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Advancing Cyber Resilience: Taiwan's Strategic Shift in the Seventh Phase of Its National Cybersecurity Program

By: Eryk Waligora

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In May 2025, Taiwan announced the seventh phase of its National Cybersecurity Development Program (spanning 2025-2028), a four-year blueprint that directs [NTD 8.8 billion \(USD 301 million\) in new resources](#) towards countering intensifying cyber campaigns and safeguarding Taiwan's role in global technology supply chains. This seventh phase sets higher benchmarks for sector-level readiness, expands public-private coordination, and introduces artificial intelligence (AI) tools for early threat detection, signaling Taipei's urgent commitment to modernizing its defenses in response to mounting cyber threats.

Taiwan's [earlier program phases](#), dating back to 2001, concentrated on infrastructure hardening, security audits, and public awareness. These efforts built the foundation for a centralized governance model, but they were often hindered by siloed implementation and limited visibility across agencies. A major milestone in strengthening institutional oversight came with the passage of the [Cybersecurity Management Act](#) in 2018, which established legal obligations for government agencies and critical infrastructure providers to maintain cybersecurity standards. However, even with the Act in place, [challenges persisted](#) due to inconsistent enforcement and limited interagency coordination. Over time, intensifying threats and internal coordination gaps have prompted a move from a reactive defense towards targeted resilience and proactive planning.

A Strategic Shift in National Cybersecurity Planning

Approved by the Executive Yuan (行政院) and coordinated by the Ministry of Digital Affairs (MODA, 數位發展部), the [seventh phase](#) expands the mandate of MODA's Administration for Cyber Security (ACS) and brings more than a dozen ministries under a unified implementation approach. This phase attempts to recalibrate Taiwan's national response based on operational lessons and increased regional vulnerability.

MODA has structured the plan around [four pillars](#): (1) national preparedness, (2) infrastructure risk

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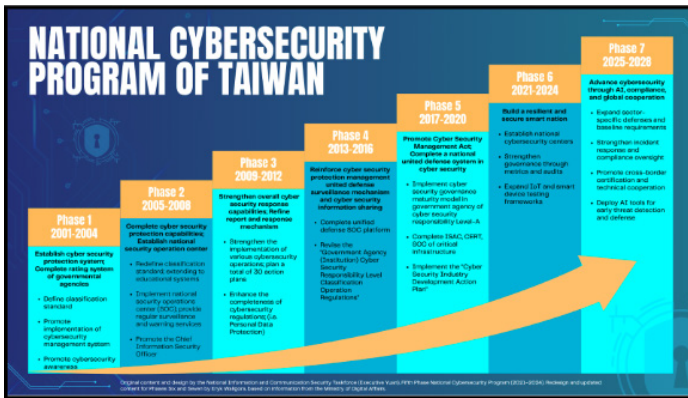


Image: National Cybersecurity Program of Taiwan. (Image Source: Original content and design by the National Information and Communication Security Taskforce (Executive Yuan), Fifth Phase [National Cybersecurity Program \(2021-2024\)](#). Redesign and updated content for Phases [Six](#) and [Seven](#) by Eryk Waligora, based on information from the Ministry of Digital Affairs.)

reduction, (3) cybersecurity industry development, and (4) AI application. Each pillar reflects an area where Taiwan has previously struggled to integrate cyber policy into broader institutional frameworks.

The first pillar centers on building a more distributed approach to national preparedness. For the first time, local governments, public schools, and nonprofit institutions are included as formal participants in Taiwan's national cybersecurity planning. MODA is [funding more](#) than 150 annual scholarships, expanding technical training programs, and establishing certification pipelines to embed cybersecurity talent into Taiwan's wider development agenda. This expansion demonstrates a strategic move toward decentralized risk ownership. It recognizes that cyber resilience requires not only national coordination but also localized capability and accountability across all levels of society.

The second pillar focuses on reducing sector-specific infrastructure risk. MODA and the ACS will issue [tailored baseline security](#) standards and conduct live simulation exercises to test operational readiness. Sectors such as energy, healthcare, and telecommunications remain central to this effort due to their high exposure to cyberattacks and their critical roles in providing essential services. This pillar is a direct response to Taiwan's [longstanding structural weaknesses](#) in inter-agency oversight and uneven adoption of protective measures, which have historically left key sectors vulnerable to disruption.

The third pillar strengthens Taiwan's international competitiveness by aligning its cybersecurity industry with global technical standards. A key initiative is TSMC's collaboration with a leading electronics industry association, SEMI, on the [SEMI E187 standard](#), which establishes minimum cybersecurity requirements for semiconductor equipment suppliers. With TSMC accounting for over [67 percent of the global](#)

[semiconductor market](#), this measure is not only operationally significant but strategically necessary. It reveals a policy shift linking national security to export resilience and supply chain trustworthiness, reinforcing Taiwan's credibility as a secure and indispensable technology partner.

The fourth pillar [introduces artificial intelligence](#) as a core component of Taiwan's national cybersecurity strategy. MODA will deploy AI-driven tools for anomaly detection, behavioral analytics, and predictive threat modeling, aiming to enhance response speed and precision. This marks a calculated shift, moving AI from a supporting role to a central function in Taiwan's defense planning. These tools will also strengthen core defense operations through automated malware analysis, cross-agency threat intelligence sharing, and faster mitigation of zero-day vulnerabilities. Together, these expanded capabilities highlight Taiwan's push to modernize its cyber defenses through real-time data analysis and scalable automation.

Why This Shift Matters

The redesign of Taiwan's cybersecurity approach stems from a regional context of persistent threat escalation. For decades, Taiwan has been subject to coordinated campaigns that blend espionage, infrastructure targeting, and disinformation. These campaigns are often intended to test institutional boundaries and erode public confidence, requiring not only technical defenses, but resilient civic architecture. In recent years, this reality has prompted successive administrations to amplify the message that cybersecurity is inseparable from national security, a principle [first articulated](#) by former President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) in 2019, and [most recently](#) reiterated by President Lai Ching-te (賴清德) at CYBERSEC 2025 in April. Yet, despite growing political recognition of its importance, cybersecurity policy execution has often failed to match progress in these ambitions. Under earlier programs, gaps in inter-agency coordination and unclear roles for sectoral regulators [hampered implementation](#).

Efforts to address these shortcomings come at a critical time, as Taiwan continues to face a surge in cyber threat and operational strain across its digital infrastructure. The ACS' [Cybersecurity Monthly Report for May 2025](#) provides a timely reference point to assess the scale and persistence of these challenges. MODA reported 8,655 cybersecurity incidents in May, a 13.7 percent increase from the 7,611 recorded in April. Compared to May 2024, when 7,647 incidents were recorded, this marks a year-on-year rise of 13.2 percent. The data affirms a consistent rise in hostile cyber activity, much of it exploiting weaknesses in central and local government systems. Nearly 60 percent of these incidents reported by MODA involved phishing or malicious link activity.

The chart on the next page further illustrates fluctuations in monthly incident reporting. The upward trend reinforces the importance of adaptive monitoring and response sys-

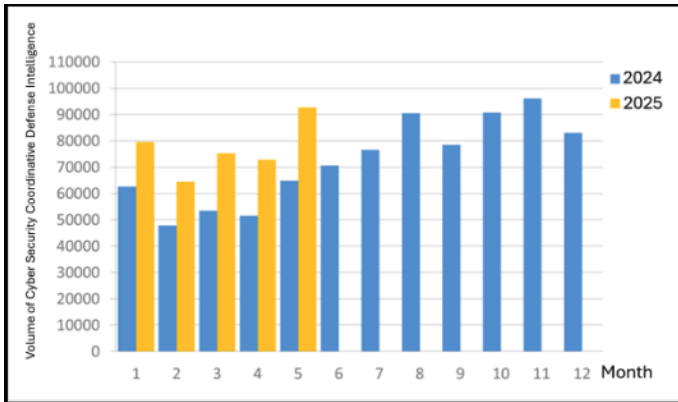


Figure: Statistics of information security joint defense monitoring and information security monitoring intelligence.
(Figure Source: [Ministry of Digital Affairs](#))

tems. It also points to a dual dynamic: the increase in reported incidents may indicate both growing threat sophistication and improved detection capabilities. The timing of the seventh phase's announcement in May, coinciding with heightened incident volume, underscores the urgency and relevance of the program's new priorities. This convergence makes it clear why investments in distributed preparedness, sector-specific baselines, and AI-integrated threat detection are not only timely, but essential.

From Domestic Defense to Global Engagement

Taiwan's seventh phase is also intended to support critical alignment with partners who share its democratic and technological values. MODA has prioritized [bilateral and multi-lateral engagements](#) that enhance mutual readiness, particularly in areas such as cross-border product assurance, AI governance, and cyber workforce development.

This cohesion is most clearly reflected in Taiwan's well-established strategic partnership with the United States. The seventh phase builds on earlier US-Taiwan cooperation in semiconductors, incident response, and information sharing, offering new momentum for formalizing collaboration through annual joint cyber exercises and a [recurring technical standards working group](#). By incorporating bilateral criteria and technical certifications into its national strategy, Taiwan strengthens its role as a reputable partner, capable of meeting security benchmarks across key technologies. This approach is increasingly relevant as [both governments evaluate](#) AI-integration and infrastructure protection as core elements of regional stability.

Yet, policy alignment is not automatic. While Taiwan already recognizes internationally accepted frameworks such as [NIST 800-53](#) and [ISO 27001](#), and publishes audit trails through [MODA's public website](#), these practices need to be applied uniformly across every ministry. Joint [threat modeling workshops](#) with US agencies and private-sector partners should also be expanded and institutionalized. MODA's [stated commitment to transparency](#) must now translate into

consistent, measurable outcomes that partners can rely on.

To support these goals, Taiwan is expanding collaborative research and cultivating cyber diplomacy channels with US stakeholders, including the [National Science Foundation](#), the Department of Homeland Security's [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#) (CISA), and [leading academic institutions](#). New opportunities for joint simulations, coordinated certification efforts, and security-by-design initiatives can strengthen these relationships. US agencies and lawmakers can further support this momentum by codifying planning efforts, increasing technical exchanges, and encouraging sustained recognition of vendor qualifications to improve cross-border supply chain reliability. These measures bolster Taiwan's position as a good-faith partner in a region where cybersecurity is increasingly linked to geopolitical stability and democratic resilience.

Conclusion

The seventh phase of the National Cybersecurity Development Program represents a structural realignment of Taiwan's national defense priorities. By integrating AI into core defense functions, advancing supply chain protections, and elevating readiness across government and industry, the program reflects a maturing approach to national cybersecurity. It also presents a practical roadmap for cooperation with like-minded partners seeking to strengthen collective defenses in an increasingly contested digital environment. To deepen the program's strategic impact, Taiwan and its partners should expand technical cooperation, jointly develop AI-powered cybersecurity solutions, and establish shared certification protocols that build trust, improve readiness, and fortify regional cyber defenses.

The main point: Taiwan's seventh phase (2025-2028) of the National Cybersecurity Development Program signals a decisive transformation in its national defense posture. By embedding AI capabilities, hardening supply chains, and reforming institutions, the program positions Taiwan to lead on cyber readiness in Asia and to serve as a vital security partner in preserving democratic stability across the Indo-Pacific.

Building Digital Resilience: Taiwan's Urgent Need for Robust Social Media Literacy Education

By: Laura Bonsaver

Laura Bonsaver is an assistant research fellow at the Taiwan Asia Exchange Foundation (TAEF).

Many Taiwanese teenagers no longer watch television after school; instead, social media dominates their daily lives. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Rednote are deep-

ly woven into teenagers' routines, with usage far outpacing that of older age groups. [Over half of Taiwanese teenagers use TikTok](#)—compared to just [a third of those in their 20s](#).

With more time spent on these platforms, they're increasingly exposed to content that subtly shapes their views—often without realizing it. Yet, many feel unprepared to navigate this flood of information. The sheer volume of content complicates efforts to verify its origins or authenticity.

This spring, [Doublethink Lab released a timely report](#) revealing that TikTok is subtly pushing political content and influencing how teens perceive the People's Republic of China (PRC). The report showed that TikTok is exposing young users to a broader range of risks than before—including disinformation, scams, and harmful material.

Despite the passing of the [Anti-Infiltration Act in 2019](#), which requires platforms to remove fabricated or misleading content, disinformation is still rife. While banning TikTok may appear to be a straightforward solution, it contradicts Taiwan's democratic values. As a result, [most young people support safer platforms, not bans](#).

To build democratic resilience and support youth well-being, Taiwan must strengthen social media literacy through increased funding and well-developed, sustained policies that are put into practice across all regions of Taiwan. This means expanding existing initiatives, empowering NGOs and experts already working in this space, and ensuring that educators receive the training they need to guide students through today's digital risks.

This is a challenge that demands attention from policymakers, families, and schools alike to equip teens with vital digital literacy skills.

The Digital Threat Facing Taiwan's Youth

Public concern about disinformation is rising, alongside a lack of education in identifying false content. According to a [National Taiwan University](#) (國立台灣大學) study, exposure to disinformation rose from 82 percent in 2023 to 95 percent in 2024. A [study by Google](#) found that over 80 percent of Taiwanese have encountered false information online, yet fewer than 10 percent have taken media literacy courses. In today's digital landscape, disinformation is everywhere. In Taiwan, there is also a region-specific concern: content and narratives originating from China.

Analysts have increasingly pointed to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP, 中國共產黨) [use of sharp power tactics to reach young Taiwanese](#), including [allegations of local influencers being paid to promote pro-Beijing messages](#). Concerns have evolved from the challenge of overt propaganda towards discussion of how everyday content can gradually normalize pro-China narratives.

This concern is echoed by many Taiwanese in their mid-20s and 30s. In preliminary research that I conducted in 2025

with Taiwanese aged 13–33, over 86 percent of respondents aged 23–33 indicated that today's teenagers are more exposed to Chinese social media content than before—and many worry this increases the risk of uncritical acceptance of PRC narratives. [1]

A clear generational divide also exists in the content they encounter: 26 percent of teenagers in the survey reported regularly seeing China-related social media content, compared to just 13 percent of those aged 20–33. Teenagers more often encountered neutral or favorable portrayals of the PRC—such as videos of Chinese urban life, economic success, or cultural trends.

Much social media content is light-hearted, and not all teen exposure is due to coordinated manipulation. However, without tools to critically assess how and why certain content appears, teenagers may internalize curated portrayals, mistaking them for reality and missing the strategic intent behind them.

While [most Taiwanese teenagers currently hold negative views of the PRC government](#), the effects of sustained exposure to positive or uncritical portrayals remain uncertain. Several teenage participants in [the recent survey by Doublethink Lab](#) acknowledged that their views had shifted somewhat positively through repeated exposure to TikTok videos that framed Chinese daily life in appealing ways. Developing a positive perspective of the PRC is not inherently problematic. However, this highlights the crucial need to provide students with targeted media literacy education so they can recognize disinformation when they do encounter it, and understand the broader political dynamics of cross-strait relations shaping it.

From Anxiety to Apathy: The Emotional Strain of Disinformation on Teenagers

Taiwanese teenagers are not only highly exposed to disinformation but also more susceptible to its emotional effects. According to [Doublethink Lab](#), many are aware that misleading content is widespread—not just among content from China, but across the entire internet. While they recognize that some information cannot be trusted, this awareness often leaves them feeling overwhelmed and unsure about what to believe. Findings from the Taiwan FactCheck Center's (TFC) ["2022 Annual Fake News Survey"](#) echo these sentiments, with teenagers frequently describing feelings of anxiety, irritation, and helplessness when navigating misinformation online. Without clear guidance, many teens struggle to respond effectively to disinformation and need more support.

As a result of these challenges, [some teenagers have disengaged and doubt most of what they see online](#). While this suggests a degree of skepticism, it can mask a deeper sense of helplessness. Furthermore, this apathy risks leaving young people increasingly vulnerable over time.

Indeed, experts warn that [Taiwanese teenagers may underestimate the risks posed by Beijing's influence campaigns](#) and may not fully understand the complexities and dangers of digital influence operations. Without firsthand experience of pivotal events like the 2014 Sunflower Movement (太陽花學運), [older generations worry that teens lack the historical context and political motivation needed to critically resist such campaigns](#). This growing challenge is compounded by the fact that many teachers themselves feel unequipped to address these political conversations and digital literacy needs.

The Struggle to Equip Teachers for Today's Digital Landscape

Even if there is broad support for expanding social media literacy, many teachers [feel unprepared to teach it](#). This presents a key challenge: how can teachers effectively guide students through the complexities of social media when they themselves lack confidence in navigating it?

One shortcoming in current media literacy education is that those who do teach media literacy [focus mainly on analyzing traditional news sources](#). Media literacy has been part of Taiwan's curriculum since 2002 (following [a white paper issued by the Ministry of Education](#) [教育部]), but coverage of media literacy in Taiwan's education systems has mainly been in the form of brief civics classes related to print journalism.

Taiwan has made important strides in integrating media literacy into education. [The Ministry of Education has introduced nationwide initiatives](#)—updated teaching materials, educator training, public outreach, and over 500 local events—to strengthen digital awareness. Looking ahead, [Taiwan's 2029 curriculum reform](#) aims to build students' digital skills and help schools adapt to emerging technologies like generative artificial intelligence (AI). However, many teachers say they have yet to see these policies translate into meaningful classroom changes or provide enough guidance on addressing the fast-moving and immersive nature of social media.

To meet the demands of today's digital environment, teachers need access to well-developed, up-to-date training programs and materials created by specialists in media and digital literacy. These programs should be designed for integration into existing curricula and regularly updated to reflect evolving online risks. Teachers would also benefit from having expert knowledge and advice that they can easily access when new concerns arise. Empowering educators in this way requires sustained government support and a clear strategy for long-term implementation.

Scaling Up Existing Social Media Literacy Across Taiwan

Taiwan's civil society leads on media literacy, with NGOs like Taiwan Information Environment Research Center (IORG), Doublethink Lab, and the TFC offering [guides](#), educational outreach, and digital literacy tools. IORG's school and com-

munity outreach programs, Doublethink Lab's [disinformation training website](#), and TFC's [three-year media literacy initiative](#), supported by Google, all exemplify creative efforts by experts to build public resilience against disinformation.



Image: The Taiwan FactCheck Center announced the launch of the "Taiwan Media Literacy Education Initiatives" project in 2021. (Image Source: [Taiwan FactCheck Center](#))

Yet, without broader support, their reach remains uneven across Taiwan. The nation now requires sustained public investment not only to embed these tools and strategies into the national curriculum, but to empower the civil society organizations behind them. With greater funding, these groups can scale their efforts, deliver training to more schools and teachers, and share their expertise more widely ensuring that both urban and rural communities benefit from consistent, high-quality support. Beyond education reform, the government must also hold platforms accountable through meaningful regulation, transparency standards and user protection, and limiting exposure to harmful content.

Taiwan's current efforts are promising, and in the face of complex international political challenges, it has built an impressive wealth of experience and expertise in strengthening digital resilience. But these efforts must be expanded further. Taiwan's long-term success in resisting disinformation will depend on its ability to integrate social media literacy widely, empower civil society further, and ensure safe digital environments for its citizens.

This challenge isn't unique to Taiwan—it's part of a global reckoning with the speed and scale of digital misinformation. As Lai Ting-Ming (賴鼎銘), chair of TFC, [put it](#): "Do not treat media literacy as an activity, but as a movement...It must start with oneself, and the most important factor is whether you put your heart into it."

The main point: To build democratic resilience and support youth well-being, Taiwan must strengthen social media literacy through increased funding and sustained, practical policies. This means expanding existing initiatives, empowering NGOs and experts already working in this space, and

ensuring that educators receive the training they need to guide students through today's digital risks—confidently and critically.

[1] The author conducted an online survey in Mandarin in February 2025 with 96 Taiwanese respondents aged 13-33 years old. Participants were recruited via universities and schools across various regions of Taiwan, from existing educational networks with the sponsoring think tank, Taiwan NextGen Foundation, and distributed by teachers and lecturers. The surveys explored young peoples' social media usage and its influence on their perceptions of the PRC. The findings cited in this article are based on the responses of two surveys: one version for respondents between the ages of 13-22 and another version for those aged 23-33.

How is Taiwan Combating Climate Change: Government and Businesses

By: Maytapat Pararaman

Maytapat Pararaman is an independent scholar. He was formerly a lecturer of International Relations at Walailak University in Nakhon-srithammarat, Thailand.

Like all nations, Taiwan is affected by climate change. The [Climate Change in Taiwan: National Scientific Report 2024](#) reveals that the average air temperatures of Taipei, Taichung, Tainan, Hengchun, Hualien, as well as Taitung, have all risen considerably since 1980. In 2025, Taiwan ranked 60th on [the Climate Change Performance Index](#) due to its very poor ratings for energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as weak scores for renewable energy and climate policy.

Following the United Nations Earth Summit of 1992, Taiwan's Executive Yuan established [the National Council for Sustainable Development](#) (NCSD, 行政院國家永續發展委員會) in August 1997 to pursue global sustainable development in tandem with other countries. With the establishment of this administrative body, Taiwan has shown a strong commitment to tackling climate change as part of the new global agenda derived from the United Nations (UN). Even though Taiwan has not had its own seat at the UN since 1971, it has nonetheless followed and supported the UN's agendas, including those aimed at climate change. However, tackling climate change is beyond the ability of Taipei alone and requires transnational cooperation—not only by states, but also by businesses.

Lai's National Resilience Plan

According to the 2023 [Annual Report on National Sustainable Development](#) published by the NCSD, Taiwan has sought to mitigate climate change in three core aspects: law, education, and climate change adaptation capabilities. On February 15, 2023, the Executive Yuan issued a presi-

dential degree amending the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Management Act* (溫室氣體減量及管理法) to the *Climate Change Response Act* (氣候變遷因應法), thus promulgating Taiwan's climate legal framework. Following this revision of the Act, the Ministry of Environment (環境部) has revised and promulgated six laws concerning management regulations for greenhouse gases to enforce Taiwan's climate governance. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education (教育部) has organized and subsidized several activities and workshops for climate change education that draw from the United Nations Education for Sustainable Development program. The Executive Yuan also approved the *National Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan* (2023-2026) on October 4, 2023, with a goal to enhance Taiwan's basic capabilities to adapt to climate change.

At the [31st Council Meeting of the NCSD, Executive Yuan](#), Lai Ching-te (賴清德), the President of the Republic of China (Taiwan), stated that "sustainable development has become an issue of national public concern. The government attaches great importance to promoting sustainable development." Under Lai's direction, Taiwan launched a new governmental initiative within the Presidential Office to address global warming. Furthermore, Lai's [2024 National Day speech](#) characterized global climate change, sudden outbreaks of infectious diseases, and expanding authoritarianism as Taiwan's "relentless challenges." To cope with these issues, Lai added that he has established three committees directly under his power: the National Climate Change Committee (國家氣候變遷對策委員會), the Healthy Taiwan Promotion Committee (健康台灣推動委員會), and the Whole-of-Society Defense Resilience Committee (全社會防衛韌性委員會). In his speech, Lai revealed that these three committees are closely tied through the theme of "national resilience" (國家韌性). Lai stated: "We intend to build up a more resilient Taiwan, proactively deal with challenges, and bring Taiwan into deeper cooperation with the international community."

[The National Climate Change Committee](#) has convened four meetings as of June 2025. The committee's objective is to hold panel discussions between the government, including cabinet ministers and the Ministry of Environment, scholars led by Academia Sinica (中央研究院), the industrial sector led by the Pegatron Corporation, and civil society groups. During the [three conventions](#), Lai primarily emphasized energy efficiency and green technology. While the former issue explores how Taiwan can optimize energy consumption, the latter is about enhancing Taiwan's international competitiveness in the global supply chain. For [the fourth meeting of the National Climate Change Committee](#) in April 2025, Lai emphasized green transition and sustainable development as the cornerstones of long-term national prosperity. Lai stated: "The government will work with the private sector to turn crises into opportunities, and actively address the challenges of climate change and net-zero transition." At the second meeting of the National Climate Change Committee in October 2024, Lai [stressed the importance](#) of strengthen-

ing international cooperation to cope with climate change. He also mentioned the People's Republic of China (PRC) as a potential target for collaboration. In this way, Lai regards climate change issues as being independent of the cross-strait conflict. When it comes to climate change, it can be concluded that Lai's "national resilience" is not simply a matter of military strategic thinking, but rather a roadmap for multilateralism.



Image: President Lai addresses the fourth meeting of the National Climate Change Committee. (Image source: [Office of the President, Republic of China \[Taiwan\]](#))

The [Taipei Times](#) reports that Taiwan has worked with the Pacific islands and like-minded partners to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Although Taiwan [cannot attend](#) the UN Climate Change Conference (COP) as a UN member, a Taiwanese delegation has been able to participate as NGO observers under the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) since 1995. In 2023, at the COP28 in Dubai, the [United Arab Emirates](#)—as well as 12 formal diplomatic allies and 42 national parliaments—sent letters supporting Taiwan's participation in meetings relating to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* and the *Paris Agreement*. Taiwan is not a member of the UN and, thus, does not receive timely information from its organs. Therefore, Taiwan's potential UN membership is relevant to its goal of achieving national resilience regarding climate change, and Lai must jointly work with diplomatic allies to gain further support for UN membership. However—besides government-level cooperation—business sectors and private technology are critical in plans to counter global warming.

Business Action

By laying a foundation in research and development (R&D), the Taiwanese government is treating the development of climate change technologies as a business opportunity. [Article 17, paragraph 6](#) of the *Climate Change Response Act* states that the government shall assist and encourage the development of technologies for climate change adaptation, and promote products and business opportunities

derived from climate change adaptation. Furthermore, in [Taiwan's 2050 net-zero emissions roadmap](#), technology R&D is listed as one of Taiwan's governance foundations. The R&D revolves around technology related to decarbonization, sustainable energy, and circularity, with an emphasis on public-private partnerships. Su Huey-jen (蘇慧貞)—a professor emeritus of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at National Cheng Kung University (國立成空大學)—opined [at the second meeting](#) of the National Climate Change Committee that: "Advancing net-zero transition and deep energy saving requires actively leveraging private sector resources to maximize the benefits of public-private collaboration." In its law, plans, and fora, the government has deliberately included the Taiwanese private sector in its climate change strategy to strengthen the development of advanced technologies.

In 2022, eight leading global information and communications technology companies in Taiwan—Acer, ASUSTek Computer, AUO, Delta Electronics, LITEON, Microsoft Taiwan, Pegatron, and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC)—have collaborated on the establishment of the [Taiwan Climate Partnership](#) (TCP, 台灣氣候聯盟). The TCP aims to implement Taiwan's net-zero goal in supply chains. In December 2024, the TCP signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) with the Japan Climate Leaders Partnership ([Japan-CLP](#))—a business coalition in Japan aiming to create a low-carbon society. Overall, the MOU aspires to promote partnerships to tackle climate change, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

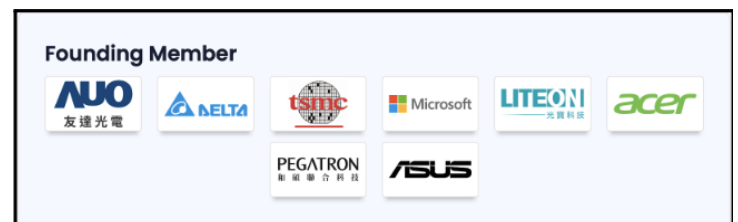


Image: The key eight firms that founded the Taiwan Climate Partnership (Image source: [Taiwan Climate Partnership](#))

In tandem with the TCP, the [Taipei Computer Association](#) (TCA, 台北市電腦商業同業公會)—the largest industrial association in Taiwan, with over 4,000 member companies—emphasizes carbon reduction in its initiatives to boost international cooperation. For example, on March 11, 2024, Dr. Chen-Yu Lee (鎮宇李), a Chief Executive Officer of the TCA, visited the [Thailand Trade and Economic Office in Taipei](#) (TTEO) to promote close cooperation with Thailand regarding net-zero policies and green technology. In a [read-out](#) of the meeting, Narong Boonsatheanwong (文那隆), the executive director the TTEO, stated that the TCA's promotion aligns with Thailand's domestic policy of a Bio-Circular-Green Economy. By seeking international cooperation at the business level, the TCP and TCA have shown Taiwan's industrial sector is willing to combat global warming.

Cooperation is Key

Just as with its business sector, Taiwan's local government is also partnering with the central government to counter climate change. In 2017, the Executive Yuan approved the [National Climate Change Action Guideline](#) (國家因應氣候變遷行動綱領), formulated by the Environmental Protection Administration (環境部環境管理署). This guideline proposes ten principles for promoting Taiwan's greenhouse gas mitigation and climate change adaptation policies. One of its [principles](#) is to: "Establish a communication platform on which to build partnerships between the central and local governments, as well as cooperation between public and private sectors, to practically execute localised adaptation and mitigation measures." Thus, multilateral cooperation at all levels—including national governments, businesses, municipalities, and international organizations—is key to enhancing Taiwan's efforts to tackle global warming.

The main point: Since 1997, Taiwan has actively promoted climate change mitigation policies in line with United Nations agendas. The National Climate Change Committee—convened by Lai Ching-te in 2024—and Taiwan's National Council for Sustainable Development have been critical in this effort. While Taiwan's bilateral diplomatic cooperation is limited due to its exclusion from the UN, Taiwanese private sector groups, such as the Taiwan Climate Partnership and the Taipei Computer Association, can expand their climate-related cooperation with foreign state and non-state actors.

Language as a Soft Power Tool: Taiwan's Mandarin Diplomacy in Vietnam

By: Huynh Tam Sang

Huynh Tam Sang is a lecturer at Ho Chi Minh City-University of Social Sciences and Humanities, a Young Leaders Program member of the Pacific Forum, a research fellow at the Taiwan NextGen Foundation, and a visiting scholar at National Taiwan University as part of the 2024 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Taiwan Fellowship.

Language diplomacy has steadily emerged as an important facet of soft power, as it provides a crucial conduit for cultural projection, national identity reinforcement, and bilateral communication. In East and Southeast Asia, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has long dominated "linguistic soft power"—influence a country wields through its language, culture, and educational systems—as a result of its [strong network of Confucius Institutes](#) (孔子學院), which promote simplified Chinese and PRC cultural narratives worldwide. While promoting the traditional Chinese character system, Taiwan has endured considerable diplomatic constraints, mostly due to China's political and economic pressure, which seeks to prevent third countries from forging official

ties with Taiwan.

Taiwan's language promotion efforts have grown into a subtle arena of influence within Vietnam. The Vietnamese government's official acknowledgment of the "One-China policy," which [asserts](#) that Taiwan is "an inseparable part of China's territory," prevents Taiwan from establishing formal language institutes in the country. In Vietnam, public schools and universities offer Mandarin instruction exclusively in simplified Chinese. Traditional Chinese is entirely absent from curricula. To address this conundrum, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO)—Taiwan's *de facto* embassy in Vietnam—has taken a pragmatic approach by organizing a variety of practical activities. These [include](#) hosting education fairs, offering scholarships, collaborating with media outlets, and working with private-sector partners.

Taiwan's Evolving Language Diplomacy

Taiwan's language diplomacy came into the spotlight following the former Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) Administration's 2016 launch of New Southbound Policy—a strategy aiming to strengthen Taiwan's comprehensive ties with southeast Asian nations, including Vietnam. Since then, interest in learning Mandarin has been growing among Vietnamese students. Now accounting for [23 percent](#) of foreign students in Taiwan, [many Vietnamese students](#) "are increasingly opting to study the Chinese language in traditional characters." This increase is driven mainly by two major scholarship programs: the [Taiwan Scholarship Program](#) and the [Huayu Enrichment Scholarship](#). Both are designed to facilitate study in Taiwan and promote Mandarin learning.

In recent years, Taiwan's universities have started to [offer](#) more specialized language classes as part of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and technical programs. This is especially true in tech-driven fields like semiconductor engineering, biotechnology, and information systems. Vietnamese students looking for a good education that fits global job market demands have [found this](#) to be very appealing. Taiwan's investment in semiconductor technology also [aligns](#) with the Vietnamese government's ambition to develop its own semiconductor industry, positioning Taiwan and Vietnam as natural partners in high-tech collaboration. Some Taiwanese universities, like [Chienkuo Technology University](#) (建國科技大學) and [National Taiwan University](#) (國立台灣大學), now offer Mandarin courses and professional subjects that include technical vocabulary. This makes Taiwan stand out from other countries' universities that typically offer only general language instruction.

Taiwan's appeal is further strengthened by its relatively liberal migration policies for international students. Vietnamese students are drawn to Taiwan because of its flexible [post-graduation opportunities](#), which include internships, job placements, specialized programs, and pathways to permanent residency for highly-skilled international students. The prospect of long-term academic and professional en-

agement enhances the practical allure of studying traditional Chinese in Taiwan and elevates the perceived utility of the language.

Traditional Chinese Re-enters Vietnamese Culture

At the emblematic root of Taiwan's approach is the promotion of traditional over simplified Chinese. Traditional Chinese represents a sense of continuity and a "pure" Chinese cultural history respected in Taiwan, which stands in stark contrast to the PRC's adoption of language reform to strengthen Communist propaganda, relinquish parts of China's cultural past, and promote modernization. Although Vietnamese public education favors simplified Chinese (largely because it is much easier to learn than traditional Chinese), the use of traditional script has gradually gained traction among intellectuals, and cultural elites, who increasingly appreciate its connection to classical literary traditions. Moreover, younger Vietnamese generations, who are open-minded and fluent in digital culture, are [increasingly interested](#) in listening to Taiwanese stories from the island's own perspective. This symbolically rich articulation of language allows Taiwan to carve out a cultural space that distinguishes it from the PRC, encouraging Vietnamese people to play a part in Taiwan's narrative.

In addition to Taiwan's language-focused strategies, its media and cultural initiatives have played an increasingly important complementary role. One notable example is the television series [Embracing Taiwan](#), co-produced by Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (外交部) and a team from Vietnam Television, which showcases Taiwanese culture, landscapes, civilians, and educational institutions in traditional Chinese, subtly reinforcing Taiwan's distinctive linguistic identity. At the grassroots level, Vietnamese influencers—such as Nguyen Thi Thu Hang, who makes videos on her "[Hang TV](#)" (越南秀台灣) YouTube channel—help to showcase Taiwanese culture, teach people how to speak Chinese, and explain how to read traditional characters. These platforms not only introduce traditional Chinese but also help promote Taiwan's culture and society among Vietnamese, especially the youth.

Social media has been instrumental in encouraging foreigners to study traditional Chinese in Taiwan. Online platforms, such as Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, are important tools that foreign students have utilized to share their experiences employing traditional Chinese. These modern and creative channels help both foreign students and Taiwanese teachers [reach out](#) to thousands of Vietnamese learners by bypassing governmental constraints. Since traditional Chinese and culture are easily accessible online via these digital learning platforms, audiences can access online resources offering traditional Chinese instruction and cultural immersion. These channels can accelerate Vietnamese learners' study and provide them with traditional character Mandarin resources illustrating Taiwan's identity—an arrangement of traditional culture and modern creativity.

Navigating Challenges Imposed by the PRC

Nevertheless, these achievements are not devoid of constraints. In the absence of formal traditional Chinese language institutes in Vietnam, Vietnamese students and learners must depend on private instructors or overseas travel, which are both costly and logistically demanding. On the other hand, the PRC's Confucius Institutes are more competitive as they are backed by direct bilateral agreements and large government subsidies, rendering simplified Chinese education broadly accessible. Compared with PRC platforms, those from Taiwan are still modest in both scale and resources. Additionally, Taiwan faces growing language-learning competition from regional countries. The [Japan Foundation](#) and [King Sejong Institute](#), well-known language institutions in Japan and South Korea, respectively, actively promote language and culture while providing substantial vocational and scholarship grants for Vietnamese students.

In addition, Taiwan's efforts to promote traditional Chinese are uneven. Outside of major cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, understanding of Taiwan's Mandarin offerings remains scant. Local universities and students in minor provinces often lack access to scholarship information, application support, or Taiwanese alumni networks. While TECO has been active in engaging with Vietnamese Mandarin learners, it has been unable to carry out a comprehensive outreach strategy towards the Vietnamese. In the nuanced battle to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese, TECO has struggled against PRC-backed centers and platforms.

Despite these shortcomings, Taiwan has opportunities to strengthen its soft power through language engagement. The Ministry of Education's 2024 initiative, [titled](#) "Program to Increase Recruitment of Overseas Chinese Students, Students from Hong Kong and Macao, and International Students," underlines recruitment in key industries and offers distinctive programs where students can engage in specialized academic tracks that integrate "one year of Chinese language instruction [with] four years of professional courses." To enhance the efficiency of these initiatives for students from Vietnam, Taiwan should consider several modifications, potentially including pre-departure traditional Chinese digital courses, recruitment centers on Vietnamese university campuses, accessible Mandarin e-learning platforms, and translation of Taiwanese cultural and educational resources into Vietnamese. These customized programs could increase Taiwan's visibility among Vietnamese youth while depicting Taiwan as a reliable and responsible partner for Vietnam, particularly in terms of language and cultural ties.

Moreover, alumni- or diaspora-led Mandarin clubs and language mentoring initiatives can play a supplementary role in fostering traditional Mandarin learning and grassroots cultural engagement. Taiwan could encourage "language ambassadors"—those who have studied in Taiwan and expe-

rienced the nation's values, lifestyle, and pluralism, among others—to share their experiences of studying, living, and working in Taiwan. Here, Mandarin learning in Taiwan is a stepping-stone for Vietnamese wishing to experience and learn more about Taiwan's democracy and achievements in upholding values-based principles and socio-economic prosperity. Mitchell Gallagher is accurate when [he writes that](#) "Taiwan has already begun earning [soft power] through the people it welcomes. Now, it must empower them to share their experiences and amplify Taiwan's voice globally." This would also hold true with "language ambassadors" who could return to Vietnam and share their lived experiences of Taiwan's society and democracy.

With its [New Southbound Policy+](#) under the Lai Ching-te (賴清德) Administration, Taiwan vows to embrace "Shin-Lai diplomacy" (信賴), or "reliable diplomacy," to expand its outreach. Fostering educational ties with New Southbound Policy partners like Vietnam should be part of this reinvigorated strategy. Taiwan should collaborate with Vietnamese civil society groups or non-governmental organizations that focus on educational development, such as [the Center for Education and Development](#) (CED), [the Center for Sustainable Development Studies](#) (CSDS), and [the Vietnam Association for Promoting Education](#) (VAPE). For instance, Taiwan's public and private universities can support bilingual Mandarin-Vietnamese teaching resources for community centers, vocational schools, and nonprofit organizations that are interested in promoting traditional Chinese for the Vietnamese. Beyond greetings, appellations, festivals, and social activities, these traditional Chinese language materials and activities should spotlight Vietnamese culture alongside Taiwanese culture, as this approach could encourage more Vietnamese to learn traditional Chinese.

Ultimately, Taiwan's promotion of traditional Chinese in Vietnam indicates a quiet but meaningful connotation of soft power engagement. Though constrained by PRC influence and political sensitivities, Taiwan's adaptive strategy through leveraging scholarships, social platforms, and grassroots mobilization has widened Vietnamese interest in learning traditional Chinese and won sympathy through its organic soft power. If nurtured, Taiwan's language diplomacy can be far more than a soft power tool: it can serve as a thread connecting cultural traditions, educational cooperation, and a shared identity.

The main point: Taiwan's quiet, yet strategic, Mandarin diplomacy has strengthened its image as a launchpad for Vietnamese students' careers. To reinforce its soft power, Taiwan should adopt more proactive measures, including customized language programs, alumni ambassadors, and reinvigorated educational collaboration.

Taiwan's Potential for Defense Cooperation with Middle Eastern Nations

By: Avaani Singh

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Introduction

Taiwan has long been an important geopolitical player in international decisions regarding economic security. The island nation draws attention for its importance to the Indo-Pacific, its economic prowess in technology—especially semiconductors—and its complex relationship with China. Much of the [ongoing discourse](#) on Taiwan's foreign relations focuses on its diplomatic isolation or trade partnerships, leaving Taiwan's defense and security cooperation with Middle Eastern nations unexplored. While Taiwan has enjoyed limited formal diplomatic ties with the region, [in contrast to the partnerships that China has developed](#), shifting geopolitical dynamics and technological advancements now pave the way for deeper military and cybersecurity collaboration.

The Middle East is currently subject to a period of [rapid defense modernization](#), particularly in Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These nations are investing heavily in military technology, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity. Additionally, Israel remains a dominant force in defense innovation, benefiting from [significant US military support](#). While Taiwan lacks formal diplomatic recognition from most Middle Eastern states, there is increasing evidence of informal cooperation, including defense partnerships.

This article will examine the evolution of Taiwanese-Middle Eastern relations by focusing on arms trading, intelligence sharing, and cybersecurity. It will also explore Taiwan's contributions to global military technology—particularly through the semiconductor industry—and how these developments are influencing Middle Eastern defense strategies. Furthermore, this article will integrate the role US policies play in furthering the relations between the two regions. Through analyzing existing trade agreements, diplomatic outreach, and emerging security collaboration, this article will expand upon a dimension of Taiwan's global strategic alignment that ties together with the Middle East's burgeoning geopolitical role.

Taiwan's History of Diplomacy in the Middle East

Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC), saw a period of formal diplomatic connection with numerous Middle Eastern powers in the late 1950s, such as Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Jordan. This diplomatic connection was

inspired by [concerns over the spread of communism and shared strategic interests](#).

In October 1971, the People's Republic of China (PRC) replaced the ROC as China's representative to the United Nations. Following this change, Taiwan lost the diplomatic recognition of most international organizations and by the early 1990s, the country no longer maintained any formal diplomatic relations with any Middle Eastern states. However, Taiwan has continued to maintain unofficial economic and cultural offices in numerous countries such as [Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UAE, and Bahrain](#), for the purpose of trade and technological cooperation.

From 1946 to 1990, [Saudi Arabia and Taiwan](#) maintained a strategic partnership. Saudi Arabia supplied stable energy supplies and financial loans to support Taiwan's infrastructure development. On the other hand, [Taiwan sent skilled professionals](#) to assist in Saudi Arabia's modernization efforts. In the case of Israel, while the country offers no diplomatic recognition, bilateral cooperation has [grown significantly since the 1990s](#). The establishment of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Tel Aviv (1993) and Israel's reciprocal presence in Taipei marked the beginning of formal engagement between the two nations. Since then, Taiwan and Israel have signed over 30 trade agreements, covering fields such as [high-tech industry collaboration, artificial intelligence, e-government, and water resource management](#).



Image: President Tsai Ing-wen met with an Israeli parliamentary delegation in 2023. (Image source: [Office of the President, Republic of China \[Taiwan\]](#))

Taiwan-Israel Ties in Cybersecurity and Military Technology

Taiwan and Israel have expanded their cooperation into defense technology and cyber security since 2006, with a focus on [biotechnology, space research, and electronics](#). Taiwan has been particularly interested in Israeli defense innovations, especially in fields such as [aerospace, radar communication, and cyber warfare](#). While there is a lack of official documentation and information on intelligence sharing between Taiwan and Israel, [evidence suggests](#) that the coun-

tries have exchanged expertise in countering cyber threats and developing military grade cybersecurity systems. Given the increasing prevalence of cyber warfare, these intelligence-sharing agreements between Taiwan and countries like Israel have been opened in order to address mutual security concerns. Both nations face persistent geopolitical threats—Taiwan from China and Israel from regional adversaries—and this has encouraged [greater cooperation in protecting critical infrastructure in military applications](#).

At the same time, the United States of America remains an important factor in the Israel-Taiwan relationship. [1] The US-Israel relationship indirectly influences Taiwan, as both Israel and Taiwan rely on US security support and advanced military technologies. [2] Taiwan has studied Israel's defense strategies, including the use of missile defense systems (e.g. the Iron Dome) to enhance its own security posture.[3] Notably, Taiwan's primary competition for certain defense systems has not been Ukraine, but [large buyers in the Middle East](#). Though Taiwan [does not receive US military aid at the same level as Israel](#), its strategic alignment with the US defense sector has allowed it to benefit from the shared research and emerging security technologies.

Taiwan's Defense Industry and Military Technology Exports to the Middle East

Taiwan has been a notable contributor to the Middle Eastern defense sector, exporting technologies such as drones, naval systems, and surveillance equipment to countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Saudi Arabia stands as Taiwan's largest trading partner in the Middle East, with an annual trade volume [exceeding USD 12 billion](#). In 2020, both nations signed a tax treaty to prevent double taxation, effective from 2022, [with the focus of streamlining bilateral trade and reducing tax burdens for businesses in both countries](#).

Taiwan's dominance in the semiconductor manufacturing industry plays a [pivotal role in global defense technologies](#). Producing over [60 percent](#) of the world's semiconductors, Taiwan's industry is integral to various military applications, including advanced computing and artificial intelligence (AI) systems. This industry edge [positions Taiwan as a strategic partner](#) for Middle Eastern nations seeking to enhance their military capabilities through AI integration.

Given the increasing prevalence of cyber warfare, intelligence-sharing agreements between Taiwan and countries like Israel have been opened in order to address mutual security concerns. Both nations face acute security threats and have [pursued policies of technological innovation](#) as a means of national defense.

Beyond military and technological collaborations, Taiwan's engagement with Middle Eastern countries extends into economic dimensions. Sovereign wealth funds (SWFs) from the [Gulf states](#) have [shown interest](#) in investing in Taiwan's high-tech industries, including semiconductor manufacturing. This could lead to an increase in knowledge transfer and skill development within the different economies, therefore

contributing to the broader societal development in both regions.

Risks in Taiwan-Middle East Engagement

While an expansion into the Middle East offers strategic advantages for Taiwan, it also entails certain risks. Taiwan's involvement in regional conflicts, even indirectly, can lead to diplomatic tensions and unintended consequences. An example of this are the recent reports of Taiwan-manufactured pagers allegedly used by Israel's Mossad in operations against Hezbollah. According to [sources](#), explosives were planted inside 5,000 Taiwan-made pagers, leading to casualties and escalating regional tensions. This incident has drawn [significant attention](#) from Taiwan's national security agencies and has raised geopolitical tensions further.

Meanwhile, Taiwan has faced a challenge in one of its humanitarian and infrastructure projects in the Middle East. The Taiwan-Reyhanli Centre for World Citizens, a refugee facility in Turkey, was initially established with the aim of assisting displaced Syrian refugees. However, [reports have surfaced](#) alleging that the camp may be linked to money laundering activities, raising concerns about financial transparency and Taiwan's humanitarian diplomacy.

Conclusion

Taiwan's evolving defense relationships with Middle Eastern nations illustrate a complex interplay of economic, technological, and strategic considerations. While Taiwan remains diplomatically isolated in the region due to pressure from China, its defense industry has quietly expanded its influence through arms exports, cybersecurity partnerships, and semiconductor technology integration. Taiwan's engagement with key Middle Eastern players—including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel—demonstrates its capacity to contribute to regional security and technological advancements, particularly in AI-driven military applications.

At the same time, the role of US defense policies remains crucial. American military assistance to Taiwan shapes its defense capabilities and export restrictions, while Washington's strategic alignment with Israel has indirect consequences for Taiwan's security posture. Additionally, other Western nations, such as the [United Kingdom](#) and [Canada](#), have maintained significant defense partnerships in the Middle East, but their direct support for Taiwan remains limited, focusing instead on diplomatic engagement and economic collaboration. Beyond traditional defense exports, Taiwan's dominance in semiconductor manufacturing has become a key factor in its global strategic value. Middle Eastern nations, eager to develop domestic AI and military tech industries, are seeking Taiwan's expertise. While some argue that Taiwan's semiconductor industry should not dictate foreign defense policies, its role in critical supply chains remains an undeniable factor in shaping international security dynamics.

While this article has explored Taiwan's expanding defense

footprint in the Middle East, several areas warrant further research. One key area is Taiwan's potential role in the military modernization efforts of Gulf states, particularly within Saudi Arabia's [Vision 2030 initiative](#). As Gulf nations seek to develop indigenous defense industries, Taiwan's expertise in AI, cybersecurity, and semiconductor technology could become even more relevant. Additionally, further research could explore the impact of sovereign wealth funds from the Middle East on Taiwan's defense and technology sectors. With countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia investing heavily in global technology firms, Taiwan's position as a tech leader could lead to new forms of collaboration beyond direct arms sales.

Finally, the broader geopolitical implications of Taiwan's Middle Eastern engagement should be examined more fully in light of China's expanding presence in the region. As Beijing strengthens its economic and security ties with Gulf nations, Taiwan's ability to maintain and grow its partnerships in the region remains a key question for future research.

The main point: Despite the lack of formal diplomatic relations, Taiwan's engagement with key Middle Eastern players—including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel—demonstrates its capacity to contribute to regional security and technological advancements, particularly in AI-driven military applications. Further research in Taiwan-Middle East relations could focus on Taiwan's potential role in military modernization or the impact of sovereign wealth funds from the Middle East on Taiwan's defense and technology sectors.

[1] Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel," Report R46463, July 2022.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.
