

**Making Time Work for Taiwan, Part 2****Eric Chan****Why Taiwan's Semiconductor Success Is About Much More Than TSMC****Mina Chen****From Episodic Curiosity to Strategic Importance: US Google Search Interest in Taiwan from 2004 to 2026****Dmitry Erokhin****Cheng Li-wun's June 2026 Visit to the United States: Symbolism Over Substance****Ben Levine and Jessica Shiao****Gender Equity Education in Taiwan: Past, Present, and Possible Future****Juliet Paulson****Making Time Work for Taiwan, Part 2***By: Eric Chan*

*Eric Chan is a senior non-resident fellow at the Global Taiwan Institute. The views in this article are the author's own, and are not intended to represent those of his affiliate organizations.*

*Editor's Note: This is the second part of a two-part article series: "[Making Time Work for Taiwan, Part 1](#)" appeared in the March 25, 2026 issue of the Global Taiwan Brief, which was a special theme issue titled "[Current Major Issues in Taiwan's Defense Production and Military Force Structure](#)."*

Taiwan lives under the shadow of an authoritarian state determined to undermine, undercut, and extinguish Taiwanese sovereignty. One poisoned fruit of that effort is an induced defense incoherency and paralysis, which Taiwan has only recently and partly overcome. In [part 1](#), I discussed how Taiwan needs an all-around defense centered on its new "strategy of erosion" (削弱戰略). This is a strategy intended to utilize Taiwan's terrain to maximize defender advantages, and to systematically erode the PLA's combat power as it presses in on the island—as well as to guard against a return of paralysis in defense planning.

This type of all-around defense is inherently complex for Taiwan's military to execute—even more so than opposing a landing campaign. In a blockade or quarantine scenario, the enemy will not obligingly run into the teeth of Taiwan's [anti-landing defenses](#), nor clump up on a [few suitable landing beaches](#). The enemy would not have to [sustain and defend the massive level of logistics](#) needed to move, feed, and arm an invasion force across the strait. The enemy would not need to immediately transition from a D-Day landing into a [massive urban assault](#) on the Taoyuan / Taipei region.

The primary reason why a blockade or a quarantine is not the first choice for the CCP is that the time necessary for this type of attack to have an effect would heighten the CCP's strategic risk: namely, that the United States would be able to rally a global coalition and intervene in force. Given the choice between assuming greater operational risk through a rapid full-scale invasion versus the strategic risk of a blockade / quarantine, the Party likely prefers the former.

*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**

John Dotson

**Staff Editor**

Benjamin Sando

*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://globaltaiwan.org/issues/vol-11-issue-11/>.*

Global Taiwan Institute  
1836 Jefferson Place NW,  
Washington DC 20036  
[contact@globaltaiwan.org](mailto:contact@globaltaiwan.org)

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

©2026 ©Global Taiwan Institute

However, as Taiwan's ability to fend off a rapid invasion increases, Taiwan will need to consider that foreclosing one option will force the Party to lean into the other. Taiwan's defense needs are many, and resources are limited. However, Taiwan can hedge between these interlocking scenarios, with a long-term national defense plan based on the first principles of the strategy of erosion.

### *First Principles of the Strategy of Erosion*

Within the strategy of erosion, there are two key innovations that differentiate it from earlier strategies: systematic weakening of the enemy, and protraction. By breaking these innovations down to first principles, a vision of Taiwan's future defense can be extrapolated.

- The first concept, "systematic weakening of the enemy", is based on the following insight: *As the aggressor, the PLA wants a rapid decisive battle with the tactical and operational advantages of striking first.*
- This leads to the conclusion: *Do not do what the enemy wants.*

The strategy of erosion thus seeks to absorb the first blow, instead of resisting with full force at the outset. New PLA technical capabilities such as the [PCH-191](#) modular long-range rocket launcher make massed attacks vulnerable. Moreover, the [continued expansion](#) of the PLA landing fleet means that if Taiwan gambled too heavily on defeating the initial invasion wave, the enemy would still have reserves that Taiwan would be challenged to match under fire. The new strategy thus seeks to structure defense as a campaign versus a battle: methodically weaken the enemy force as they get closer to Taiwan, while defensive forces strengthen over time.

- The second concept, "protraction," is a logical outgrowth of this line of thinking: *The [CCP fears a long war](#), with the resulting loss of "war control" (控制戰爭).*
- This leads to the conclusion: *Do what the enemy fears.*

Thus, to deter the adversary, Taiwan must be seen to be prepared for a long war, and able to stoke CCP fears of losing control of the direction and scope of the war.

Taiwan's defense reforms, including whole-of-society defense resilience, are in the service of these two concepts. It is a radical vision of reform and can be extended to

provide for an effective all-around defense.

### *Human-Machine Teaming*

The concepts of systematic weakening and protraction are both manpower and resource intensive. In the Russia-Ukraine war, [Ukraine gambled heavily on decisive action in its 2023 counter-offensive](#); but hastily-trained recruits had trouble coordinating their attacks into the teeth of Russia's long-prepared defenses, resulting in high casualties for little gain. Ukraine was forced to spend the next two years without the necessary reserves as they pivoted to an erosion strategy. This almost led to disaster for Ukraine several times, with [exhausted units collapsing](#) without adequate back-up during withdrawal. Taiwan has neither the manpower nor space nor time to make that same mistake.

Human-machine teaming is how Ukraine is regaining the ability to sustain the war, after trying to fight Russia on Russia's terms. To offset dangerously low troop density, Ukraine sought methods for unmanned systems to both substitute for and integrate with manned forces. In 2024, Ukraine established the [Unmanned Systems Forces as an independent branch](#). The USF worked through a step progression system: development of unmanned systems for [front-line logistics](#), then for [stationary defense](#). AI integration in [interceptor drones](#) and turrets [followed](#). Finally, there was a transition to the counter-offensive: Ukraine has begun to use unmanned systems for reconnaissance and shaping strikes to [open the way](#) for manned, mechanized maneuver warfare. In 2026, Ukraine [gained ground](#) for the first time in years, while casualties have [gone down by 30%](#).

For Taiwan, a similar transformation will certainly not be cheap or easy to replicate. The battlefield environment would involve considerably more enemy defensive systems—kinetic, electronic warfare, or cyber—in a smaller space; and the PLA has greater capabilities compared to the Russians. The right mix of force integration with unmanned systems will likely be very different from the mix that Ukraine uses. In a blockade or quarantine scenario, the relevant tactical target sets will likely be focused on finding and overwhelming ships to punch holes in the blockade, as opposed to creating an anti-ground maneuver kill zone. This is a technically harder task to master. However, Taiwan has stronger conventional capabilities compared to Ukraine; it is not for nothing that Ukraine, despite being a leader in UAV development, is still desperate for [modern fighter](#) and [airborne early warning and control aircraft](#).

The success of Taiwan in getting this transformation right holds the promise of offsetting PRC numerical, electronic warfare, and firepower superiority—particularly when the enemy is transiting vulnerable open terrain and waters. Human-machine teaming is key to sustaining the erosion strategy into the future.

### *Victory through Time*

Sustaining a protracted war, however, is not enough. Ukraine has protracted the war [far past Putin's timelines](#) and [sharply driven up](#) the Russian casualty rate, but that has not been sufficient to force Putin to the negotiation table. Protraction needs to be paired with the plausible threat of sharply escalating costs for the attacker, beyond tactical costs alone. This is particularly true in Taiwan's case, where a successful deterrence effort, or even the defeat of an invasion, may lead the PRC to consider long-term strategies like a blockade.

Ukraine's [long-range strategic strike campaign](#), and to a lesser extent [Iran's strikes](#) in the US-Iran conflict, show how weaker actors can impose escalating costs on a grander level. Ukraine's strategic strike campaign is now capable of sustaining a [near-daily attack rate](#) involving [dozens and sometimes hundreds of UAVs](#). This turns Russia's size from an asset into a vulnerability, with the strikes on key economic targets like fuel refineries slowly strangling the Russian war economy and exhausting air defense interceptors. Time and attrition warfare no longer works in Russia's favor.

Meanwhile, Iran's strikes show another method of horizontal escalation. Iran sought to impose economic costs on US allies and partners in a bid to restrain US power projection. This is not directly applicable for Taiwan, as the PRC is bereft of allies. However, it shows that both countries have adapted elements of deterrence by punishment into an overall strategy that still focuses primarily on deterrence by denial.

Ukraine has shown the ability to impose economic costs by oil refinery strikes on an extractive Russian economy. Iran has shown the ability to impose economic costs by blocking freedom of navigation in a chokepoint. Taiwan can similarly strategically deter by being able to do elements of both. This means developing the capability and capacity to sustainably strike PRC ports at scale, thereby shuttering PRC maritime trade and the export-oriented PRC economy—as well as disrupting the PLA's capability to reinforce a landing on Taiwan, or sustain a blockade. This type of operation used to require large manned force packages to suppress enemy air defenses, conduct the strike, protect and potentially rescue the strikers in

what would be a very risky operation. In the era of precise mass, where [relatively cheap platforms can replicate elements](#) of a more complex and expensive air force strike complex, this can now be conducted repeatedly via a combination of decoys, UAVs, and low-cost cruise missiles.

Systemic tactical adaptation and integration of unmanned platforms will demonstrate Taiwan's ability to sustain a protracted war. Wartime capacity to threaten thousands of long-range strikes over time will demonstrate Taiwan's ability to win a protracted war.

### *Conclusion*

Taiwan has overcome much of its former paralysis from defense incoherency and embarked upon an ambitious set of military reforms, centered on the strategy of erosion against an invasion. These reforms are not complete and must be prioritized. The recent passage of the [truncated special defense budget](#) goes some way to funding a force that is capable of carrying out both the reform and strategy.

However, both the reform and the strategy's end-states are insufficient. They are *realistic*, based on the desired reform timeline and current budget; however, if Taiwan wants the capabilities and capacities to carry out an effective all-around defense, this is only the very beginning of a long-term investment.

Yet what is unrealistic with today's ways and means can, and should, change over the long-term. The expansion of Taiwan's industrial capacity, paired with a truly [massive economic boom](#), means that Taiwan has a unique opportunity to scale up defensive capabilities without serious economic pain. With continued fast reform and investment, time can be made to work for Taiwan.

**The main point:** Taiwan's new strategy of erosion is an excellent start, but it is only a start. Taiwan can make time work in its favor against PRC coercion by applying its strategy of erosion into an all-around defense framework. This enlarged strategy relies on both the capability to conduct human-machine teaming and the capacity to threaten PRC ports at scale.

\*\*\*

## Why Taiwan's Semiconductor Success Is About Much More Than TSMC

By: Mina Chen

*Mina Chen is a first-year Master of Security Studies student at Georgetown University, and a 2026 Summer Intern at the Global Taiwan Institute.*

[COMPUTEX 2026](#), the world's premier technology and AI procurement exhibition, took place from June 2-5, 2026, in Taipei, Taiwan. This year's event centered around the theme "[AI Together](#)," with a focus on AI computing, advanced robotics, and next-generation smart technology ecosystems. While most observers focus on TSMC as the firm that represents Taiwan's dominance in chip manufacturing, the island's success is equally the result of its diverse ecosystem of semiconductor firms that cover nearly every stage of production.

For example, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang gave a speech at the event in which he [introduced](#) a powerful new chip (the "RTX Spark") and revealed his company's global partnership. From wafer and chip producers to manufacturing and systems leaders, Taiwan hosts more than [500 firms supporting Nvidia's manufacturing ecosystem](#). Together, they produce more than [one million components](#) for Nvidia's new "Vera Rubin" infrastructure supporting agentic AI.

### *Taiwan's Centrality in the Global AI Supply Chain*

Taiwan's role in Nvidia's supply chain reflects a broader reality: that many of the world's most advanced AI systems depend on the [semiconductor manufacturing ecosystem concentrated in this small country](#). "[Upstream](#)" companies such as Nvidia, AMD, and Apple design the advanced chips that power their products. However, these companies do not manufacture these chips themselves; instead, they rely on specialized foundries to fabricate their designs.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC, 台灣積體電路製造股份有限公司) is the undisputed leader of the global semiconductor foundry industry, producing [more than 90 percent](#) of the world's most advanced chips and occupying more than [70 percent of the global foundry market](#) in 2025. Since it was launched in 2022, TSMC's [3-nanometer technology](#) has become the industry standard for high-performance computing, artificial intelli-

gence, and mobile devices; while its [1.6-nanometer](#) process will be ready for commercial production in the second half of 2026. TSMC's constant technological innovation gives it an edge over its competitors.

Yet, before a chip can power an AI server, smartphone, or automobile, it must undergo [a series of highly specialized back-end processes](#) that transform manufactured [wafers](#) (the structures housing semiconductors) into reliable and deployable products. As AI chips become increasingly complex, these downstream capabilities in [assembly, testing, and packaging](#) (ATP) have become just as critical as the advanced manufacturing itself.

ATP serves as the [critical final bridge](#) between raw silicon and the functional microchips inside our modern devices. Assembly is a process wherein a large, newly fabricated silicon wafer is sliced into distinct, miniature squares. The testing process then simulates years of intense real-world usage to filter out any components that fail to meet strict performance metrics, ensuring that only flawless hardware proceeds further down the supply chain. The final stage completes the process by packaging verified chips for global distribution and integration.

In [2023](#), Taiwan's semiconductor packaging and testing sector captured more than 50 percent of the global market, generating NTD 584 billion (USD 18.46 billion) in revenue. Such dominance is the result of more than five decades of ecosystem building. In the 1970s, Taiwan faced both economic turmoil driven by [global oil crises](#), and diplomatic challenges brought about by the loss of its [seat in the United Nations](#) and formal ties with major partners like the [United States](#) and [Japan](#). Recognizing these challenges, the government realized that Taiwan's economy could no longer rely on traditional labor-intensive industries, such as [textiles and plastics](#). Therefore, Taiwan launched the "Ten Major Construction Projects" (十大建設) to transition Taiwan's economy toward [technology- and capital-intensive industries with higher added value](#).

To achieve this, Taiwan established the [Industrial Technology Research Institute](#) (ITRI, 工業技術研究院) in 1973 to invest in technological R&D. Three years later, ITRI signed a technology transfer and licensing agreement with the US semiconductor firm [Radio Corporation of America \(RCA\)](#). The agreement allowed Taiwan to import technology to build 3-inch wafers. The transfer of knowledge built the founda-



Image: A view of the event floor at the COMPUTEX 2026 tradeshow. (Image source: [COM-PUTEX Taipei](#))

tion for Taiwan's [vertically specialized supply chain](#), enabling multiple independent companies in Taiwan to handle individual stages of the production. The [1980s](#) saw the emergence of specialized firms focused on fabrication, testing, and packaging.

Today, five of the [world's ten largest](#) semiconductor assembly and testing companies are headquartered in Taiwan. At the center of this ecosystem is [ASE Group](#) (日月光集團). As the world's [largest independent provider](#) of chip assembly and testing services, ASE Group ensures the newly-manufactured chips are flawless and ready to be installed onto various kinds of electronic devices. Meanwhile, companies such as [King Yuan Electronics Co.](#) (京元電子) and [Powertech Technology](#) (力成科技), each specialize in packing or testing for advanced chips. The success of these companies shows that Taiwan has built competitive advantages across multiple segments of the semiconductor value chain.

Taken together, Taiwan's strategic importance cannot be measured solely by TSMC's leadership in

semiconductor manufacturing. Instead, Taiwan's advantages lie in its complete, highly interconnected semiconductor ecosystem that supports every stage of production.

### *The Cluster for Scale Economy*

Central to Taiwan's success in dominating the semiconductor supply chain is the strategic organization of economic activity within geographically-concentrated technology clusters. Inspired by [Silicon Valley's success](#) in the United States, [Taiwan's science park model](#) brings together manufacturers, suppliers, research institutions, and universities—in close proximity to one another—to create powerful advantages for innovation.

The first science park, the [Hsinchu Science Park](#) (新竹科學園區), was established in 1980 near leading research institutions, including the National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU, 國立陽明交通大學), and the Industrial Technology Research Institute. The combination of government, academic, and industry



Image: Attendees interact with a robot in the “AI Robotics Zone” at the COMPUTEX 2026 trade-show (undated). (Image source: [COMPUTEX Taipei](#))

institutions creates the interconnected ecosystem that fosters close collaboration for technology research and innovation.

Today, the Hsinchu Science Park remains the centerpiece of Taiwan’s high-tech economy. Driven by continued growth in artificial intelligence applications, the annual total revenue of the entire park is expected to surpass [NTD 1.8 trillion \(USD 56.9 billion\) in 2026](#). What makes Hsinchu irreplaceable is the knowledge network it contains. When a new technology sector emerges within the cluster, it does not need to construct its foundational capabilities from scratch. Instead, it can draw on a pre-existing, deeply internalized semiconductor knowledge base that surrounds it within the park. This cross-firm feedback loop depends on physical co-location and cannot be replicated at scale without the broader network supplying equipment, technology, and services.

Over the past decade alone, the total planned area of national science parks has expanded by more than [1,305 hectares \(3224 acres\)](#). Taiwan is actively replicating and extending this model to the south-

ern part of the island, where science parks in [Chiayi](#), [Tainan](#), and [Nanzih](#) are expanding due to the [surge in demand for semiconductors caused by the global AI boom](#).

### *The Human Infrastructure Behind the Chip*

Equally important is the steady supply of high-skilled workers capable of innovating on and operating some of the world’s most advanced manufacturing processes. Workers with STEM degrees are in high demand in Taiwan: it is estimated that the industry will require an additional 193,000 high-skilled workers in 2026.

To sustain the amount of talent needed, the Taiwanese legislature enacted the [National Key Fields Industry-University Cooperation and Skilled Personnel Training Act](#) (國家重點領域產學合作及人才培育創新條例) in 2021. The legal framework aims to accelerate R&D and train mid-to-high-level talent for critical national industries, through joint investment from both the government and industry. Under this scheme, top Taiwanese universities can establish in-

dependently-operated research colleges in partnership with major research-intensive firms. Granting substantial flexibility in budgeting and governance, the law helps schools to develop programs that correspond with the latest industry-need skills.

For instance, with funding from TSMC, [National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University](#) (NYCU, 國立陽明交通大學), established a Department of Microelectronics Engineering, where students can learn cutting-edge research and knowledge in nanotechnology, component architecture, and chip design. Moreover, the [curriculum](#) of NYCU's materials science program is specifically designed to prepare students for careers as high-level process engineers in the semiconductor industry. Students receive [priority consideration for internship opportunities at TSMC](#) and are given access to full-time job interviews. NYCU graduates hired by TSMC may also [receive higher starting salaries](#), with compensation determined by their academic performance and achievements in the program.

Similarly, at [National Sun Yat-sen University \(NSYU, 國立中山大學\)](#), the College of Semiconductor and Advanced Technology Research was designed in close partnership with midstream packaging and testing firms—such as the [ASE Group, Orient Semiconductor Electronics \(OSE, 華泰電子股份有限公司\)](#), and [WinWay Technology \(穎崴科技股份有限公司\)](#). The college aims to eliminate the gap between academic learning and the practical skills that are required at manufacturing sites. These education programs allow [high-skilled human capital](#) to remain Taiwan's lasting edge in the global semiconductor industry. From legislative frameworks to institutional collaboration between firms and universities, Taiwan is investing in the next generation of talent to support the expansion of its physical infrastructure.

**The main point:** Taiwan's position at the center of the global AI supply chain is not the product of a single company. Rather, it is the cumulative outcome of decades of government investment in geographical technology clusters, vertical supply chain diversification, and partnerships between firms and universities. As demand for computing continues to accelerate, these advantages will help Taiwan retain its position as the backbone of the global AI infrastructure.

\*\*\*

## From Episodic Curiosity to Strategic Importance: US Google Search Interest in Taiwan from 2004 to 2026

By: Dmitry Erokhin

*Dmitry Erokhin is a research scholar in the Cooperation and Transformative Governance Research Group of the Advancing Systems Analysis Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (Austria).*

Researchers have come to rely on digital trace data for understanding many of the topics capturing public attention. Digital trace data are the records internet users leave when they interact with the internet. Among these, search engine trends are among the most useful indicators for what topics are commanding public attention. In [politics](#), [economics](#), [public health](#), and other fields, scholars have used search behavior to detect when issues move from the realm of background awareness—and become targets of active information-seeking. Google Trends is useful for this purpose, since Google is the [most widely used search engine](#) in the world. Google Trends also [distinguishes](#) between top searches, rising searches, and breakout searches, thereby allowing researchers to separate steady interest from sudden spikes.

This article examines Google search interest among Americans for the topic “Taiwan,” from the years 2004 (when data first became available) to 2026, along with related search queries. Data regarding the topic “Taiwan” also captures multiple languages and related word forms. I combined Google Trends data with raw search volumes provided from Glimpse. (Glimpse is a third-party Google Trends enhancement tool that estimates absolute search volumes and related trend metrics, supplementing Google Trends' normalized search-interest index.) I then grouped search queries into thematic categories using the OpenAI API model [gpt-5.4-mini](#). The results reveal the precise moments when the topic “Taiwan” becomes salient enough for Americans to actively seek out information. It also reveals the contexts—whether political, technological, cultural, etc.—under which Taiwan attracts attention.

The results are relevant for both American and Taiwanese policy, since public attention is one of the conditions under which foreign policy debates become comprehensible to broader audiences. The United States maintains a robust relationship with



Figure 1: Estimated monthly US Google searches for “Taiwan.” (Image Source: Produced by the author, using [Google Trends](#) and [Glimpse](#))

Taiwan under the legal framework of the [Taiwan Relations Act](#) and other elements of [declaratory policy](#). Taiwan is also increasingly central to [US-China strategic competition](#), [One China policy debates](#), and [semiconductor supply chain vulnerabilities](#). Search behavior helps to show when those policy issues break through to a wider US public.

### ***Taiwan’s US Search Profile is No Longer Only Episodic***

The overall search volume for “Taiwan” between 2004 and 2026 (see Figure 1) reveals a decline in interest over the 2000s, followed by a major late resurgence in the 2020s. In 2004, estimated US monthly searches for “Taiwan” ranged from roughly 1.68 million to 2.83 million. That early high point was not simply generic curiosity: rather, it plausibly reflected interest in [Taiwan’s 2004 presidential election](#) and coinciding [cross-Strait tensions](#). The policy lesson is that Taiwan’s democratic calendar can generate US public attention when elections are understood as having implications for cross-Strait stability. In those moments, American audiences are more likely to seek out more information on Taiwan’s democratic system, as well as the relevance of China and the United States.

From 2005 through 2010, interest generally moved

downward, falling from approximately 1.60 to 1.90 million monthly searches in early 2005 to about 1.00 million by late 2010. Between 2011 and 2019, the pattern shifted from decline to stabilization at a lower baseline, with most months falling between 800,000 and 1.2 million searches. (For comparison, during this same period, US search interest for China ranged from 3.1 million to 6.6 million monthly searches; Germany from 1.8 million to 8.3 million; Hong Kong from 426,000 to 1.5 million; Austria from 277,000 to 461,000; Japan from 2.9 million to 32 million; Mexico from 18 million to 33 million; Türkiye from 379,000 to 2.6 million; Russia from 1.3 million to 4.5 million; and Canada from 4 million to 6.9 million.)

Taiwan occupied a mid-to-lower tier of public search attention: being more visible than some smaller or less frequently searched countries and political entities, but well below major US public reference points such as China, Japan, Mexico, Canada, and Russia. This does not mean Taiwan became strategically unimportant. Rather, it means the US public’s active information-seeking about Taiwan remained limited outside major triggering events. For policymakers, that is a warning that quiet periods should be treated as moments where public understanding can be shaped, so that awareness does not have to be built from the ground up during crises.

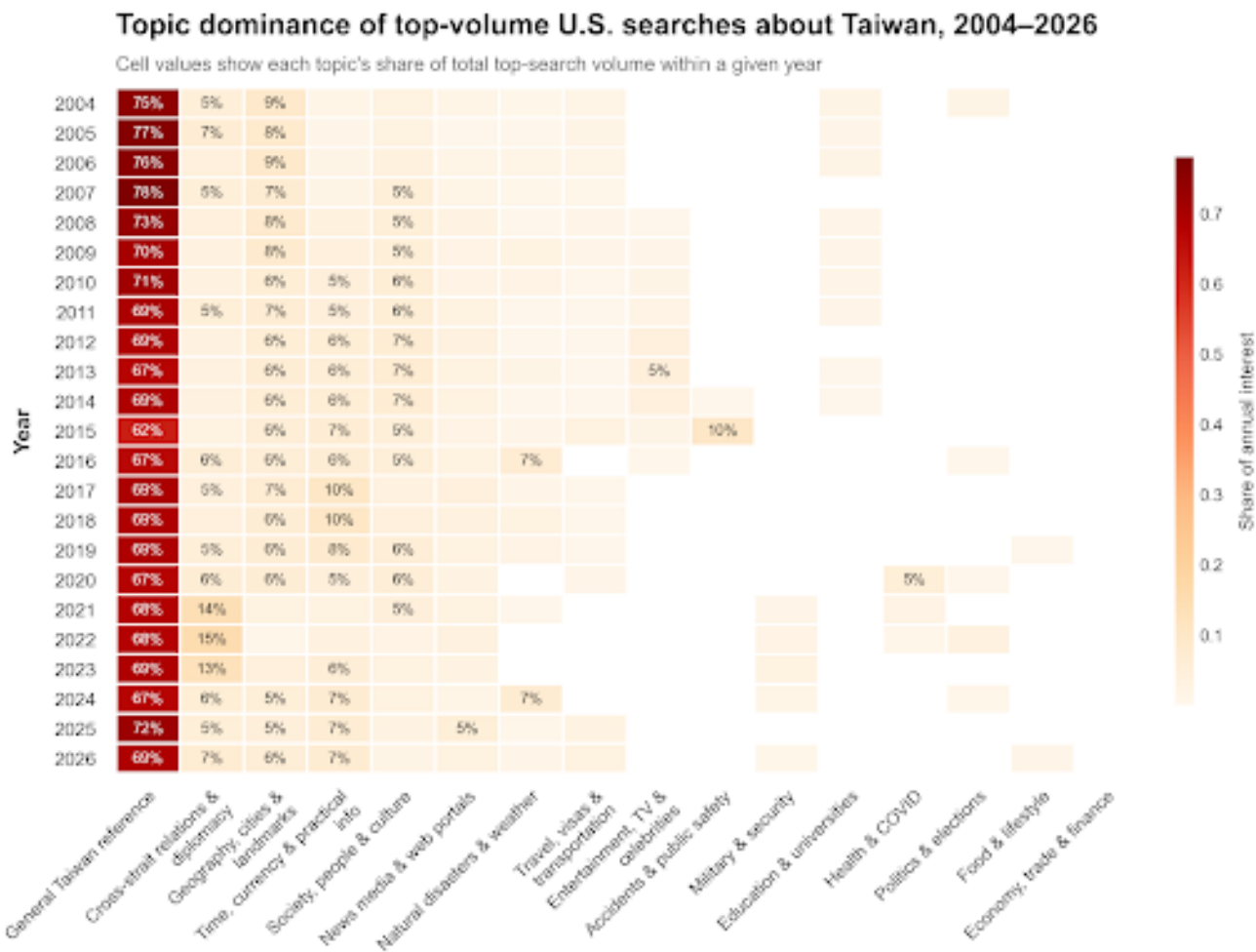


Figure 2: Topic dominance of top-volume US searches about Taiwan, 2004–2026. Each cell shows the topic's share of total top-search volume in that year: for example, if politics & elections sums to 50 and the full year's top-query total is 1000, the cell value is  $50/1000 = 5\%$ . (Image Source: Produced by the author, using Google Trends.)

A clear break in search trends emerged around 2020, and became unmistakable by 2021 and 2022. From 2022, Taiwan moved into a different class of US search attention. In February that year, the topic reached 2.88 million searches, and in August surged to 4.8 million—the highest volume since records began in 2004. The August 2022 peak corresponded to [US Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei](#) and the ensuing military escalation by the People's Republic of China (PRC), widely described as a "[Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis](#)." The scale of this spike becomes clearer when compared with US search interest for other countries and political entities during the same period: Hong Kong ranged from 358,000 to 784,000 monthly searches, Japan from 5.5 million to 8.4 million, South Korea from 2.4 million to 9.3 million, China from 4 million to 15 million, Germany from 2.9 million to 5.6 million, Russia from 1.3 million to

19 million, Israel from 814,000 to 20 million, Austria from 346,000 to 1.1 million, and Türkiye from 715,000 to 4.2 million.

This comparison suggests that Taiwan's 2022 search peak placed it much closer to countries that regularly occupy US public attention, such as Japan, South Korea, Germany, and Türkiye, rather than remaining in the lower-attention category associated with quieter periods. At that moment, Taiwan entered US search behavior not merely as a place, but as a central node curiosity regarding US-China relations. This is relevant for policy, since crisis moments are also learning moments. The explanations, official statements, and media frames available during spikes can shape how Americans understand deterrence, escalation risk, and US commitments.

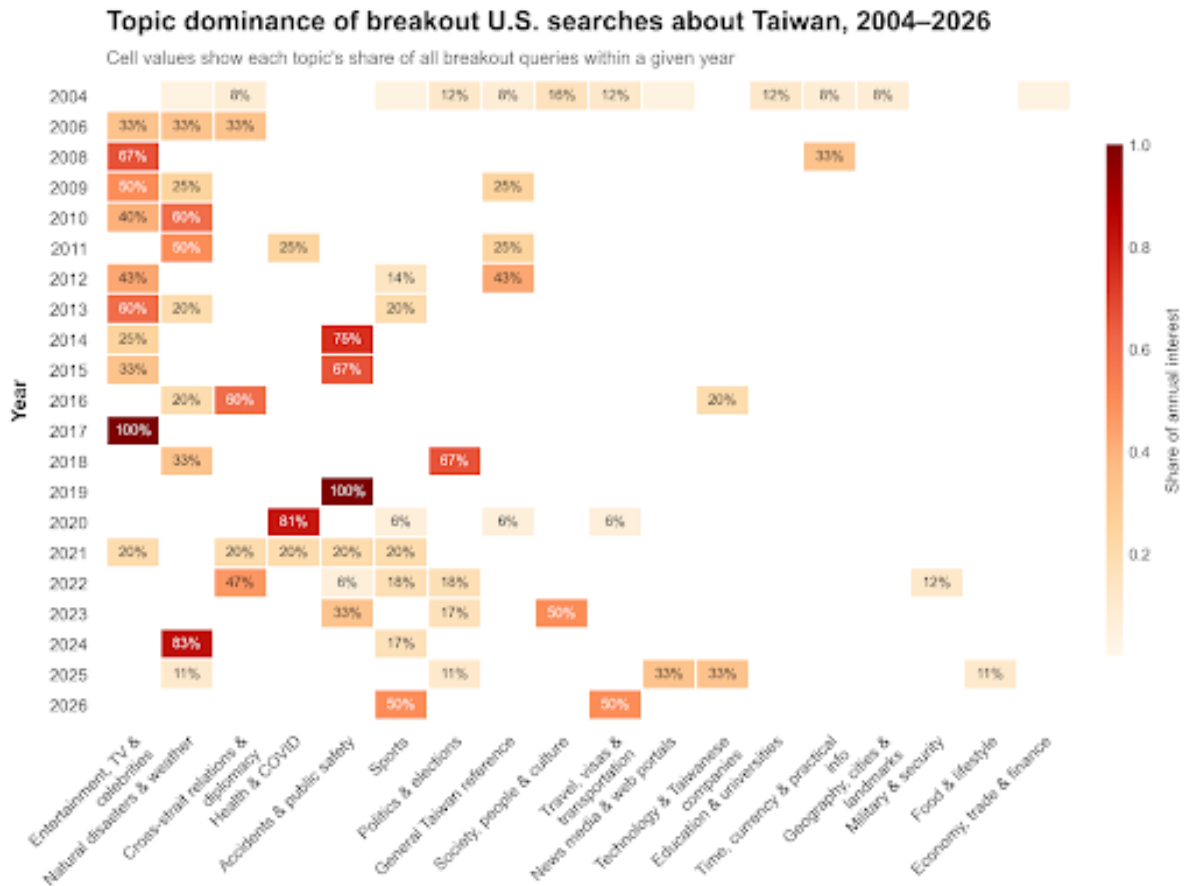


Figure 3: Topic dominance of breakout US searches about Taiwan, 2004-2026. Each cell shows the percentage of all breakout queries in that year for that topic. For example, if a year has 20 breakout queries in total and 5 of them are in military & security, the cell value is 5/20 = 25%. (Image Source: Produced by the author, using Google Trends.)

The 2024-2026 period reveals that Taiwan’s visibility in American society can no longer be understood as the product of isolated news shocks. A January 2024 spike was shaped by [Taiwan’s presidential election](#), while the much larger April 2024 spike aligned with the Hualien earthquake (which the US Geological Survey [identified as the strongest](#) in the area in twenty-five years). These two peaks point to different but complementary forms of relevance: Taiwan as a democracy whose elections affect regional stability, and Taiwan as a society facing humanitarian and resilience challenges. Therefore, US and Taiwanese public diplomacy must factor in both facets of American interest. Security messaging alone cannot explain all US attention to Taiwan. Disaster response, civil resilience, and people-to-people ties also shape how Taiwan becomes visible to Americans.

The most dramatic phase runs from 2024 through March 2026 (the final month of analysis). April 2024 registered 3.89 million searches, followed by a sequence of peaks that included July 2025 at 4.61 million, December 2025 at 4.75 million, and January

2026 at 4.51 million. Search volumes in the first three months of 2026 all remained above 3.40 million, suggesting that heightened interest persisted into the most recent period of observation. Indeed, this persistence is the most important shift in trends across the 2004-2026 period. It suggests that Taiwan has moved from episodic visibility toward sustained salience in American conversations about [military deterrence](#), [supply-chain resilience](#), [semiconductors](#), and the future of US-China relations.

#### **What Americans Search for Shows How Taiwan is Understood**

Further analysis into what themes accompanied searches of “Taiwan” reveal a generally stable trend in specific interests (see Figures 2-4). Across the whole period, the most persistent accompanying themes were basic reference queries regarding Taiwan: such as its identity, naming differences, and close geographical neighbors. In these searches, accompanying terms included “China,” “Formosa,” and “Hong Kong.” This baseline suggests that when

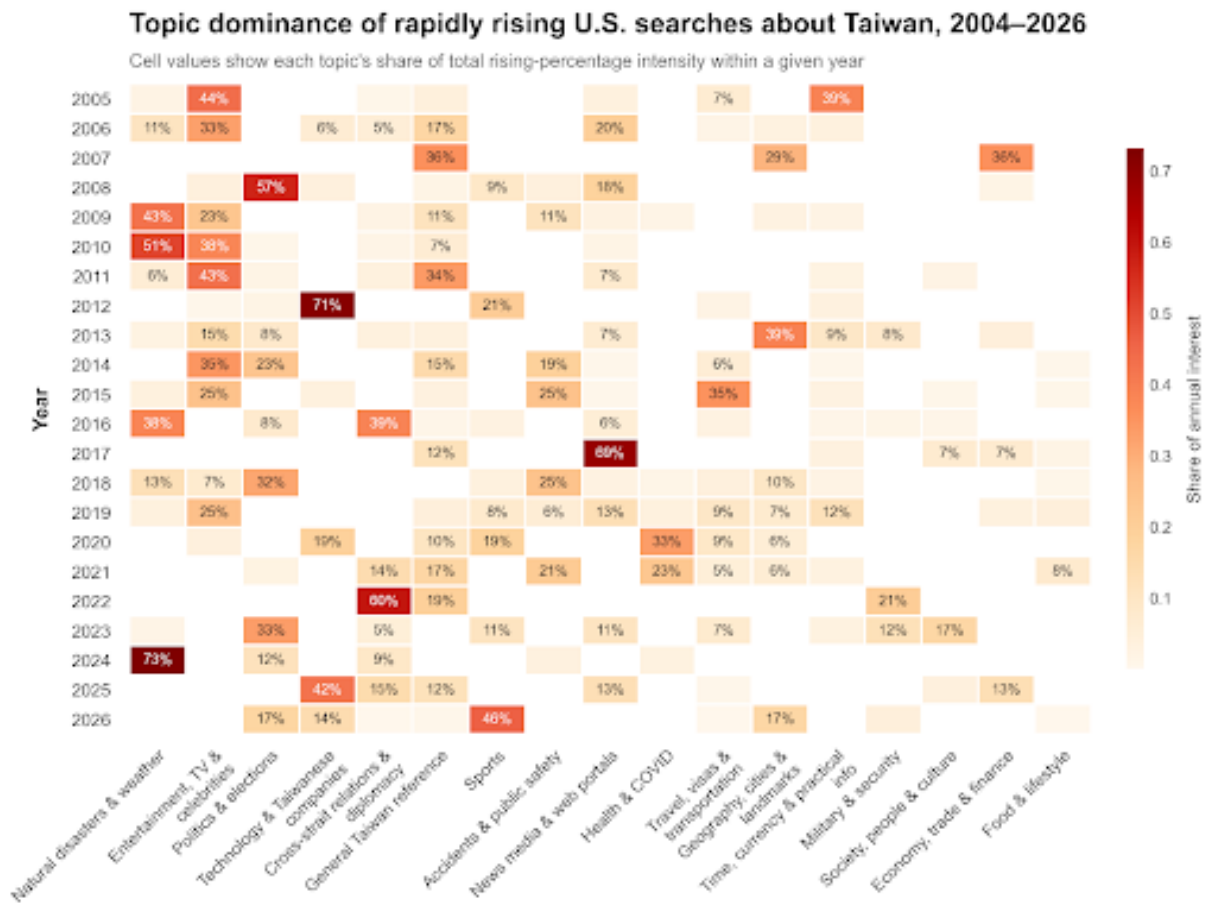


Figure 4: Topic dominance of rapidly rising US searches about Taiwan, 2004–2026. Each cell shows the topic's share of all rising-percentage intensity in that year. For example, if one topic has rising values of +300% and +200% (= 500) and the whole year sums to 2,000, the heatmap cell is  $500/2,000 = 25\%$ . (Produced by the author, using Google Trends.)

looking up Taiwan, many Americans begin with basic questions regarding geography and identity. For US policymakers, this reveals a communication challenge. Explanations of the *Taiwan Relations Act*, the One China policy, cross-Straits deterrence, and Taiwan's democratic system cannot assume that the audience already has a clear conceptual map of Taiwan's status.

In earlier years, accompanying terms were more often related to entertainment, especially Taiwanese dramas and celebrities. Though it is not obviously "policy" content, the pattern is still politically relevant. Cultural and entertainment searches create soft power entry points through which US audiences encounter Taiwan—before they see it as a security issue. However, in the later years of the dataset (2018–2026, and especially 2020–2026), elections, diplomatic tension, military-security language, and Taiwan's technology sector grow more prominent among

searches. This shift in themes tracks Taiwan's changing place in US policy debates. Taiwan is increasingly visible not only as a cultural or geographic object, but as a democratic partner, a potential flashpoint, and a core node in the global semiconductor system.

The distinction between breakout and rising searches is especially important. Breakout terms capture sharp, event-specific bursts of attention, while rising terms reveal the deeper thematic direction of change. A single spike may reflect a disaster, a celebrity story, or one diplomatic event. By contrast, a sustained rise in security or semiconductor-related searches suggests a more durable change in how Taiwan is being framed. US and Taiwanese policymakers should therefore avoid reading search interest only through the lens of the biggest monthly peaks. A more useful policy signal is the combination of volume, topic, and persistence—i.e., what Americans search for when attention spikes, and whether

those searches fade quickly or become part of a longer-term pattern.

### ***Policy Relevance: Search Spikes Are Windows for Public Explanation***

Search data is best understood as an [indicator of attention, rather than endorsement](#). For Taiwan, the practical implication is that US public attention is higher overall, albeit punctuated by spikes tied to particular events. Americans do not search for Taiwan evenly over time. They search when events make Taiwan newly relevant: including elections, acts of military coercion, senior US visits, natural disasters, or concerns over the semiconductor trade. Each of these moments creates a short window in which the public is more receptive to explanation.

That should influence policy communication in at least three ways. First, US and Taiwanese officials should prepare public-facing explanations before predictable attention cycles, especially Taiwanese elections and pre-planned military exercises. Second, crisis communication should connect immediate events to durable policy concepts such as deterrence, peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, supply-chain resilience, and the legal foundations of US-Taiwan relations—rather than treating each spike as a stand-alone news episode. Third, since many searches remain basic or reference-oriented, public communication should be accessible and explanatory, not only aimed at specialists already familiar with cross-Strait policy.

The data also suggests that Taiwan's public image in the United States is multidimensional. Security issues may drive the most strategically consequential attention, but elections, disasters, culture, and technology all shape the search environment. A policy strategy that presents Taiwan only as a military flashpoint risks narrowing public understanding. A stronger approach would link Taiwan's democracy, technological importance, resilience, and social connections to the United States. In that sense, search behavior does not dictate policy, but it identifies where public understanding is thin, when Americans are paying attention, and which narratives are most likely to reach them.

### ***Conclusion***

Google search interest among Americans towards "Taiwan" has undergone a major historical transfor-

mation. A data series from 2004 to 2026 shows high but declining attention in the mid-2000s; a lower and more stable baseline during much of the 2010s; and a sharp and sustained rise from 2021 onward, culminating in record-setting peaks from 2024 through early 2026.

The deeper point is that the meaning of US searches about Taiwan has changed. Taiwan remains anchored by a stable layer of general geographic awareness, but the drivers of heightened US attention have shifted toward elections, disasters, diplomatic crises, military coercion, and semiconductors. Taiwan therefore appears in the American search imagination not as a routine object of continuous public engagement, but as a place that becomes intensely visible when broader events make it strategically, technologically, or culturally important. Over time, those moments of visibility have become more frequent, sustained, and geopolitically charged.

For policymakers, the implication is clear. Search interest should be treated as a real-time signal of when the US public is seeking information about Taiwan and what kinds of explanations it may need. Taiwan policy depends on deterrence, diplomacy, and material capabilities, but it also depends on public understanding during moments of heightened attention. The search record shows that those moments are no longer rare. They are becoming a recurring feature of Taiwan's place in US public and policy debates.

**The main point:** Since 2021, US Google search interest in Taiwan has shifted from mostly episodic, low-intensity attention to sustained and record-high salience. This suggests Taiwan has become increasingly visible to Americans not just as a place, but as a strategic, democratic, and technological focal point shaped by elections, crises, and the trade in semiconductors.

\*\*\*

## **Cheng Li-wun's June 2026 Visit to the United States: Symbolism Over Substance**

*By: Ben Levine and Jessica Shiao*

*Ben Levine is a programs coordinator at the Global Taiwan Institute.*

*Jessica Shiao is a research associate at the Global Taiwan Institute.*



*Image: Cheng Li-wun (second from left) speaking at a forum hosted by the Asia Society in New York (June 9, 2026). (Image source: [Asia Society / YouTube](#))*

On June 1, 2026, Kuomintang (KMT, 中國國民黨) chairwoman Cheng Li-wun (鄭麗文) embarked on a [15-day journey to the United States](#), her first such visit since assuming the party leadership in October 2025. This trip came after her [highly publicized April trip to China](#), which included a meeting with Chinese Communist Party (CCP) General Secretary Xi Jinping. It also followed long and controversial debates in the Taiwanese Legislative Yuan (LY, 立法院) over a proposed [special defense budget](#).

As the chairwoman of Taiwan's main opposition party, Cheng has sought to position herself as an advocate for the ["normalization of peace in the Taiwan Strait"](#) (台海和平常態化). She has repeatedly argued that peaceful dialogue, rather than military confrontation, would be the best path for stability in the region. In this regard, her polarizing discourse has directed constant [criticism](#) towards the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民主進步黨): arguing that excessive reliance on military acquisitions to provide deterrence would only increase misunderstandings between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Despite the expectations, Cheng's visit yielded few tangible results and little attention from Washington. The trip was primarily a domestic political exercise of leadership consolidation, and was intended to present a message of reassurance regarding KMT-US

relations. The trip did not substantially alter external perceptions of the KMT, nor reshape either US-Taiwan relations or cross-Strait dynamics.

#### *Major Themes of Cheng's Visit*

According to the [KMT](#), Cheng's visit was designed to explain the party's cross-Strait policy to an American audience, and to reassure the US on concerns after her April meeting with Xi Jinping. The [itinerary](#) included stops in San Francisco, Boston, New York, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles, in the course of which Cheng met with members of Congress, policy-makers, universities, think tank scholars, and overseas Taiwanese communities.

In these engagements, Cheng's discussions centered around the narrative of "institutionalizing peace and prosperity," wherein she [continued](#) to advocate for a paradigmatic shift: instead of a front line of geopolitical contestation, the First Island Chain should be transformed into a ["chain of peace and prosperity."](#) Moreover, Cheng remarked that restarting dialogue in the Taiwan Strait would be the only way to avoid "Taiwan becoming the next Ukraine."

Additionally, another major theme was Cheng's insistence that Taiwan should [not be treated as a "pawn"](#) by great powers—meaning that it should not be used as leverage in competition between the United States and the PRC negotiations. [1] Specifically,



Image: Cheng Li-wun speaking at an overseas community banquet in Boston (June 6, 2026).  
(Image source: [KMT Official Website](#))

regarding [President Trump's comments](#) on American arms sales to Taiwan as a chip, she stated that "Taiwan can never become or be reduced to a pawn traded away at a negotiating table by great powers."

Regarding cross-strait relations, Cheng [framed](#) her April meeting with Xi Jinping as part of the "1992 Consensus" (92 共識), suggesting that Taiwan and China could coexist peacefully, building mutual trust and cooperation mechanisms. To address US concerns about the KMT's decision to cut the [special defense budget](#), Cheng [stated](#) that the DPP proposal lacked transparency and violated legislative principles, while also calling for [an AI-based defense strategy](#): Taiwan should leverage its semiconductor advantages to develop low-cost asymmetric capabilities, such as AI-driven drone systems and intelligence analysis.

Cheng's interactions with US counterparts included

[Congress members](#) Dan Sullivan, Brian Mast, and Young Kim. She participated in private sessions at the [Hoover Institution](#), the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Stimson Center](#), [CSIS](#), and the [Brookings Institution](#), and appeared in a public event [held by Asia Society](#). However, her [requests](#) for meetings with administrative officials from the National Security Council and representatives from the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) were reportedly cancelled—without public explanation, but possibly as an indication of displeasure over her role in blocking passage of the defense budget.

The messages promoted by Cheng and the party bureaucracy under her control stand in sharp contrast to Taichung Mayor Lu Shiow-yen (盧秀燕), whose March 11-21 visit to the United States was characterized by more institutionally oriented meetings—including [meeting with Ingrid Larson](#), the managing director of the AIT's Washington office. Lu also [pub-](#)

licly expressed support for higher defense spending, aligning her policy views with longstanding US expectations regarding Taiwan's defense posture. As one of the [leading potential KMT presidential candidates in 2028](#), Lu's visit was widely viewed as part of her broader efforts to cultivate international visibility.

### *The Outcomes of Cheng's Visit to the USA*

#### *Task 1: Consolidate Leadership within the KMT (Partial Success)*

Cheng's tour through the USA allowed her to portray herself as someone capable of engaging with both Beijing and Washington—in contrast to President Lai Ching-te, who was denied a [stopover in New York](#) in 2025 and who is derided by the CCP as a ["Taiwanese separatist."](#) In doing so, Cheng sought to [strengthen her position within the party and reinforce her credentials as a potential presidential candidate in 2028](#).

Furthermore, Cheng's visit demonstrated noteworthy support from parts of the Taiwanese American community in the United States. Significant attendance of diaspora representatives in both the [New York and Los Angeles banquets](#) allowed her to test her presidential ambitions, since the overseas community is usually seen as a source of election donations. Nevertheless, the presence of [Chinese-affiliated united front organizations](#) at these banquets—such as Jiao Sheng-an (焦聖安), the president of the New York chapter of the Council for the Promotion of the Peaceful Reunification of China (紐約中國和平統一促進會會長) raised concerns that Cheng could be ["exploited by Beijing."](#)

In this regard, the visit achieved a partial success in consolidating her leadership within the KMT. [While her China trip generated extensive domestic media coverage and sparked debate within Taiwan](#), the US visit attracted considerably less attention. Notably, it generated little public commentary from other senior KMT figures, as Taiwan's political media has largely been focused on other issues, such as the Taipei mayoral elections campaign. [In contrast with the reactions that followed her meeting with Xi Jinping](#),

KMT elected officials and party elites, by and large, have not offered public opinions on Cheng's US trip. Rather, the [media](#) and [political figures](#) have mostly focused on the meetings that US counterparts cancelled on Cheng, portraying it as a failure from the KMT chair to secure bilateral partnerships—and possibly, eroding American trust in Taiwanese leaders.

#### *Task 2: Mitigating Concerns in KMT-US Relations (Mixed Results)*

This trip also represented an effort to reassure the United States following the concerns raised by Cheng's meeting with Xi Jinping, and the recent supplemental defense spending debate in the LY. Before her visit, Cheng emphasized that the KMT remains committed to ["deepening US-Taiwan relations and promoting peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait."](#) Many in Washington remain willing to engage with the KMT despite [persistent concerns over the KMT's policy approach toward Beijing](#). One example of this was Cheng's meeting with Senator Dan Sullivan, who [criticized](#) the KMT in February 2026 for blocking the special defense budget. Sullivan's [discussion](#) with the KMT chair in the course of this trip further reiterates US policymakers' willingness to cooperate with the Taiwanese main opposition party.

However, the visit remained largely within existing congressional channels and policy-community engagement. This limited its broader relevance, and did not appear to alter Washington's perception of either Cheng or the KMT. [Taiwanese media coverage devoted significant attention to the speculation that Cheng might meet President Donald Trump](#), but no such meeting occurred. As a result, the trip generated more attention in Taiwan than it did in Washington itself.

#### *Conclusion: No Significant Impact on Cross-Strait Relations*

Despite Cheng's efforts to position herself and her party as a bridge between Washington and Beijing, the visit had little impact on broader cross-Strait relations. Beijing's Taiwan policy continues to be driven by its assessment of the Lai Ching-te admin-

istration, US-China relations, and long-term strategic considerations. In terms of the PRC government response, Cheng's trip was reduced to an answer in a press conference by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where spokesperson Mao Ning indicated that it would be handled "[in accordance with the One China Principle.](#)"

Similarly, US policy towards Taiwan remains focused on ensuring deterrence, US-Taiwan defense cooperation, and regional stability. During Cheng's earlier visit to Beijing, both sides signaled interest in [institutionalizing cross-strait exchanges and improving communication mechanisms](#). However, no formal institutional framework or concrete agreement was announced following the trip.

Cheng's two trips in April and June differed in terms of intended audiences, and in their political salience. Cheng's visit to China generated greater domestic media attention and KMT intra-party discussion within Taiwan. By contrast, her US visit was more limited in its media visibility and policy reach, remaining largely confined to congressional and think tank interactions. They both demonstrated her ambition to position herself and the KMT as capable of maintaining dialogue with both major powers. Yet beyond the symbolic value of these engagements, there is little evidence that the US trip substantially altered either cross-strait relations or the broader strategic environment. Instead, the greatest significance of the June trip is to be found in Cheng's efforts to strengthen her own domestic political standing and shape the KMT's future direction as a party.

**The main point:** KMT Chairwoman Cheng Li-wun's visit to the United States generated significant political attention but produced little institutional or policy substance, underscoring the symbolic nature of the visits as an attempt to position the KMT as a bridge between the United States and China.

[1] This is a longstanding narrative theme employed widely in KMT / Pan-Blue discourse regarding Taiwan's relations with the United States. For fuller discussion of this issue, see: John Dotson, *Chinese Information Operations against Taiwan: The "Abandoned Chess Piece" and "America Skepticism Theory"*, Global Taiwan Institute (August 2023), [OR\\_ASTAW0807FINAL.pdf](#).

## Gender Equity Education in Taiwan: Past, Present, and Possible Future

By: Juliet Paulson

*Juliet Paulson, an editor and communications specialist in Taipei, is a graduate of the International Master's Program in Asia-Pacific Studies at National Chengchi University, where she was a Fulbright grantee.*

More than two decades have elapsed since Taiwan's *Gender Equity Education Act* (GEEA, 性別平等教育法) went into effect on June 23, 2004. Since that time, continual efforts to renegotiate the act's scope and content have encapsulated broader trends in national gender politics. The history of the GEEA has been characterized by notable advances in education reform, alongside structural challenges hindering full implementation of its provisions. Currently, the GEEA establishes a framework for equal educational rights, anti-discrimination protections in schools, and curricular instruction on gender diversity, sex education, and LGBTQ+ identity. These latter topics have become a particular source of contention for the act's opponents, stymieing progress toward substantive equality. As educational initiatives related to gender diversity and inclusion come under growing scrutiny worldwide, the limitations and successes of the GEEA can serve as a reference for future policy interventions within and beyond Taiwan.

### *Policy Development Background*

Educational equity became an early advocacy priority for Taiwan's burgeoning feminist movement at the close of the twentieth century, as the [democratizing state responded](#) to an emboldened civil society and enacted post-martial law reforms to the academic system. In 1988, the [Awakening Foundation](#) (婦女新知基金會), one of Taiwan's first feminist organizations, published a [handbook](#) that drew wider attention to the pervasive gender stereotypes common to textbooks of the time and called for school curricula to incorporate values of equity and inclusion. By the mid-1990s, the government had begun to [explicitly include](#) gender-related concerns in educational policy agendas. At this stage, many activists used the phrase "equality between both sexes" (兩性平等) in their calls for change, emphasizing the representation of women relative to men in educational materials and the consequences of existing imbalances.

In 2000, the focus of educational advocacy broad-



Image: Parents listening to student performances at Tanzi Public Elementary School in Taichung (臺中市潭子區潭子國民小學) (May 2023). (Image source: [Wikimedia Commons / Taichung City Government](#))

ened following the death of middle school student [Yeh Yung-chih](#) (葉永鈺), who had been bullied by classmates for his perceived feminine characteristics. The incident increased the urgency to push for legislative change and prompted [wider embrace](#) of the term “gender equality” (性別平等) in recognition of more complex manifestations of gender discrimination in the classroom. This linguistic shift—also reflected in the name change of the “Educational Act for Equality Between Both Sexes” legislative draft (兩性平等教育法) to the GEEA—highlights how addressing diverse gendered experiences and expressions beyond a binary framework has been embedded in the act’s core from the beginning. This shift in the legislation’s framing was [driven](#) by the feminists themselves, who offered a framework for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ education within its parameters, even as the provisions for course content on gender diversity and sexuality quickly became its most controversial and neglected components.

The increasing support for educational reform during the early 2000s generated momentum for new and existing civil society groups. In 2002, activists and teachers founded the [Taiwan Gender](#)

[Equity Education Association](#) (TGEEA, 台灣性別平等教育協會) to provide follow-up assistance for the Yeh Yung-chih case and push for greater protection and understanding of gender diversity on school campuses. Subsequently, TGEEA formed a [legislative advocacy coalition](#) with other feminist groups, including the Awakening Foundation and [Taiwan Tongzhi \(LGBTQ+\) Hotline Association](#) (Hotline, 台灣同志諮詢熱線協會), the nation’s oldest and largest LGBTQ+-serving nonprofit. After two more years of discussion, the legislature passed the GEEA on June 4, 2004. The new law went into effect later that month, establishing initial articles against sexual harassment and assault, anti-discrimination protections for teachers and students regarding sexual orientation and gender identity/presentation, and curriculum requirements related to gender equity instruction.

### *Early Implementation and Politicization*

Although the passage of the GEEA marked a crucial first step towards educational equity in Taiwan, its often [protracted and uneven](#) implementation—like other social policy initiatives—presented an imme-

diate challenge to further progress. Across Taiwan, academically high-performing schools and those in urban centers generally enjoy greater access to educational resources than lower-ranking and rural schools. This uneven distribution limits both the availability of relevant pedagogical expertise to all students, and the amount of time teachers at under-resourced schools are willing to devote to subjects that are not exam-oriented. Furthermore, since the GEEA went into effect, policymaking agendas have seldom prioritized gender education, exacerbating the challenges to GEEA implementation.

In addition to these structural barriers, [backlash](#) against GEEA provisions on comprehensive sex education and curricular inclusion of LGBTQ+ identity spread in the early 2010s. The GEEA legitimized and provided an official framework for pre-existing efforts to promote gender education in schools and teacher trainings, and organizations like TGEEA continued to create supplementary learning materials to embody this purpose. Despite being within the scope of the GEEA, some of these materials became the target of parent groups and budding campaigns to restrict GEEA enforcement. Perhaps most prominently, the sex education short film “Shall We Swim” (青春水漾), first released by TGEEA in 2011, became subject to [numerous bans and protests](#)—due largely to its portrayal of same-sex relationships.

This timeline corresponds to the parallel expansion of movements for and against same-sex marriage legalization throughout the 2010s. Opposition to the GEEA surged leading up to the passage of marriage equality legislation in 2019, during which both supporters and detractors increasingly framed gender diversity education and same-sex marriage as ideologically linked policy goals. The 2018 national referendum included five items associated with marriage equality and GEEA implementation, such as a motion to [block](#) the enforcement of LGBTQ+ education requirements in elementary and middle schools (which passed with approximately 67 percent of the vote) and a counter-motion to [protect](#) the requirements at all levels (supported by only 34 percent of voters).

The divisive referendum campaign period profoundly affected schools’ willingness to foster discussion on topics related to gender diversity and LGBTQ+ identity, regardless of GEEA provisions. This trend is illustrated by a dramatic decrease in the number of gender diversity education lectures delivered by Ho-

line volunteers at schools: from [415 in 2016](#) to [139 in 2017](#), and further still to [123 in 2018](#). Although institutional support for gender equity education has since begun to recover, the tensions that emerged during Taiwan’s marriage equality movement have had lasting consequences for the political climate in which social policy is developed, revised, and enacted.

### *Persistent Challenges and Future Possibilities*

As its history illustrates, the GEEA has generally received the most attention during periods characterized by broader social transformations in gender relations and positioning, a trend that has remained evident in recent years. In addition to minor revisions made largely in the early 2010s, the GEEA was most recently and extensively amended during the summer of 2023 in response to Taiwan’s [#MeToo movement](#). These amendments expanded the definition and regulatory scope of campus gender incidents (校園性別事件), increased reporting requirements, strengthened investigation and oversight mechanisms, and reaffirmed the mandatory nature of gender equity awareness activities.

With each revision cycle, the GEEA brings Taiwan’s educational landscape closer to the ideal of equality that activists have long envisioned. Nevertheless, advocates have consistently highlighted several key challenges that continue to impede this goal. Sociologist and founding member of TGEEA Yang Chia-ling (楊佳羚) [has researched](#) the continued discrepancy between GEEA provisions on paper and their practical implementation in schools—which is often frustrated by the lack of adequate teacher training on gender issues, incentives to devote greater focus to exam-oriented subjects, and administrators’ fear of generating controversy over course content. For initiatives like Hotline’s [educational outreach program](#) to effectively reach students, any visits must be invited (and thus sanctioned) by school personnel, who may face pressure from parents and other third parties to limit or avoid gender diverse and LGBTQ+-inclusive course content.

As is commonly the case with mounting [book bans and teaching material challenges](#) in the United States, individuals lodging complaints against gender-related course content in Taiwanese classrooms often exert influence through broader networks of parent associations and anti-LGBTQ+ groups. In one notable 2017 example, a teacher in Kaohsiung [re-](#)

between GEEA provisions on paper and their practical implementation in schools—which is often frustrated by the lack of adequate teacher training on gender issues, incentives to devote greater focus to exam-oriented subjects, and administrators' fear of generating controversy over course content. For initiatives like Hotline's [educational outreach program](#) to effectively reach students, any visits must be invited (and thus sanctioned) by school personnel, who may face pressure from parents and other third parties to limit or avoid gender diverse and LGBTQ+-inclusive course content.

As is commonly the case with mounting [book bans and teaching material challenges](#) in the United States, individuals lodging complaints against gender-related course content in Taiwanese classrooms often exert influence through broader networks of parent associations and anti-LGBTQ+ groups. In one notable 2017 example, a teacher in Kaohsiung [received complaints](#) from members of such groups nationwide after his sex education lesson for elementary schoolers was televised, even though his students' parents had approved the lesson in advance. Beyond the school level, politicians' reluctance to invest in gender education continues to pose barriers: in early 2025, gender movement organizations (including [TGEEA](#), [Hotline](#), and [the Awakening Foundation](#)) released statements criticizing proposed [budget cuts](#) that would suspend nearly all funding for the Executive Yuan's Department of Gender Equality. Although the cuts were ultimately rescinded, such proposals can block efforts to further improve and implement policies like the GEEA.

Advocates have also expressed concerns regarding the full integration of comprehensive sex and gender education into everyday curricula. The GEEA stipulates that schools must provide students with at least four hours of instruction in gender equity education per semester, but teachers may lack incentives to devote any additional class time to gender issues. When such instruction primarily involves one-off lectures or volunteer-driven classroom visits, this status quo may reinforce a sense of distance between the topic of gender equality and other required subjects, allowing educators to outsource responsibility for initiating these discussions. Efforts to promote gender equity education are often [siloed rather than systemic](#), focusing on a handful of common themes (e.g., discrimination and sexual health) rather than a more nuanced, holistic approach to inclusion that is embedded within daily classroom activities.

Despite these challenges, the GEEA has undeniably advanced the status of gender education in Taiwan since 2004, increasing social awareness and acceptance of gender diversity. LGBTQ+ and gender-diverse students in Taiwan—particularly those who are transgender—face lingering [harassment and bias](#) as the increasing backlash against gender education initiatives worldwide complicates their implementation. Acts like the GEEA provide a crucial framework to ensure students are granted equal opportunities to learn in a safe and open environment. In 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed that parents should be able to [remove their children from LGBTQ+-inclusive lessons](#), reflecting similar retrenchments to educational equity nationwide. Measures to shield students from any exposure to positive portrayals of gender diversity contrast with the ultimate goal of gender education policies to normalize and integrate such content across all facets of the educational environment. As Taiwan's case demonstrates, the success of these policies is contingent upon sustained commitment at both the institutional and individual levels. Further stakeholder consultation, dedicated resource provision, and continued policy and strategy adjustment in response to current needs will be essential to fully embed the GEEA within Taiwan's educational system.

**The main point:** Throughout its more than 20-year history, Taiwan's *Gender Equity Education Act* has been at the center of calls for inclusive education reform and broader shifts in societal gender discourses. This policy has provided crucial protections for students and educators while increasing attention to gender-related topics in the classroom, but persistent policy and implementation gaps must be addressed to truly fulfill the act's purpose.

\*\*\*