Pacific region.”

In this context, Canada sees cooperation with Taiwan as a critical part of its IPS and Taiwan sees cooperation with Canada as an important part of its efforts to strengthen its efforts to preserve its political, economic and security status based on liberal democratic institutions.

Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy: An Overview

Launched in November 2022, Canada's IPS represents a significant shift in its foreign policy, emphasizing a comprehensive approach to engage with the Indo-Pacific region. The strategy outlines [five interconnected objectives](#): promoting peace, resilience, and security; expanding trade, investment, and supply chain resilience; investing in and connecting people; building a sustainable and green future; and positioning Canada as an active and engaged partner in the Indo-Pacific.

The IPS recognizes the importance of Taiwan as a democratic partner and a critical player in regional security and economic frameworks. Taiwan's strategic location in key sea lines of communication (SLOCs) that connect the South China Sea (SCS), the East China Sea (ECS), and the Sea of Japan to the Pacific Ocean; its central position in advanced semi-conductor technology production; and its position in the [First Island Chain](#) make it an essential partner for Canada in achieving its IPS objectives.

Taiwan's New Southbound Policy: Background and Objectives

Taiwan's NSP aims to strengthen Taiwan's economic and cultural ties with countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Australasia, in the face of what the Mainland Affairs Council calls continued [economic coercion from the People's Republic of China \(PRC\)](#). The policy seeks to diversify Taiwan's economic partnerships and reduce its reliance on China, particularly in the face of increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region—including [military drills](#), [grey zone operations](#), and daily [disinformation campaigns](#) and [cyberattacks](#). The NSP encompasses various sectors, including trade, investment, education, and cultural exchanges, and emphasizes people-to-people connections. The NSP aligns with Canada's IPS, as both strategies prioritize economic cooperation, democratic values, and regional stability. The potential for collaboration between Canada and Taiwan under the NSP framework presents significant opportunities for both nations.

Opportunities for Interconnections

One of the most significant opportunities for Canada in engaging with Taiwan's NSP lies in the area of economic collaboration. Taiwan is a vital player in global supply chains, particularly in the semiconductor industry—which is crucial for various sectors, including technology, automotive, and healthcare. Canada can leverage its resources and expertise to enhance trade and investment ties with Taiwan. For instance, in 2023, Canada announced the opening of its first [Indo-Pacific Agriculture and Agri-Food Office in Manila](#), Philippines, which aims to strengthen agricultural ties in the region, including with Taiwan. This initiative aligns with Taiwan's NSP goals of enhancing agricultural cooperation and food security in the region.

Moreover, Canada's emphasis on diversifying its trade relationships can complement Taiwan's efforts to reduce its economic dependence on China. The IPS highlights the importance of expanding trade with Taiwan, which could involve negotiating free trade agreements or enhancing existing trade frameworks. Canada can do more here as G-7 chair, by advocating for Taiwan's inclusion into the Comprehensive and Progressive Transpacific Partnership (CPTPP). As CPTPP chair Canada could champion the enlargement of the CPTPP to include Taiwan by supporting an [CPTPP Dialogue Group](#). This approach would “socialize current and potential members around possible alterations to the existing CPTPP agreement and make recommendations to the Commission on changes.”

Strengthening [people-to-people connections](#) is a key component of both Canada's IPS and Taiwan's NSP. Educational exchanges, cultural diplomacy, and tourism can foster mutual understanding and cooperation between the two nations. Canada has done this by bolstering visa-processing capacities, facilitating travel to and from the region, and strengthening Canada's international student program according to its [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#). Similarly, Taiwan has [established an office in Montréal](#), Quebec, Canada, to promote bilateral exchanges and cooperation. Additionally, Canada's commitment to attracting international students from the Indo-Pacific region, including Taiwan, can enhance educational collaboration. Taiwan has a strong educational system, and partnerships between Canadian and Taiwanese universities can facilitate research collaboration and innovation.

Collaboration on Security Challenges

The security landscape in the Indo-Pacific is increasing-

ly complex, with rising tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Canada's IPS recognizes the need for enhanced security cooperation with regional partners, including Taiwan. This presents an opportunity for Canada to collaborate with Taiwan on security initiatives, such as joint military exercises and intelligence sharing. In 2024, Canada participated in [multinational naval exercises](#) in the Indo-Pacific, which included cooperation with Taiwan's military forces. Such engagements not only strengthen bilateral security ties but also demonstrate Canada's commitment to upholding regional stability and supporting Taiwan's defense capabilities.

Disinformation is also a key concern, and as noted in an Asia-Pacific Foundation commentary on [combatting disinformation](#): “[I]n June 2025, Ottawa has an opportunity to promote a G7 coordinated effort to combat disinformation with fellow G7 members. At the same time, Canada should present the idea of a non-state-level approach to disinformation through the promotion of a consortium of universities and research institutes to collectively pool their resources to combat disinformation.” Such initiatives would complement each other and be inclusive, ensuring that frontline actors like Taiwan and their invaluable experience are also leveraged to mitigate the global scourge of MDM.

Furthermore, Canada should take the opportunity to combat disinformation and make democracies more resilient against MDM by including disinformation as a major part of any joint communique released by the G7. An additional joint communique could be released focusing specifically on disinformation and the weaponization of the social media space—akin to the Hiroshima G7 Summit, when a separate [communique](#) was issued on the theme of economic coercion.

Lastly, as host, Ottawa could use the unique opportunity of the G7 framework to hold a “Combating Disinformation” conference, workshop, and/or seminar in conjunction with the Summit. Experts and scholars could be convened to convey to G7 leaders the trends, dangers, and strategic approaches to combating disinformation. Necessarily, the experts would come from frontline states and political entities facing the dangers of MDM.

Furthermore, Canada's involvement in initiatives aimed at countering cyber threats aligns with Taiwan's NSP focus on enhancing cybersecurity. Collaborative efforts in this area can bolster both nations' resilience against cyberattacks, particularly those attributed to state-sponsored actors.

Challenges to Interconnections

Despite the promising opportunities for collaboration, several challenges may hinder Canada's engagement with Taiwan under the NSP framework: including geopolitical tensions, domestic political considerations, and implementation of Canada's IPS in the backdrop of troubled relations with China and India. In addition, Canada currently faces serious [credibility issues](#) in the region at large due to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's unexplained, [last minute walkout](#) at the 2017 Danang, Vietnam TPP signing agreement—and [dissonance between his progressive ideals](#) and [heterogeneous values](#) in the Indo-Pacific region.

The geopolitical landscape in the Indo-Pacific is fraught with tensions, particularly concerning China's assertiveness. Canada's engagement with Taiwan may provoke backlash from China, which views Taiwan as a breakaway province. This could complicate Canada's diplomatic relations with China, a significant trading partner. The resulting problems could include further [economic sanctions](#), a return to [hostage diplomacy](#), or an intensification of efforts to [interfere into Canadian domestic politics](#). The challenge lies in balancing the need to support Taiwan while managing relations with China, which is crucial for Canada's economic interests.

Domestic political considerations in Canada may also pose challenges to furthering interconnections with Taiwan. [Public opinion](#) on China has shifted significantly in recent years, with increasing skepticism regarding China's intentions and actions. This shift may create a more favorable environment for supporting Taiwan; however, it could also lead to polarized views on Canada's foreign policy direction. The Canadian government must navigate these domestic sentiments while formulating its approach to Taiwan. Ensuring bipartisan support for engagement with Taiwan will be essential for the long-term sustainability of Canada's IPS.

The successful implementation of Canada's IPS is critical for enhancing interconnections with Taiwan. However, the strategy requires significant resources and commitment from various levels of government and civil society. Ensuring that the IPS translates into concrete actions and initiatives will be a challenge, particularly in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment. This implementation is now challenged by frozen relations with India following an ongoing dispute about the [killing of a Sikh activist in Canada](#); growing tensions with China, as Canada has adopted tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles; and most recently, South Korea's domestic politics descending into chaos with President

Yoon Sul-yeol's declaration of martial law on December 4 likely leading to a much less cooperative partner in Seoul.

Moreover, the effectiveness of Canada's engagement with Taiwan will depend on the ability to coordinate efforts across different government departments and agencies. This is challenged by hesitancy within Canada's political leadership to adopt more a Canadian-defined "One-China Policy"—a hesitancy that inculcates more nebulous boundaries as to what, when and how Canada engages with Taiwan while not drawing Beijing's ire.

A cohesive and subtle approach will be necessary to maximize the potential benefits of collaboration under the NSP framework. This can and should take place at the non-state level, and within multilateral and minilateral formulas that treat Taiwan as a [global public good](#). This should and has included highlighting the importance of Taiwan as a global public good in G-7, NATO IP4 and bilateral statements, as well as in Canada's IPS.

Black Swans, Taiwan and the Future of Ottawa-Taipei relations

Liberal democracies around the world including Canada are facing domestic political legitimacy problems. After 9 years in power, the Trudeau government has struggled to bring prosperity to Canada. For example, in writing for the *Financial Times*, [Valentina Romei, William Crofton, and Colby Smith found](#) that "Canada's labour productivity has contracted for 14 of the last 16 quarters and was 1.2 per cent below its pre-pandemic level at the end of the second quarter of 2024." Carolyn Rogers, senior deputy governor at the Bank of Canada, warned in March that weak productivity was an economic "emergency," adding that "over the past four decades, we have actually slipped significantly compared with some other countries."

Moreover, Trudeau's government has been seen to be [weak on China](#), and as having crafted an Indo-Pacific Strategy that [pandered to domestic interests](#) not national interests. This is evidenced by the strong focus within the Canadian IPS on championing diversity, reconciliation, and environmentalism, and PM Justin Trudeau prioritization of a progressive foreign policy approach that puts a "[feminist foreign policy](#)" approach at the center of its efforts to eradicate poverty and support inclusive development.

With an election looming in Canada, there are many

questions about whether a Conservative government will sustain the current IPS, or substantially revise it to be more in line with Canadian national interests rather than interest groups in Canada. Fortunately for Taiwan, the Conservatives are likely to push the boundaries of a Canadian defined “One-China Policy” to promote cooperation and a deepening of comprehensive relations.

As Canada navigates the complexities of its relationship with Taiwan, it must remain committed to supporting Taiwan’s democratic values and sovereignty while balancing its broader geopolitical interests in the Indo-Pacific. The coming years will be crucial in determining the trajectory of Canada-Taiwan relations and their implications for regional stability and prosperity.

The main point: Canada’s *Indo-Pacific Strategy* presents significant opportunities for enhancing interconnections with Taiwan’s New Southbound Policy. Economic collaboration, security cooperation, and people-to-people connections are key areas where both nations can benefit from strengthened ties. However, challenges such as geopolitical tensions, domestic political considerations, and the effective implementation of the IPS must be addressed to realize the full potential of this engagement.