

## CONTENT

- TAEF Updates
- TAEF Commentaries
- New Southbound Policy News
- Regional Headlines

## TAEF UPDATES

### TAEF Executive Director Shared Insights about Communal Action on Disaster Preparedness



*Saturday, May 9, 2020*

**D**r. Alan H. Yang, the executive director of the TAEF, was invited by one of the

TAEF's partners, Meizu community, in Yilan to share how communal action on disaster preparedness can contribute to Taiwan's New Southbound Policy in the workshop organized by Meizhou community and International Cooperation and Development Fund (ICDF).

Forming regional partnership in disaster partnership is one of the TAEF's key mandate. Among the Foundation's 5 core programs, the Regional Resilience Program is established in order to address natural and man-made disasters and post-disaster reconstruction in Asia. TAEF has been serving as a platform for government officials and NGO workers to share experience and form partnerships, and we hope to collaborate with related agencies, research institutions, and medical centers to develop a common resilience project to combat regional disasters.

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## TAEF COMMENTARIES

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*The Diplomat*

### **How COVID-19 Challenges Taiwan's New Southbound Policy**

*-Jeremy Huai-Che Chiang, Non-resident Research Associate, TAEF*

*Monday, May 18, 2020*

Taiwan's New Southbound Policy, the country's "regional strategy for Asia" inaugurated by incumbent President Tsai Ing-wen in 2016, has been impacted by the global COVID-19 crisis, though not all in a disappointing direction. The NSP's short-term stagnation is inevitable given the global economic downturn, but calls for supply-chain diversification from China have also never been that widely supported. It is, however, still up to Tsai's government to rise up to the challenge and settle priorities moving into her second term. This will ultimately determine the final effects of COVID-19 on her signature foreign policy.

As Tsai prepares to inaugurate her second 4-year term on May 20, many have speculated about what will come in the next phase of the NSP. While the U.S.-China trade war and the ongoing pandemic have increasingly occupied Tsai's attention, it is vital that her administration follows up on NSP achievements (and setbacks) during the past few years, especially since Washington has made this a focal point of U.S.-Taiwan cooperation alongside its Indo-Pacific push. Taiwan needs to step up its efforts for the

NSP, even though such a long-term strategy takes time to see results and requires serious patience.

As devastating as COVID-19 has been, the global crisis it has created will eventually end. The struggle for Taiwan's viability, however, sees no such definite conclusion. Taiwan needs both a domestic industrial transformation and an international reorientation to keep up with the times, something that will only happen when an administration decides to persist with long-term strategic thinking. Good NSP results should encourage the Tsai administration. Unattained goals should inspire policy innovation to improve circumstances. It is yet too early to label Tsai's NSP a success or a failure, while there is still much that needs to be strived for.

*Read more*

## *Taiwan Insight*

# **How Taiwan Can Help Create A More Resilient Global Society**

*-Cheng-Chia Tung, Assistant Research Fellow, TAEF*

*Monday, May 18, 2020*

**C**COVID-19 has cost thousands of lives outside of its place of origin and has put 20% of the global population under lockdown. It is hard to envision it not having a long-lasting impact. Many influential commentators have focused on how it has exacerbated the decline of globalization and intensified political tension and strategic competition among great powers. While many may crave a "return to normalcy," if we are to address the challenges created by the pandemic more holistically we need to do more than simply ask "whether we're going back to where we were."

In order to repair the damage this has caused and prepare for crises in the future, resilience must be strengthened so that the market economy can be revitalized and become more sustainable. Although the idea of social resilience traditionally focuses on the capacity to respond to external stresses at a community level, there are grounds for it to be expanded to cover partnerships across sectors so as to better reflect the fact that states, firms, civil societies, and individuals are indispensable to each other when emergencies occur. The problem with this is that while it gives governments a prerogative to act to contain the contagion of a dysfunctional market economy, the expansion of government power during the time of emergency triggers the concern of the rise of authoritarian governance.

Such a concern offers a good reason to study Taiwan's model of disease control. As of May 12, Taiwan only had 440 positive cases despite being one of the first countries to report confirmed cases and its geographical proximity to China. Since the early detection of the outbreak in Wuhan, the Taiwanese government has implemented measures with hundreds of action items to break the chains of transmission. Most importantly, Taiwan was able to do this without employing the harsh authoritarian and anti-democratic measures seen elsewhere in the region. Taiwan's example, as such, offers a model on how to overcome the apparent conundrum of taking strong pandemic prevention measures without creating a leviathan through the expansion of untrammelled state power.

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## Taiwan Insight

# Taiwan's "Warm Power": Gender Equality And The New Southbound Policy

*-Hsin-Chi Lee, Assistant Research Fellow, TAEF*

*Wednesday, May 20, 2020*

**I**n the 2020 Taiwanese presidential election held in January, Taiwan's first female president Tsai Ing-wen won her second term. At the same time female representation reached a record high – 42% of legislators are now women, which is top rate in Asia. Apart from this, Taiwan recently became the first country in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage. The World Bank in its 2019 report also ranked Taiwan number one in Asia and eighth worldwide for legal protections for female employees and entrepreneurs. These achievements are gradually gaining the attention of the global community.

Taiwan's remarkable achievements in promoting gender equality are also a part of the countries' "warm power" strategy, which is enabling Taiwan to play an increasingly crucial role in the region. The term "warm power" was articulated alongside the New Southbound Policy (NSP), which was launched by the Tsai government in 2016. Warm power is an important component of the "people-centered approach" of as the NSP, which aside from economic partnerships places special emphasis on culture and societal development.

In addition to governmental agencies, Taiwanese civil society organisations have also shared ideas on gender equality advocacy with their Southeast and South Asian counterparts. For example, the Taiwan Alliance to Promote Civil Partnership Rights visited Bangkok in 2019 to share their experiences of lobbying for same-sex marriage legalization with Thailand's LGBT rights activists. In the 2nd Asia Pacific Summit on Gender Based Violence held by the Taiwan Coalition Against Violence in 2018, women's organisations from Southeast Asian countries were invited to discuss strategies for

gender-based violence prevention and advocacy. The Garden of Hope Foundation established the Asian Girls Rights Alliance in 2015 to campaign for girls' rights in Asia and encourage girls to challenge gender discrimination and patriarchal structures.

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## NEW SOUTHBOUND POLICY NEWS

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*Taipei Times*

### **EDITORIAL: Tsai Opens Term with Pride, Unity**

*Thursday, May 21, 2020*

**P**resident Tsai Ing-wen delivered her second inaugural address yesterday morning, marking the start of her second term. Tsai is beginning her new term on a high, despite facing considerable challenges — which are two sides of the same coin, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Her government has won plaudits around the world for its effective response to the coronavirus outbreak. The nation feels more united at this moment than it has for a long time.

The address was also an opportunity for Tsai to reiterate indirect positives from the pandemic, such as Taiwan's growing international profile and acclaim through its exemplary response and "mask diplomacy" — a chance to make itself distinct from China in the eyes of the international community.

Reducing dependence on the Chinese market is an objective of the government's New Southbound Policy. If the pandemic has hampered this policy, the renewed scrutiny it has placed on the codependence of supply chains and certain major trading partners has revealed the wisdom of developing partnerships with other nations in the region.

One of the challenges that Tsai specified in her speech was the accelerated reorganization of supply chains internationally, which is a trend to be followed by not only Taiwan, but other nations worldwide.

The argument made by Tsai's administration, that Taiwan needs self-sufficient, economically independent and diverse supply chains, has received a major boost — not only as a winning formula for this nation, but for the whole world.

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## 14 Countries Voice Support for Taiwan's WHA Participation: MOFA

*Tuesday, May 19, 2020*

**A** total of 14 countries directly expressed support for Taiwan's bid to participate in the World Health Assembly (WHA) as it opened its two-day virtual session Monday after Taiwan was excluded from the proceedings.

Health officials from the United States, Japan, and 12 of Taiwan's 15 diplomatic allies expressed the need for Taiwan to take part in the WHA during Monday's session, Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Joanne Ou said at a press briefing.

Beyond those countries, other WHO member-states, such as the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, and the Czech Republic, showed support for Taiwan by stressing the need for "inclusiveness" in the health body amid global health challenges.

"The MOFA sincerely thanks those countries that supported Taiwan, especially under the session's tight schedule in which every country's representative was only allotted two minutes to speak," Ou said.

China was the main opponent of Taiwan's bid, reflecting its ongoing suppression of participation by Taiwan in the international community.

*[Read more](#)*

## Taiwan, Australia to Team Up on COVID-19 Drug Study

*Thursday, May 14, 2020*

**T**aiwanese and Australian university researchers will work together on developing new drugs with potential efficacy against various viruses, including the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 disease, Taiwan's Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) said Thursday.

In a video conference call on May 7, researchers from Australia's Monash University and Taiwan's Chang Gung University (CGU) expressed a strong desire to embark on a study and reached an agreement on the areas in which they will cooperate, the ministry said.



Under the agreement, Taiwan will provide strains of the SARS-CoV-2 and other viruses, and Australia will provide the anti-parasitic drug Ivermectin to study its effectiveness against COVID-19, the ministry said, adding the research will be carried out in Taiwan laboratories.

The cooperation will focus on identifying novel therapeutic drug targets against COVID-19 and will be expanded to study their effectiveness against other viruses, including HIV, dengue, Zika, and influenza, the ministry said.

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## REGIONAL HEADLINES

*The Jakarta Post*

**ASEAN-US:  
Partners in  
Beating  
COVID-19,  
Building  
Resilient,  
Prosperous  
Region**

*May 19, 2020*

**T**ogether, the United States and ASEAN are facing down the SARS-CoV-2 virus – one of the greatest threats of the last century to the health of our collective 1 billion people. While the virus did not originate in America or Southeast Asia, our nations can be

*The Jakarta Post*

**With Policy  
Flip-Flops,  
'New Normal'  
Looks Gloomy  
for Indonesia**

*May 19, 2020*

**T**he COVID-19-stricken world has seen countries easing lockdowns and stay-at-home orders since the beginning of this month. But Indonesians have a right to worry after the government followed suit by relaxing travel restrictions on May 6.

*Nikkei Asian  
Review*

**Vietnam Vows  
5% Growth in  
Post-Outbreak  
Foreign  
Investment  
Pitch**

*May 11, 2020*

**V**ietnam is pressing for foreign investment to defend its status as Southeast Asia's fastest-growing economy, just as the country becomes the first in the region to emerge from the coronavirus pandemic.

"We must put our heads

proud of the bold steps we are taking to extinguish it, and build a healthier, more resilient and prosperous region long-term.

As US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a virtual meeting with ASEAN foreign ministers on April 23, "we will work together to beat this pandemic, and get back to the business of building a bright future for the region."

Since the outbreak began, as of May 4, the US had released more than US\$57.5 million to help Southeast Asian countries to fight the virus, including more than \$7 million in emergency health funding to Indonesia with an additional \$5 million just announced. These funds have helped strengthen the COVID-19 testing capacity of Indonesian laboratories, deliver accurate information to the public on physical distancing and hygiene practices and provide technical assistance to the lead agencies working on the response.

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First, the numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise across many provinces outside Jakarta. The Health Ministry announced 59 more deaths on Sunday, the highest one-day spike in over a month, bringing the death toll to 1,148 from 17,514 confirmed cases.

Second, the easing of restrictions, which allow people to travel for work purposes, came only about two weeks after a full ban was announced for all passenger travel and less than a month since provinces, cities and regencies formally enforced large-scale social restrictions (PSBB).

Third, the number of tests conducted remains very low, at 140,000, compared to other countries.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo has said the country must be ready for a "new normal" by July. With little commitment from the government and citizens to fight the virus, the future looks grim for the country.

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together to restart Vietnam's economy with the lifting of social distancing, to reach the target of over 5% gross domestic product growth in 2020," Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said Saturday, in defiance of a projection for 2.7% growth from the International Monetary Fund last month.


Phuc spoke at Vietnam's largest-ever business conference, an online event that drew 6,000 participants from the foreign and domestic business communities while over 5 million people nationwide representing local companies and family enterprises watched on television, according to the prime minister.

The event followed Hanoi's announcement Friday essentially lifting all restrictions to contain COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. The communist-led country on Monday reported 24 straight days without a new infection, while seeing no deaths since the outbreak.

[Read more](#)



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