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From “Nuclear-Free Homeland” to Pragmatic Pivot: The DPP’s Evolving Nuclear Policy

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Since its inception in 1986, Taiwan’s Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民進黨) has adopted an anti-nuclear policy stance, aligning with Taiwan’s environmental and civil society groups in pursuing a “nuclear-free homeland” as a [core party goal](#). By contrast, the Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨) has traditionally been more supportive of nuclear power: all three of Taiwan’s nuclear power plants—Chinshan, Kuosheng, and Maanshan—comprising a total of six reactors, were constructed under KMT governments during the 1970s and 1980s.

Since President Lai Ching-te (賴清德) of the DPP assumed power in May 2024, his government has indicated a shift in the party’s long-held anti-nuclear policy by considering the [restart](#) of nuclear reactors and exploring advanced [small modular reactor](#) (SMR) technologies.

This brief has three objectives: first, it examines the DPP’s nuclear policy since the party first came into power in 2000; second, it analyzes the emerging changes in the DPP’s stance under the Lai Administration; and third, it explores the factors driving these changes.

DPP Nuclear Policy in Retrospect

The DPP emerged from the *Tangwai* (黨外, “outside the party”) pro-democracy movement of the 1980s. Its anti-nuclear stance was both an environmental commitment and a political strategy to challenge the authoritarian development model of the ruling KMT. When the party came into power for the first time in 2000, it put its nuclear-related policies into practice. The administration of President Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁, 2000–2008) [halted the construction](#) of the Fourth

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Image: Activists pose on top of simulated barrels of nuclear waste at an anti-nuclear power protest near the Presidential Office Building in Taipei (March 2013). (Image source: [Wiki-media Commons / VOA](#)).

Nuclear Power Plant (Lungmen), which had already begun. It also codified the “nuclear-free homeland” principle into the [Basic Environment Act of 2002](#) (環境基本法第23條), and [established](#) a Nuclear-Free Homeland Advisory Committee (非核家園推動委員會) that coordinated civil society, environmental groups, and government agencies to advance the phaseout agenda.

Japan’s Fukushima nuclear accident in 2011 gave the DPP, which was then in opposition, renewed momentum to advance its long-standing “nuclear-free homeland” agenda: phasing out Taiwan’s reactors and embedding anti-nuclear policies more firmly into national energy policy.

Upon the DPP’s return to power in 2016, the administration of President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) (2016–2024) [launched a comprehensive energy transition](#)

[plan](#). It enacted the [Electricity Act Amendment of 2017](#), which codified the principle of a “nuclear-free homeland” into law and [directed](#) Taipower (台灣電力公司)—Taiwan’s state-owned electric utility responsible for power generation and distribution—to restructure, promote, and liberalize the electricity market.

As the initial 40-year operation period of nuclear power plants approached, the DPP [decided](#) to retire them. The first of the six reactors, Chinshan Unit 1, [was closed](#) in December 2018; and the last, Maanshan Unit 2, was [closed by](#) May 2025. With this, Taiwan’s nuclear energy reached zero, and the DPP achieved its goal of a “nuclear-free homeland.”

To replace nuclear energy—which at times had constituted up to [20 percent](#) of Taiwan’s energy supply—the Tsai Administration [pursued](#) a policy with

energy targets of 20 percent renewables, 30 percent coal, and 50 percent liquefied natural gas (LNG) by 2025. It made [massive investments](#) in offshore wind and solar, positioning Taiwan among the [top five](#) globally in [offshore wind capacity](#), while renewables grew from [4.1 percent](#) in 2016 to [12 percent](#) by 2024.

Crucially, the Tsai Administration pursued the “nuclear-free homeland” policy despite growing broad overall support for nuclear energy. For instance, in the 2018 [referendum](#), approximately 59.5 percent of voters voted in favour of keeping nuclear power available, versus 40.5 percent who voted against it. The DPP continued its resolute policy of a “nuclear-free homeland” during Tsai’s two terms as president. However, this policy began to reverse under her successor, President Lai Ching-te.

Lai’s Reversal of Nuclear Policy

After taking office in May 2024, although President [Lai](#) did not halt the ongoing decommissioning of the last reactor, he adopted a more pragmatic approach to nuclear technology. He [indicated](#) the possibility of reviving existing reactors and deploying advanced nuclear energy technology such as “small modular reactors” (SMRs)—conditioned on ensuring nuclear safety, resolving nuclear waste issues, and achieving social consensus. He [instructed](#) both the Nuclear Safety Commission and Taipower to initiate the regulatory and safety inspection processes required before any restart could proceed.

Lai [defended](#) this policy reversal by arguing that reviewing a possible restart of nuclear power plants was fully compatible with Taiwan’s continued push for renewable energy, and necessary due to the strain that expanding AI applications are placing on the power grid. Under the Lai Administration, the DPP made a pragmatic reassessment of its long-standing opposition to nuclear energy, even though this put it at odds with [environmentalist groups](#) that had long been its partners.

Factors Behind the Reversal in Nuclear Policy

Several factors played a role in the gradual reversal of the DPP’s policy, as discussed below.

The Politics of Electricity

The Taiwanese public has demonstrated growing support for the continued use of nuclear energy, as evidenced by two recent referendums. As mentioned before, [in the 2018 referendum](#), 59.5 percent

of voters favored maintaining nuclear power generation. While the 2025 referendum [failed](#) due to low voter turnout, an overwhelming 74 percent of those who did cast ballots supported restarting the Maanshan Nuclear Power Plant. This growing support indicates a shift from the post-Fukushima period, when a majority of the public backed the DPP’s nuclear-free homeland policy, toward support for nuclear energy. This shift stems from concerns over energy security, rising electricity demand from AI and semiconductors, and heavy reliance on imported energy that is vulnerable to geopolitical tensions.

In the summer of 2025, the DPP faced political setbacks during its [“Great Recall” campaign](#), which aimed to unseat 31 KMT legislators; ultimately, not a single opposition lawmaker lost their seat. These political defeats bolstered the KMT–TPP (民眾黨, Taiwan People’s Party) opposition coalition, which currently dominates the Legislative Yuan. With Taiwan slated to hold local elections in late 2026, it is in the DPP’s interest to pursue a publicly popular policy.

Setbacks in the Renewable Energy Transition

The DPP’s original energy platform dictated that nuclear power could be replaced by a combination of LNG, coal reduction, and—critically—renewables reaching 20 percent of the energy mix by 2025. However, that target was not met. [Renewables](#) accounted for only 13.1 percent of electricity generation in 2025, well below the policy target. Although solar and wind generation continued to expand, progress was hampered by [corruption scandals](#) and repeated project delays, pushing the official deadline for the 20 percent renewable target to November 2026.

The energy gap left by the phasing out of nuclear power was mainly filled by LNG, which accounted for approximately 47.8 percent of Taiwan’s electricity generation in 2025. This imposed geopolitical challenges at the regional and international levels. Regionally, as LNG tankers must pass through contested sea lanes, Taiwan’s energy supply is [structurally vulnerable](#) to maritime blockades or coercive military scenarios orchestrated by the People’s Republic of China (PRC). As LNG cannot be easily stockpiled for long periods, Taiwan would face rapid and potentially crippling energy shortages if cut off from sea-lane shipments. These concerns drove the controversial construction of Taiwan’s third LNG receiving terminal at Guantang, off the coast of [Datan](#) in Taoyuan. The terminal was completed in 2025, despite strong environmental opposition and political

debate.

Internationally, the US-Israel strikes on Iran in early 2026 and the resulting regional tensions further exposed Taiwan's energy vulnerabilities. For instance, Taiwan imported nearly [33 percent of its LNG](#) in 2025 from Qatar, whose exports were severely disrupted by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Taiwan maintains only [11 days](#) of gas reserves, the lowest in East Asia. The crisis exposed Taiwan's energy fragility and contributed to President Lai's decision to reconsider his party's long-held nuclear policy.

AI and Semiconductor Demand

The structural demand-side shift has been equally decisive in considering nuclear energy options. Taiwan's electricity [consumption](#) has increased significantly—and will continue to [rise](#), driven by the AI boom and semiconductor expansion. Unlike industrial loads that can flex, high-performance AI clusters operate continuously, requiring uninterrupted electricity for both computation and cooling—making baseload supply, of the kind nuclear power uniquely provides, a strategic necessity rather than a preference. In the context of the [AI boom](#), the Lai Administration stated it would explore nuclear options.

Addressing Concerns of Nuclear Proliferation

While the recent bipartisan alignment in support of reviving nuclear energy is driven by energy security, there is speculation that Taiwan might pursue the development of nuclear weapons. Prior to its expulsion from the United Nations in 1971, Taiwan [signed and ratified](#) the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Taiwan maintains [unique trilateral safeguards arrangements](#) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United States, ensuring that its nuclear installations remain fully transparent and open to international inspections. Open-source analysis reveals no concrete evidence indicating that pursuit of nuclear weapons is a driving motive behind the current energy policy pivot. However, given the historical fact that Taiwan [secretly pursued a nuclear weapons program](#) in the 1970s and 1980s—which was [dismantled](#) only under intense pressure from the United States—lingering [external analysis](#) persists.

Furthermore, shifting regional debates (particularly in South Korea and Japan) on nuclear deterrence, coupled with intensifying cross-Strait tensions and

Taiwan's adoption of an [asymmetric defense posture](#), may prompt some analysts to speculate about potential long-term strategic hedging. While civil nuclear know-how and infrastructure provide latent technical capabilities, any current speculation about a clandestine weapons program remains entirely speculative. The current policy shift toward restarting nuclear power plants seems to be driven solely by energy security and economic factors.

The main point: The DPP is gradually pivoting away from its well-established “nuclear-free homeland” ideology to embrace nuclear energy. This pragmatic shift is driven by domestic political pressures, AI-fueled electricity demand, the strategic risks of over-reliance on LNG, and the realities of a stalled renewable transition. The fact that both the government and the opposition now align in support of nuclear energy heralds a profound and consequential shift in Taiwan's nuclear energy policy.

A Paralyzed National Communications Commission is Putting Taiwan's National Security at Risk

By: Mina Chen and Karyn Kao

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For the past 20 years, the National Communications Commission (國家通訊傳播委員會) has served as a significant regulatory force in Taiwan's telecommunications and media environment. Yet in recent years, its operations have been considerably compromised, as the Legislative Yuan's (LY, 立法院) voting majority has vetoed every new commissioner proposed by Taiwan's Executive Yuan (EY, 行政院) since 2024. As of the beginning of August, all commissioner seats in the NCC are now vacant as a result of this impasse between the EY and the majority caucus in the LY. As long as the NCC lacks a quorum of commissioners, it cannot function, and Taiwan's national security is at risk: in these circumstances, both critical communications infrastructure and drone initiatives cannot receive the regulatory certainty needed for stable development.

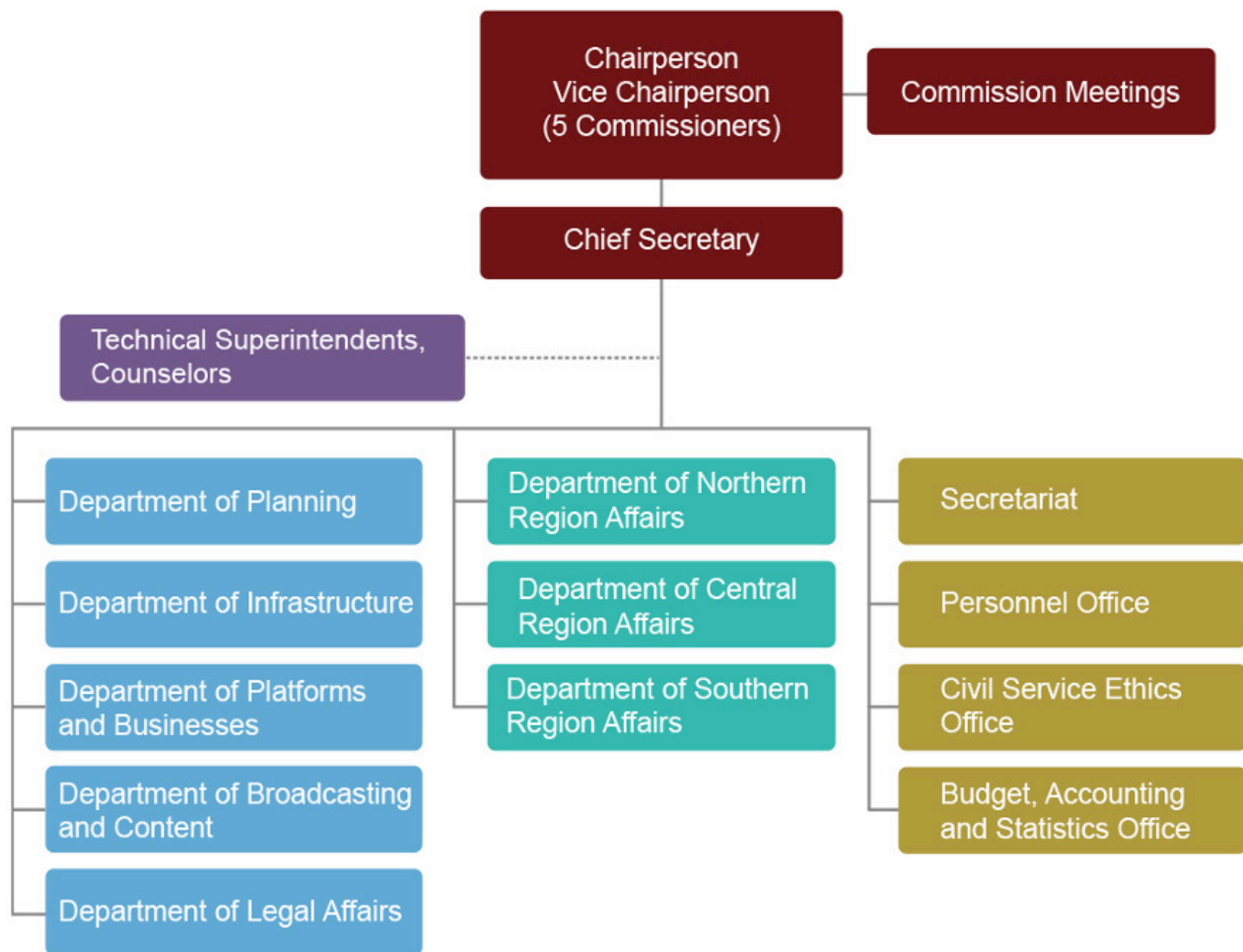


Image: The Organization Structure of National Communications Commissions (NCC). (Image source: [NCC Website](#))

What is the NCC?

The [National Communications Commission](#) is an independent statutory agency of the EY, responsible for regulating telecommunications and broadcasting services. Established in 2006, its [mandate](#) includes issuing licenses, inspecting and certifying communication systems, managing radio frequencies, and strengthening the development of Taiwan's telecommunications industries. The NCC is also responsible for ensuring media professionalism.

The NCC comprises [seven full-time commissioners](#), each serving a four-year term (and eligible for one consecutive reappointment). They are [nominated by Taiwan's premier](#) (the head of the EY) and require approval by the LY. To ensure bipartisanship, no more than [half of the commissioners](#) can belong to the same political party. The [NCC's decision-making](#)

[process](#) is based on majority voting. Major matters under the NCC's legal authority must be decided through a commission meeting, and a resolution requires the support of [more than half of the commissioners](#). If a commissioner supports a final decision but holds different reasoning, they can [submit a concurring opinion](#). Meanwhile, if a commissioner disagrees with the decision, they can share [a dissenting opinion](#). These opinions are published alongside the commission's decisions for transparency and accountability.

However, when there are [too few commissioners](#) to reach the required decision-making threshold, the NCC is only empowered to conduct routine administrative work through its professional staff. However, professional staff cannot substitute for commissioners in formal NCC decisions. Therefore, the deadlock of commissioner appointments has created an



Image: The flags of the Transportation Ministry (top), the ROC (middle), and the NCC flag (bottom) fly outside of the NCC's office building in Taipei (2014). (Image source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

important vulnerability. When there are not enough commissioners, the NCC loses the legal authority to safeguard the public interest, ensure fair market competition, and preserve Taiwan's media integrity.

A full bench of commissioners is necessary for important decisions. For instance, the NCC commissioners [approved separate mergers](#) by two of Taiwan's large telecom operators with smaller carriers in January 2023. To ensure the fair distribution of resources and market competition, the [NCC conditioned the mergers](#) on the two companies improving their service quality, with the mergers subject to an annual review. In the beginning of 2024, the NCC commissioners [blocked](#) a pro-Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, 民進黨) media channel from purchasing a stake in an internet and cable channel company. Concerned about the possibility of media monopolization and the lack of transparency in the shareholder structure, the NCC [fined](#) the digital communication company more than USD 450,000 and demanded corrective measures.

Nevertheless, some of the NCC's rulings have provoked partisan controversy. A prominent example is NCC's decision in 2020 not to renew the broadcasting license for CTi News (中天新聞台). The NCC's

decision followed a series of regulatory violations by CTi News. In 2019, there were accounting for 31.5 percent of all complaints regarding TV stations. These complaints [accused CTi News](#) of including unverified information in the news and disproportionately reporting certain politicians. The NCC judged that CTi News' [major shareholders](#) [including its biggest shareholder Tsai Eng-meng (蔡衍明), who runs the food manufacturing conglomerate [Want Want China \(旺旺集團\)](#) in China] were significantly involved in news production, thus violating news production ethics and [Radio and Television Act](#) (廣播電視法).

Therefore, the NCC's commissioners unanimously voted [7–0 to deny CTi News' license renewal](#) on November 18, 2020. The decision generated controversy in Taiwan as CTi News is often understood as a pro-Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨) media outlet. Some critics argued that the decision was influenced by partisan politics and [infringed on press freedom](#). Yet, CTi News [lost 17 out of the 26](#) ensuing lawsuits it filed against NCC, undermining the argument that the NCC's decision lacked merit.

The Impasse in the Legislative Yuan

The NCC has not been able to function at its full capacity since July of 2024, following the [victory](#) of the KMT and the Taiwan People's Party (TPP, 民眾黨) in the January 2024 legislative elections. Since then, the KMT and TPP legislative majority has continuously vetoed the EY's commissioner appointments. On July 31, 2024, four out of the seven commissioners [finished their terms](#), leaving only three seats filled. In response, the EY [extended](#) the term of one commissioner to sustain at least half of total seats—which is the minimum required by the [NCC Organization Act](#) (國家通訊傳播委員會組織法) for commission meetings to issue decisions. However, in November 2024, KMT and TPP legislators [passed](#) an amendment to the *NCC Organization Act* that removed EY's power to extend commissioner terms. This law thus crippled the NCC, as it could no longer achieve a functioning quorum.

In July, 2025, the EY [announced](#) a new list of commissioner nominations, [comprising](#) one KMT member and three candidates with no party affiliation. Nevertheless, KMT and TPP jointly [rejected](#) the appointments in a November LY session, leaving the NCC without commissioner authority.

On July 31 of this year, the three remaining NCC commissioners all [finished](#) their four-year terms. This is the first time since the creation of the NCC in 2006 that there have been no active commissioners. In the past two years, the three NCC commissioners have only been able to hold [advisory meetings](#) to advance the administrative functions of the organization. Starting from August 1, the lack of commissioners [prevents](#) the NCC from holding even advisory meetings. In their absence, the chief secretary of the NCC has [assumed](#) some commissioner functions.

Of particular concern, the LY's 2026 budget (passed on August 14) [removes](#) 56 percent of the funding for NCC's basic administrative operations budget. This budget cut will impact the NCC's water and electricity, rent, security, and building maintenance. On top of the commissioners' absence, the NCC is poised to lose access to funding for day-to-day operations.

In an effort to restore full function to the NCC, the EY [proposed](#) another set of commissioner appointments this July, but with seven candidates this time. A DPP legislator on the LY's Transportation Committee (交通委員會) held a [public hearing](#) on August 19, urging the acceleration of the LY's appointment review process.

The Consequences of an NCC Without a Quorum

As the NCC's mandate spans telecommunications regulation and the protection of Taiwan's information environment, a malfunctioning NCC has consequences far beyond administrative inefficiency. As of August 1 this year, there are [700 outstanding cases](#) that the NCC has lacked the commissioner authority to process. These cases cover [six major areas](#): including public safety, transportation, remote and off-shore communications, research and development, and foreign telecom companies operating in Taiwan.

1) Public Safety and Critical Infrastructure

A malfunctioning NCC poses an immediate risk to the reliability of Taiwan's public safety and transportation systems. Of the 700 cases yet unresolved by the NCC, [84 concern radio-frequency equipment](#) used by the police, firefighters, medical emergency services, and the coast guard. Without the necessary approval, these Taiwanese first responders cannot replace or install new radio equipment if radio frequency [permit licenses cannot be verified by Customs](#). The consequences also extend to transportation. As most air and sea vessels rely on radar to operate, delayed approval of new communication equipment could [halt the activity](#) of aircraft and ships. If vessels are forced to extend the lifetime of existing radar equipment, there may be risks to transportation safety and operational continuity. Moreover, if [mobile broadband base stations](#) in remote areas and offshore islands [cannot receive upgrades or replacements](#), these regions will suffer from impaired connectivity with Taiwan's main island. Impaired connectivity is especially concerning during Taiwan's typhoon season, when reliable communication is essential for receiving emergency alerts, reporting disasters and coordinating responses. These examples demonstrate that the NCC's inability to approve critical equipment can directly affect Taiwan's emergency response and transportation safety.

2) Economic Development and Taiwan's Digital Resilience

The NCC's regulatory capacity is also closely connected to Taiwan's economic competitiveness and ability to develop resilient communications infrastructure. Because licensing and equipment certification requires NCC approval, some [Taiwanese businesses now face delays](#) in installing communications equipment for their products or research and development. Such regulatory paralysis also creates barriers

for companies seeking to introduce new communications technologies to Taiwan, such as satellite connectivity. Taiwan's government has placed emphasis on launching [low-earth orbit \(LEO\) communications satellites](#) in order to reduce its [reliance on undersea cable for outbound communications](#). The Ministry of Digital Affairs (數位發展部) has announced [a USD 18 million plan](#) to build more than 700 satellite receiver stations in two years. Last month, the government further amended the [Telecommunications Management Act](#) (電信管理法) to allow foreign LEO satellite providers—[such as SpaceX's Starlink](#)—to potentially enter the market. However, the inability to process applications for emerging technologies could delay the diversification of Taiwan's communications infrastructure.

3) Information Environment and Social Trust

The NCC's responsibilities also extend to broadcasting and media consumption within Taiwan's broader information environment. Its functions include [reviewing cable television and broadcast license renewals and applications](#), and enforcing [accountability for the dissemination of false information](#). When NCC does not have a quorum of commissioners, it can only institute temporary or workaround measures. Although these measures prevent immediate disruption, prolonged reliance on temporary arrangements creates regulatory uncertainty and weakens institutional accountability. Over time, this undermines public confidence in the communications regulatory system. In 2025, the Taiwanese government discovered [45,000 sets of inauthentic social-media accounts](#) and [2.3 million pieces of disinformation](#).

Since mis/disinformation has become ubiquitous in Taiwan's information environment, Taiwan faces the additional challenge of preventing false narratives from being promoted through television and other mass media. Information operations linked to the People's Republic of China (PRC) [have capitalized on vulnerabilities within Taiwan's own media ecosystem](#). Strategies include the utilization of PRC-linked capital to acquire or invest in major media outlets, allowing Beijing-aligned interests to influence editorial priorities and amplify narratives favorable to the PRC. Under Taiwan's [Satellite Broadcasting Act](#) (衛星廣播電視法), television news programs are required to adhere to practices such as fact-checking and fairness, and the [NCC has the authority to address violations](#). Without a functioning NCC, misleading information circulated through news media outlets

will increase public confusion and deepen political polarization. This regulatory void creates opportunities for foreign influence operations to exploit Taiwan's open information environment.

4) Technological Development and the Drone Industry

NCC is also a key player in market regulation to protect and support Taiwan's drone industry. According to [Article 65 of the Telecommunications Management Act](#), certain controlled radio frequency devices must receive approval from the NCC before they can be manufactured or imported. In addition, [anyone who manufactures or imports these controlled devices](#) must regularly report information about the devices. Since most drones available on the market are controlled remotely via [radio frequency modules, such as 4G or Wi-Fi](#), they fall within the NCC's regulatory boundaries. Even with three commissioners, the NCC struggled to maintain operations. Now, with none, its functions are impaired to the point [that drones cannot clear manufacturing or import review](#).

As of July 2026, the NCC has [halted the import of 48 drone models](#) in order to prevent unqualified items (such as devices that overlap restricted radio frequencies or contain components that are prohibited) from entering the Taiwanese market. Should national frequency bands be disrupted or occupied by unlawful devices that circumvent a non-functional NCC, Taiwan's military and public safety communications could be compromised—thereby affecting the government's ability to effectively respond to emergencies or security threats.

Moreover, based on the 1998 [APEC-TEL Mutual Recognition Arrangement](#) (亞太經濟合作會議電信設備符合性評鑑相互承認協定), Taiwan-certified drones can gain easier access to international markets because NCC approval is recognized by participating economies. This reduces the need for Taiwan's drones to earn certification in every new market. In the first quarter of 2026, Taiwan's drone export value surged to [USD 115 million](#), surpassing the export value for the whole of 2025 (USD 93 million). If the NCC cannot reliably certify new Taiwanese drone models, drone exporters face greater uncertainty and costs when entering international markets.

Conclusion

In sum, the NCC's current dysfunction should be understood as a broader national security and economic resilience problem. The impact of prolonged regulatory paralysis weakens Taiwan's ability

to maintain a trusted information environment and creates uncertainty for businesses developing and deploying critical communications technologies. Taiwan's opposition parties should enter negotiations with the government to produce an acceptable list of commissioner nominees who can restore the NCC's full decision-making capacity. Meanwhile, the 2027 budget must not retain a provision removing funds for the NCC's daily operating expenses.

The main point: Taiwan's National Communications Commission (NCC) plays a critical role in safeguarding public safety, digital development, information security, and emerging technological advancement. Stalled by domestic political deadlocks since 2024, the paralysis of the NCC has significant implications for Taiwan's national security and societal resilience.

Japan's Strategic Clarity towards Taiwan

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Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has articulated a clear strategy for Taiwan's security, as opposed to the ambiguous statements offered by President Trump after the [Trump-Xi Summit](#) in May of this year. In November 2025, Takaichi stated that a Chinese attack on Taiwan could constitute a ["survival-threatening situation" for Japan](#). She also [lifted the ban on full lethal weapons](#) sales to more than 17 countries; visited South Korea, Australia, Vietnam, and met with the Philippines president; and strengthened strategic partnerships with major middle powers such as Canada, India, and European states. [In the Shangri-La Dialogue this year](#), Japan's Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi sharply rebuffed claims of "new militarism" leveled by the People's Republic of China (PRC), and opposed "unilateral changes to the *status quo* by force or coercion."

Why does Japan show strong support and strategic clarity for the defense of Taiwan? The PRC's increasingly aggressive posture, and the Trump Adminis-

tration's ambiguous cross-Straits policies, have compelled Japan to assume both a policy of strategic clarity and a leading role in regional security.

Three Periods of Japan-Taiwan Relations Post World War II

The history of Japan-Taiwan relations provides the foundation for Japan's current security policies. In broad terms, the bilateral relationship has undergone three periods after World War II (WWII): the first from 1952 to 1972, when there were formal diplomatic ties and an unofficial Cold War alliance between Japan and the Republic of China; the second from 1972 to 2000, wherein bilateral relations were practical and ["unofficial in name only;"](#) and the third from 2000 to the present, with informal but close and active bilateral relations.

In 1952, Japan signed the ["Treaty of Peace"](#) with the Republic of China (ROC) government in Taipei, formally ending the war between the two countries and establishing diplomatic relations. Following the treaty, the two countries established mutual embassies in Taipei and Tokyo, operating with [full ambassadorial-level](#) representation. In June 1957, Japanese PM Nobusuke made an official visit to Taiwan. Moreover, between 1945 and 1972, Japan provided Taiwan with economic aid and technical assistance and promoted private investment, facilitating Taiwan's early industrialization.

In this period, Japan's commitment to defend Taiwan was reflected in the [US-Japan Security Treaty](#), which included a "Far East" clause: "[I]n the Far East, the US is granted the use by its land, air and naval forces of facilities and areas in Japan." The Japanese government [clarified that "Far East"](#) included territories under the control of the ROC. Therefore, in the event of a Chinese attack, the US and Japan could defend Taiwan. On this basis, the US military was stationed in Taiwan for approximately 28 years until 1979. Thus, Taiwan and Japan were Cold War allies against communist regimes in the region, and this became the foundation for bilateral relations between them.

In 1972, following the US-China rapprochement, Japan established relations with the PRC through a [Joint Communiqué](#). Japan followed a "One-China Policy" and cut ties with Taiwan. However, Japan and Taiwan developed practical, deep, and ["unofficial in name only"](#) relations, especially in the economic, social, and cultural domains. People-to-people ties



Image: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in Japan's legislature on October 21, 2025, when she was designated as Japan's prime minister. (Image source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

were also strengthened through [tourism](#) and the return of media outlets to Taiwan. Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan's president in office between 1988 and 2000, enjoyed a warm relationship with the people and culture of Japan, and significantly [promoted bilateral relations](#).

Despite the lack of official ties, [the 1997 US-Japan Defense Guidelines](#) emphasized that the two states should address the "situations in areas surrounding Japan"—which was widely understood to include the Taiwan Strait, although Japan officials avoided specifically defining this concept. Furthermore, Japan's Diet adopted the 1999 [Act Concerning Measures for Peace and Safety in Areas Surrounding Japan](#), and advanced legislative and regulatory authorizations to implement the revised *Guidelines*.

From the year 2000, the geopolitical situation changed: China rose, became a powerful hegemon in Asia, and intensified its expansionism in the Taiwan Strait and the South and East China Seas. In Ja-

pan, the Koizumi Administration (2001-2006) viewed Taiwan as a vital democratic partner and [security buffer](#). Koizumi [publicly stated](#) that Japan had an "important role" in fostering a cross-Straits dialogue without the use of force. In 2005, the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee issued a [joint statement](#) that listed for the first time a "peaceful resolution of issues across the Taiwan Strait" among its objectives.

Under PMs Shinzo Abe (2006-2007, 2012-2020) and Sanae Takaichi (2025-present), Japan aimed to play a greater role in regional stability and to strengthen the relationship with Taiwan. Both administrations focused on China's aggressive behavior and security cooperation with Taiwan. [Abe advocated](#) the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) in 2007, the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" concept in 2016, and held many events to enhance multilateral defense cooperation. Additionally, defense mechanisms in the Taiwan Strait expanded through the [2014 Cabinet reinterpretation of Article 9](#), the 2015 revision of the [US-Japan Guidelines for Defense Cooperation](#),



*Image: Then-ROC Premier Chen Cheng shaking hands with Japan's representative Isao Kawada on the occasion of the signing of the ROC-Japan peace treaty in Taipei (April 28, 1952).
(Image source: [ROC Executive Yuan](#))*

and the 2015 [Legislation for Peace and Security](#)—thereby strengthening the legitimacy of defense [cooperation with Taiwan](#). On November 7, 2025, PM Takaichi [explicitly defined the Taiwan crisis](#) as a “survival-threatening situation,” and that she would apply the 2015 *Peace and Security Legislation* to require Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to respond. Takaishi has therefore explicitly articulated a stance of “strategic clarity,” marking the highest level of defense cooperation between Taiwan and Japan since 1972.

The Implications of Trump Administration Policy in Japan-Taiwan Relations

Takaichi's “strategic clarity” has marked a shift in Japan's national security posture towards Taiwan, and stands in contrast to Trump's second-term Taiwan policy. When Trump took office in 2025, he did not clarify whether or not he would send troops to protect Taiwan. As Trump sought to improve relations with the PRC, support for Taiwan faced limitations: for instance, the denial of a US transit for Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te. After the 2026 [Trump-Xi summit](#), Trump almost accepted Xi's narrative regarding Taiwan's independence, and asserted that arms sales to Taiwan constituted an obstacle in negotiations with the PRC.

In this regard, Takaichi [bore the heavy pressure](#) of economic coercion, diplomatic isolation, and intense criticism from China—even as Trump remained silent after her statements, [urging Japan not to aggravate](#) the dispute. In response, Japan [expressed frustrations](#) over the lack of explicit US support. Reliability in Washington further [eroded](#) as uncertainty over trade, investment requirements, and higher tariffs damaged mutual trust.

In addition, the [2025 US National Security Strategy](#) prioritized the Western Hemisphere over the Indo-Pacific. As [a report by the Asia Society Policy Institute](#) states, “[t]he lack of a coherent American approach to the Indo-Pacific undermines the alliance's ability to adapt to a changing security landscape. Tokyo fears that Trump will try for a deal with Beijing that leaves Taiwan's status unclear.” According to an [Asahi Shimbun poll](#), 77 percent of Japanese respondents do not think that the US would defend Japan in a military crisis.

Takaichi's Approach toward Taiwan

Although some experts have [suggested](#) that “Japan must stabilize relations with China and reformulate its Indo-Pacific strategy around inclusive regional cooperation,” this is not Takaichi's favored approach.

Instead, her strategy has aimed at [sustaining ties with the US](#), [increasing defense spending and developing counterattack capabilities](#), [coordinating regional multilateralism](#), and increasing [cooperation with middle powers](#).

Thus, Takaichi has refused to reverse her pro-Taiwan statements. Instead, she continues to maintain an assertive approach, insists on strategic clarity in defending Taiwan, and strengthens relations with Indo-Pacific allies to contain China. If Takaichi followed Trump's cross-strait policy, China's ambition to annex Taiwan would be emboldened. Hence, Japan must maintain strategic clarity and assume a leadership role in the region. Despite China hoping that Japan would follow Trump's policy, Takaichi acted in the opposite direction and [infuriated Beijing](#).

Japan and Taiwan have enjoyed solid relations in the years following WWII. Amid uncertainty surrounding Trump's Indo-Pacific policy, the relationship between Taiwan and Japan is destined to grow more. Only through mutual interdependence and mutual defense can they collectively safeguard freedom and stability in the region.

The main point: Japan's current Taiwan policy is the result of both historical and current factors. After WWII, both sides established close relations. As the PRC's aggression increases, and as uncertainty rises regarding Trump's Indo-Pacific policy, Japan has demonstrated strategic clarity and assumed a leading role in defending Taiwan.

Taiwan Needs a New Sanctions Strategy

By: James Jennion

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Taiwan's advanced chip manufacturing industry—commonly referred to as its “silicon shield”—provides for much of its security. As China intensifies efforts to isolate the island, Taiwan may have to learn to wield the silicon sword.

Powerful authoritarian states support China's efforts to isolate and weaken Taiwan, seemingly without response from Taipei. Despite its central role in global technology supply chains, Taiwan is generally unwilling to employ its unique economic strengths to constrain its adversaries. This allows such actors—primarily China and its key partners, such as Russia and the Myanmar junta—to work against Taiwan's interests with little resistance, and to use Taiwan as a means of evading sanctions introduced by other democracies.

To better defend its own interests, and avoid undermining partner sanctions, Taiwan should develop a comprehensive sanctions strategy of its own.

Taiwan's Current Approach to Sanctions Policy

While Taiwan has been rhetorically supportive of Western sanctions, it currently lacks an independent, comprehensive sanctions regime of its own. Taiwan's export controls are managed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA, 經濟部), with its [current approach](#) mainly centered on export controls of high-tech goods. The [Strategic High-Tech Commodity \(SHTC, 戰略性高科技貨品\) List](#) is Taiwan's primary vehicle for applying export restrictions. The SHTC List designates foreign entities for export controls to prevent them from using Taiwanese technological products for producing weapons of mass destruction—including chemical, nuclear, and biological weapons, or related military activities. Put simply, Taiwan applies restrictions to the export of technological products that could be used for offensive or illicit purposes, and the entities that may use these products for such purposes.

Taiwan tends to follow, rather than lead, the implementation of restrictions. Following [criticism](#) over its ongoing importation of Russian fuel sources in 2025, the Taiwanese government stated that it would “[cooperate](#)” on further restrictions of Russian energy imports if other democratic actors, such as the United States and EU, introduced them. Due to its lack of recognition as a state, Taiwan is unable to participate in multilateral export control bodies like the [Wassenaar Arrangement](#), but it still adheres to the group's

definitions and restrictions on military and dual-use technologies.

Taiwan has recently begun to experiment with a firmer sanctions approach, demonstrating that decisionmakers in Taipei recognize the importance of a more assertive foreign policy. In 2025, for the first time, Taipei instrumentalized its unique position in the global semiconductor supply chain to [apply export controls](#) to South Africa-bound goods, following a diplomatic dispute over the location of Taiwan's *de facto* embassy. These controls were later [rolled back](#), following the agreement of further negotiations.

Additionally, Taiwan has [applied](#) export controls to Chinese tech giants such as Huawei, with any sales to such companies now requiring a license. Taiwan is now reportedly [planning](#) to introduce curbs on advanced chips to all customers in China, instead of only the specific companies previously designated. Despite these reports, Taiwanese officials still seem reluctant to restrict exports in the primary sector driving Taiwan's [rapid economic growth](#).

A detractor might argue that a more thorough sanctions approach would risk antagonizing sanctioned actors. But those likely to be sanctioned are already firmly acting against Taiwan's interests anyway. The lack of a comprehensive approach causes indirect support to adversarial states who would support an attempt by China to change the cross-strait *status quo* by force.

The Strategic Cost of Weak Sanctions

This current, list-based approach leads to inevitable gaps, including the failure to fully account for dual-use exports—products intended for commercial use that are repurposed for military applications. Taiwanese-manufactured components are regularly [found](#) in Russian weapons and equipment used in its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. For example, one Taiwanese audio-visual technology company still appears to be actively [selling](#) products on the Russian market; the same company's components have been [found](#) in Russian reconnaissance drones destroyed in Ukraine.

Taiwan is also a [major destination](#) for the transshipment of sensitive goods into Russia, a process whereby goods are shipped to their final destination via Taiwan as a stopover in order to conceal a product's true origin or destination. In spite of this strategic

service to Russia, Moscow is [supporting](#) China with preparations for possible military action in Taiwan, by providing China with airborne infiltration equipment and the training of paratroopers in employing this equipment.

Likewise, Taiwan has not placed restrictions on any officials linked to the Myanmar military junta. The [SHTC List](#) only names two entities connected to Myanmar: a telecommunications company part-owned by the Myanmar military, and a North Korean individual [connected](#) to the Myanmar arms trade. Taiwan is reportedly used by the Myanmar military [as a destination](#) for the repair of arms manufacturing equipment, allowing the junta to bypass European sanctions. The same junta [enthusiastically backs](#) Beijing's claims and narratives around Taiwan, with a December 2025 statement outlining the junta's view that "the Taiwan issue is China's internal affairs and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China".

These gaps provide adversarial actors an avenue to evade these sanctions through exploiting Taiwanese technology and capabilities, lessening the impact of sanctions designated by other democracies.

How Taiwan Could Strengthen Its Approach

As demonstrated by these examples, Taiwan's current approach, and its reliance on deadlocked international standards bodies, is inadequate. A new policy should look beyond the rather narrowly defined criteria of SHTC, including stricter measures to prevent the use of Taiwanese ports for transshipments of sanctioned goods, and the use of Taiwan as a venue for actors sanctioned by other democracies to secure goods and services they could not do so elsewhere.

This may require Taiwanese policymakers to move to a broader model whereby whole countries as well as their territories and industries are subjected to controls and bans. Sanctions measures should be employable in direct response to actions that harm Taiwan's interests and security, including diplomatic and public support for Beijing's efforts to [distort narratives](#) that erase and delegitimize Taiwan. Such measures could prove hugely effective, as Taiwan controls more than [90 percent](#) of advanced semiconductor process capacity. Measures to prevent—or even slow down—access to these components could have a significant impact on the economies and development of states acting against Taiwan.

A major roadblock could lie in the potential need for new legislation. The [SHTC regulatory regime](#), as the name suggests, is specifically limited to strategic high-tech commodities. Other existing legislation is narrowly constrained to tackling [terrorist financing](#) and [money laundering](#).

Meanwhile, the clauses relevant to trade and exports in Taiwan's wide-ranging [National Security Act](#) (國家安全法) primarily concern the disclosure of trade secrets, rather than sanctions more broadly. These contrast with, for example, the United Kingdom's 2018 [Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act](#), which affords the UK authorities broader powers to implement sanctions based on foreign policy objectives, national security, human rights, and a range of other issues. In contrast, Taiwan's current legislation may not provide the government sufficient powers to implement a more ambitious regime, necessitating new laws to be passed.

Taiwanese politics are bitterly divided, with Taiwan's Legislative Yuan controlled by the opposition Kuomintang (KMT, 國民黨). The KMT has a strong tendency to frustrate government-initiated bills and budgets, most recently by [passing](#) President Lai Ching-te's proposed NTD 1.25 trillion (USD 40 billion) special defense budget at a drastically watered down size of NTD 780 billion (USD 25 billion), with cuts focused primarily on domestic defense programs. Any efforts to build a stronger sanctions regime could face similar obstructionism, as the KMT generally [supports](#) closer economic integration between Taiwan and China—though it should be noted that the party has previously voiced [support](#) for sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, meaning there could be support for measures targeting third countries.

While Taiwan would clearly be unable to completely match Beijing's economic coercive capabilities, its specific strengths could still be used to complicate other actors' decisions that threaten Taiwan's core interests or its *status quo*. As it stands, such actors can do so largely without restraint or response, undermining both Taiwan's security and sanctions introduced by other democracies.

The main point: Taiwan has historically refrained from instrumentalizing its prodigious economic strength through sanctions regimes imposed on antagonistic foreign countries. Yet in a recent case involving South Africa, Taipei showed the influence

of sanctions based around semiconductor export controls. To truly develop a sanctions strategy, Taiwan's legislature will likely need to pass legislation to support government policy.

From Pandemic Prevention to Pharmaceutical Resilience: Why Health Security Should Be Part of US-Taiwan Economic Security Cooperation

By: Hanson Wu

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Introduction

As strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific region intensifies, Washington increasingly views Taiwan as both a reliable partner for democracy and regional stability, and as a critical contributor to supply-chain resilience and technology security. However, one important area has room for improvement: health security and pharmaceutical resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the strategic consequences of fragile medical supply chains, shortages of critical medicines, and overreliance on concentrated sources of pharmaceutical ingredients and manufacturing capacity. As Taiwan sits on the democratic frontline against authoritarian expansionism, its ability to maintain access to essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, and innovative therapies during a crisis should not be framed as a mere healthcare issue. It is a matter of national resilience and survival.

Recent developments in the US trade platform showcase this evolving perspective. In June 2026, Senator Todd Young (R-IN) and a group of Senate colleagues wrote a [joint letter](#) urging the US Trade Representative (USTR) to investigate foreign pharmaceutical pricing practices that, in their view, suppress the value of innovation and shift a disproportionate share of global research and development costs onto the United States. Later, USTR initiated a Section 301 [investigation](#) into Germany's pharmaceutical pricing



Image: Then-Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar II (center of line) arriving at the Presidential Office Building in Taipei during his August 2020 visit to Taiwan. (Image source: [Wikimedia Commons / ROC Presidential Office](#))

ing policies. These actions arguably underscore a broader trend in Washington: pharmaceutical policy is increasingly viewed through the lens of economic security, innovation competitiveness, and national resilience.

As the United States and Taiwan deepen their cooperation on economic security, policymakers inside the Beltway should recognize that pharmaceutical resilience should be considered a natural extension of existing efforts to strengthen democratic supply chains.

From Public Health Participation to Health Security Partnership

Congressional interest in US-Taiwan health cooperation has developed gradually through bipartisan efforts—during and after the COVID-19 pandemic—to elevate health security within the broader framework of Taiwan’s overall resilience. These efforts reflect a broader awareness that health security is an increasingly important component of resilience,

economic security, and strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific region.

As Taiwan has long been excluded from international arenas, US-Taiwan health cooperation has historically focused [on supporting Taiwan’s meaningful participation in multilateral health organizations, particularly the World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). Recent years have also shown growing opportunities for new and emerging areas of cooperation, reflecting a broader effort to link public health, security, and regional resilience.

Notably, then-US Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar II visited Taiwan in August 2020 and witnessed the signing of the US-Taiwan health cooperation [MOU](#). Azar’s visit—the first by a US HHS Secretary, and the highest-level visit by a US Cabinet official since 1979—demonstrated the unique position of public health in the US-Taiwan relationship.

Another milestone came in 2021, with Section [1260B](#) of the *FY2021 US National Defense Authorization*

Act (NDAA). This legislation required the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, to assess the feasibility of establishing a US-Taiwan medical security partnership. The provision specifically identified potential areas of cooperation: including pandemic preparedness, vaccines and medicines, medical supplies, and scientific exchanges. Furthermore, by placing health-related cooperation within a defense authorization bill, Congress effectively recognized that medical readiness and health security are both indispensable components of broader resilience and security planning. Notably, this congressional effort was subsequently reinforced by a 2022 Department of Defense [assessment](#), which concluded that expanded health-related cooperation with Taiwan was “not only feasible, but also desirable.”

Congressional interest in US-Taiwan health security did not end with the FY2021 NDAA. In 2021, Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) and Representative Ro Khanna (D-CA) introduced the bipartisan and bicameral [United States-Taiwan Public Health Protection Act](#), which proposed establishing a US-Taiwan Infectious Disease Monitoring Center within the American Institute in Taipei (AIT) to strengthen regional disease surveillance and public health preparedness. While the legislation was not enacted as a standalone bill, its underlying concept—that Taiwan should not be viewed merely as a participant in global health institutions, but as a responsible stakeholder in Indo-Pacific health security—continued to gain traction in Congress.

This broader vision was later reflected in the FY2023 NDAA through the incorporation of key elements of [the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act \(TERA\)](#), which expanded US-Taiwan cooperation on defense, economic resilience, countering coercion, and support for Taiwan’s meaningful international participation. Taken together, these legislative initiatives might imply an important US policy transition: Taiwan is increasingly viewed not simply as a partner seeking greater international space, but as a capable contributor to regional resilience—including in areas where health security intersects with broader economic and strategic preparedness.

The next phase of this agenda should recognize that health security is not limited to disease surveillance or pandemic response. A truly resilient Taiwan must also be able to sustain access to essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, active pharmaceutical ingredi-

ents, and advanced therapies during a public health emergency, natural disaster, or Taiwan Strait contingency. In this regard, US-Taiwan health security co-operation should include pharmaceutical resilience and biomedical supply-chain security in its agenda.

Taiwan’s Healthcare Strengths and Strategic Vulnerabilities

Taiwan’s healthcare system is widely admired for its universal coverage, cost-effectiveness, and clinical infrastructure. Combined with [strong regulatory institutions, advanced digital health capabilities, and growing experience in real-world evidence generation](#), Taiwan enjoys many of the assets needed to become a reliable partner in regional health security. Meanwhile, it is also necessary for policymakers to recognize that Taiwan’s long-term resilience depends on the ability to maintain an uninterrupted pharmaceutical supply during a contingency.

Like many healthcare systems around the world, Taiwan has been challenged by balancing affordability, timely patient access, innovation incentives, and the integrity of supply chains. Budgetary pressures and reimbursement uncertainties may inadvertently contribute to medicine shortages, delayed availability of innovative therapies, and reduced incentives for manufacturers to prioritize the market during global disruption. These challenges are not merely healthcare management issues—they should be placed in a broader resilience framework.

In a future public health emergency, natural disaster, or Taiwan Strait contingency, disruptions in the supply of essential medicines, active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), biologics, or advanced therapies could place significant strain on Taiwan’s ability to maintain healthcare operations and public morale. Taiwan’s vulnerability is also not limited to physical supply chains. [Recent assessments by Taiwan’s National Security Bureau](#) have identified healthcare institutions among the key targets of PRC cyber activities, highlighting the broader challenge of maintaining healthcare continuity during periods of intensified tension and disruption. For this reason, resilience planning should extend beyond military readiness and technological security to include healthcare systems and pharmaceutical preparedness.

The Trade Policy Opportunity

Recent trade developments provide a unique oppor-

tunity to advance this agenda. The 2026 [US-Taiwan Agreement on Reciprocal Trade \(ART\)](#) included commitments related to pharmaceutical and medical device regulation, enhanced transparency, and efforts to address non-tariff barriers affecting healthcare products. The [agreement](#) also emphasized supply-chain resilience and broader economic cooperation. These provisions represent an important step forward. However, regulatory streamlining alone is insufficient to achieve long-term resilience.

On the other hand, inclusion of pharmaceutical market access into bilateral trade talks could be a solution for addressing the growing US-Taiwan trade imbalance. As Taiwan's tech-driven trade surplus with the United States continues to grow rapidly, actively incorporating cutting-edge biomedical technologies into Taiwan's healthcare system might offer an opportunity to rebalance bilateral trade flows. Furthermore, Taipei can demonstrate its readiness to move beyond its role as a manufacturing partner in the tech supply chain into a strategic partner that actively co-invests in the resilience of Western medical innovation.

Future discussions should focus not only on how quickly medical products can access the Taiwanese market, but also on whether healthcare systems are structured in ways that support sustainable access, supply continuity, and biomedical innovation in the long term. The broader lesson is that healthcare governance should no longer be viewed solely as a domestic social policy issue. It has gradually intersected with trade policy, economic security, and strategic resilience.

Policy Recommendations for US Policymakers

1. Advance a THRIVE Taiwan Act to Assess US-Taiwan Health Security Gaps

Congress should build upon the legislative foundation established by the FY2021 NDAA's medical security partnership and subsequent congressional proposals spearheading US-Taiwan public health cooperation. A practical next step would be to introduce a *THRIVE Taiwan Act*—the *Taiwan Health Resilience, Innovation, and Vitality Enhancement Act*—directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in coordination with the Secretary of State and other relevant agencies, to assess current gaps in the US-Taiwan health security partnership, identify existing mechanisms, and develop a strategy for strengthening cooperation on pharmaceutical

resilience and biomedical supply-chain security.

The bill could require the administration to evaluate Taiwan's vulnerabilities related to essential medicines, active pharmaceutical ingredients, diagnostics, vaccines, and advanced therapies; assess how existing US-Taiwan health, economic, and security mechanisms could be better aligned; and report to Congress on policy recommendations for strengthening Taiwan's whole-of-society resilience, including considerations for public health.

2. Integrate Pharmaceutical Resilience into US-Taiwan Economic Security Frameworks

Recent US trade concerns involving pharmaceutical pricing policies in Germany and the [United Kingdom](#) illustrate that healthcare and pharmaceutical access issues should be treated as part of US-Taiwan trade and economic security engagement. These issues could be addressed through existing or future discussions related to the [Agreement on Reciprocal Trade](#) and other economic cooperation frameworks.

Instead of focusing narrowly on market access challenges, economic security frameworks should address broader topics such as pharmaceutical supply-chain resilience, innovation policy, reimbursement transparency, emergency preparedness, and trusted biomedical partnerships. Recent US debates regarding global pharmaceutical pricing have underscored that innovation itself is increasingly viewed as a strategic asset, making healthcare governance relevant not only to public health, but also to economic competitiveness and national resilience.

Integrating these issues into existing economic engagement frameworks would reinforce the growing recognition that healthcare and economic security are increasingly intertwined. Taiwan's strengths in clinical research, digital health, regulatory science, and real-world data capabilities could further support a more integrated innovation partnership, allowing Taiwan to be viewed as a trusted contributor to regional biomedical resilience.

3. Use the 2020 Health Cooperation MOU Renewal as a Near-Term Implementation Vehicle

The impending renewal of the 2020 [US-Taiwan Health Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) presents a unique opportunity to broaden the scope of bilateral cooperation. While the existing MOU has facilitated valuable collaboration in areas

such as public health, disease prevention, and pandemic preparedness, ever-changing geopolitical and supply-chain realities call for a more comprehensive approach.

As part of the renewal process, both sides should use the MOU as a near-term implementation vehicle for the broader agenda outlined above, including working-level consultations on pharmaceutical supply-chain resilience, access to innovative therapies, the value of health investment, regulatory cooperation, clinical research collaboration, real-world evidence generation, and preparedness for future health emergencies.

This approach would allow both sides to make quick progress before new legislation is enacted. Rather than creating a separate institutional structure, the renewed MOU could help transform shared priorities into practical cooperation, identify early deliverables, and lay the groundwork for deeper collaboration over time. The renewal of the MOU therefore offers an opportunity to elevate health security from a largely technical issue to a strategic pillar of US-Taiwan cooperation.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, US-Taiwan cooperation has expanded from traditional defense ties to include economic security, supply-chain resilience, and whole-of-society preparedness. In the next decade, pharmaceutical resilience should become its next strategic pillar. Proposed Congressional initiatives, such as the medical security partnership and Senator Tom Cotton's infectious disease monitoring center, demonstrate an emerging recognition that health-care is an essential component of resilience. At the same time, recent debates over pharmaceutical innovation, pricing, and industrial competitiveness suggest that healthcare issues are increasingly becoming matters of economic security as well.

As Washington and Taipei continue to upgrade their strategic partnership, pharmaceutical resilience should be integrated into existing trade, economic, and health security frameworks. This would help protect the integrity of supply chains, support biomedical innovation, and ensure Taiwan's resilience in case of future contingencies.

The main point: As both the United States and Taiwan are committed to deepening their economic security partnership, health security should be priori-

tized in high-level policy discussions. Building on bipartisan congressional support, recent trade-policy developments, and the 2020 Health Cooperation MOU, policymakers should identify pharmaceutical resilience as a key pillar of the US-Taiwan partnership alongside defense, semiconductors, and supply-chain security.
