



Taiwan's defense industry

ROC President Tsai Ing-wen has made promoting national defense industry one of her administration's policy planks. The new administration hopes to build a self-reliant national defense force, while bolstering Taiwan's informational security, aviation and shipbuilding industries in the process.

Already, relevant industries have shown that they have the capabilities to achieve the government's goal. In early May, CSBC Corporation, Taiwan, unveiled its highest-capacity domestically developed and constructed container vessels in the southern Taiwan port city of Kaohsiung.

YM Window and *YM Width* are 368 meters long, 51 meters wide and can carry 14,198, 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of containers. A 40-foot container – the most commonly used size – is around two TEUs.

The improved performance of the ships will help ensure they do not fall prey to pirates off the coast of Somalia as was the case with *Maersk Alabama*, a vessel of around 1,000 TEUs constructed by CSBC in 1998. "Not many people know that it was our ship depicted in the 2013 box office hit 'Captain Phillips' starring Tom Hanks," CSBC Chairman Lai Sun-quae said. According to CSBC, the vessels were commissioned by

Canada-based *Seaspan Corp.* under a five-ship lease agreement with *Yang Ming Marine Transport Corp.* – the world's 10th largest fleet operator – based in the northern Taiwan port city of Keelung. CSBC expects to complete the remaining three vessels by the end of the year.

Kaohsiung is the nation's main shipbuilding center and has produced a number of world-class vessels in recent years. These include *Pan Shi*, a stealth supply ship constructed by CSBC for the ROC navy in March 2015; *Tuo Jiang*, a stealth corvette constructed by *Lung Teh Shipbuilding Co. Ltd.* for the ROC navy at the same time; and *Yilan* and *Kaohsiung*, cutters constructed for the Coast Guard Administration by *Jong Shyn Shipbuilding Co. Ltd.* in March 2014. Meanwhile, *Aerospace Industrial Development Corp.*, one of Taiwan's leading aviation firms, has helped set up a communication platform dubbed A-Team



4.0 for local companies, with the goal of making Taiwan an indispensable part of the global supply chain.

There are more than 200 small and medium-sized enterprises in Taiwan that provide high-quality components for the global aviation industry. According to the Committee for Aviation and Space Industry Development under the Industrial Development Bureau of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Taiwan's competitive advantages include "well-integrated industrial clusters, solid R&D capabilities, sound infra-

structure, abundant high-quality human resources and solid industrial foundation." Tsai has said on several occasions that the nation will continue to promote the policy of building its own vessels and aircrafts. "In addition to enhancing naval combat capacity, it will also help the development of the shipbuilding and machinery sectors, as well as system integration," she said. The government's approach will be to make "demands for national defense the driving force of industrial upgrade and transformation," Tsai said.

Tsai delivers address to Paraguayan congress

President Tsai Ing-wen addressed the Paraguayan congress June 28 in the capital Asuncion, highlighting her administration's down-to-earth diplomacy and reciprocity between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and its South American diplomatic ally.

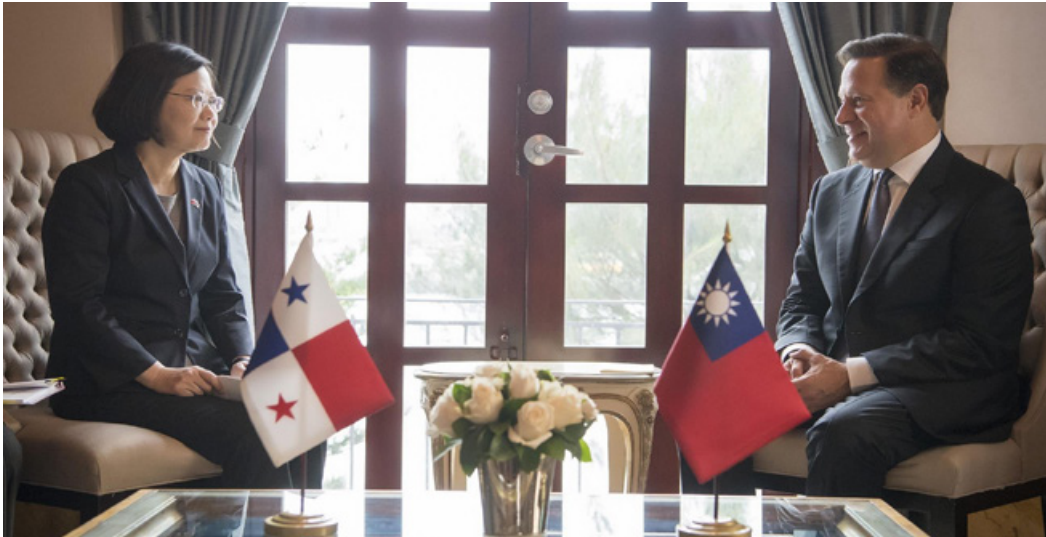
"Taiwan and Paraguay enjoy more than ordinary diplomatic relations, and this two-way collaboration extends beyond business investment," Tsai said. "Our friendship is firmly grounded on such shared universal values as democracy, freedom and respect for human rights."

According to the president, Taiwan and Paraguay are working on a raft of collaborative projects promoting housing justice and narrowing the digital divide, among many social issues. She cited the Digital Opportunity Center initiative proposed by Taiwan in 2003 under the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation as a prime example of efforts by the ROC government in ensuring social equality. "A number of Taiwan high-tech firms, including *Acer Inc.* and *AsusTek Computer Inc.*, have pledged



Source: Taiwan Today, Focus Taiwan, Photos: Office of the President

to provide hardware and cloud learning software to support the youth of Paraguay in joining the digital world," Tsai said. Concerning agricultural cooperation, the president said Taiwan will gradually increase beef imports from Paraguay provided these products meet Taiwan's health and inspection standards. It will also con-



tinue assisting the Latin American country in upgrading feed production, medical data management, orchid cultivation and white pomfret aquaculture.

Tsai also places a premium on enhanced people-to-people exchanges. She said the government will increase the number of scholarships for Paraguay students from 14 to 28, as well as make available more local industry professionals and mandarin teachers. In terms of economic collaboration, the president said given the complementary nature of Taiwan's and Paraguay's climates and industrial structures, she expects more interaction and investment between the private sectors of the two nations. This will help position Paraguay as an important base for Taiwan firms seeking to expand their footprint in the Americas, she added.

Tsai is on the second leg of a nine-day official visit to Latin America. She was invited to attend the formal opening of the expanded Panama Canal June 26 by Panama President Juan Carlos Varela, joining heads of state and dignitaries from around the world in celebration of the US\$5.4 billion project that took nine years to complete. According to Tsai, the ROC has

maintained diplomatic relations with Panama for more than a century, and the two sides enjoy close cooperation and exchanges. "I believe this visit will further consolidate our longstanding partnership," she said. Before attending the ceremony, Tsai held talks with Danilo Medina Sanchez, president of the Dominican Republic, Oscar Samuel Ortiz Ascencio, vice president of El Salvador, Jafeth Cabrera Franco, vice president of Guatemala, and Juan Orlando Hernandez Alvarado, president of Honduras. She discussed a number of issues such as strengthening cooperation in various fields with the four Central American ROC diplomatic allies.

Tsai also held a bilateral meeting with President Varela. During her trip to Panama, the two countries signed an agreement on the cooperation on immigration and the prevention of human trafficking. Taiwan also donated 3,000 boxes of flu medicine to Panama's ministry of health in an effort to help the country fight an H1N1 flu epidemic.

This was Tsai's first overseas trip as head of state. She departed Paraguay June 30 for Taiwan with a stopover in the US city of Los Angeles.



Writing as Meditation

The surging popularity of practicing penmanship has swept the online, publishing, and fountain-pen industries in recent months, and even engendered the birth of a new handwritten font industry. Rejecting the uniformity of the age and the impersonal virtuality of computers and mobile devices, many people have begun turning back to writing by hand as a means of imbuing their lives and communications with greater warmth, personality and sincerity.

by Chiung-fang,
Taiwan Panorama
Photos: Chuang Kung-ju

In 2013, the poet Xiang Yang published *The Handwritten Era*, a collection of stories and letters handwritten by 24 Taiwanese writers in the 1980s. The poet waxed wistful in his introduction to these manuscripts: “In those days of writing by hand, the ink on the page captured the temperature of our moods and burned them into our receptive hearts in a way that has disappeared since we began pounding out texts on keyboards. This book is an attempt to recall, stroke by stroke, whether formal or cursive, a mindset that the clamor of modern life makes ever more distant.”

The Lemmings

Fortunately, the golden age of writing by hand has not passed beyond hope of revival, and a new enthusiasm for pen and ink has arisen among young people online.

“The Fountain-Pen Lemmings Brigade,” or “Lemmings” for short, is a Facebook

group founded three years ago as a forum for young people to share their work in pen and ink.

The group’s mission statement is clear: “There is an odd rodent that takes paper as nest, pen as food, and ink as drink. It bites at the sight of a pen and won’t let go, grasping pens for pleasure and sharing its every inking. When people first observed the behavior of these rodents, they named them ‘lemmings.’”

Yan Lizhong, the group’s founder, says that the Lemmings are a pretty nerdy bunch who often show off their collections and their work to the group.

“A flower fades, but Spring goes on unaffected.”

“Even if there’s no Pure Land, one can still meditate.”

The Lemmings’ basic model is for members to write bits of encouragement or moody thoughts with a fountain pen and





share them. Detail-oriented posters will also append the brand and color of the ink and stationery they used, while others use drawings of cute animals to give their posts a little extra character.

Yan says that he founded the group just for fun, never imagining it would grow to its current size of more than 125,000 members. “An average of 300 to 700 people sign up every day. On weekends and holidays, the number can go over 1,000.” He says it all came as a surprise to him.

Ethan Yeh’s calligraphy

The Lemmings include any number of individuals well known for their penmanship, Ethan Yeh among them.

Ethan Yeh, a middle-school art teacher in his 30s, not only has lovely handwriting, but is also a champion calligrapher. In fact, he has won the National Taipei University of Education National Pen-based Calligraphy Competition’s *xingshu* (semi-cursive script) prize five consecutive times, and *itskaishu* (regular script) prize once. “Calligraphy means a great deal to me,” says Yeh, adding that he finds writing similar to meditation or Zen practice in that it gives

him a sense of transcendence.

But the pleasure Yeh takes in writing isn’t limited to his solo practice: he also enjoys teaching calligraphy. With that in mind, he’s created his own Facebook page, which has gathered more than 8,000 followers in just a few months. Although Yeh owns 20 or 30 fountain pens, including some pricey antique ones, he typically uses an inexpensive pen for demonstrations. In fact, he most often uses an SKB ballpoint that costs just NT\$7. “The ink flows out smoothly and its very maneuverable, so all the characters come out looking nice.”

Last year, Taiwan as everywhere else saw a wave of enthusiasm for coloring books, but it has subsided and been replaced by a new copybook craze. *Sun Color Culture* was the first publisher to sniff out the trend.

Summer Chou, from the company’s department of sales and marketing, says that the publisher noticed that the protagonists in Korean dramas were beginning to take up penmanship as a pastime. “Looking to the past in search of pretty things has become something of a fashion.” So Sun Color began planning a series of copybooks for Chinese and English calligraphy.

Fountain-pen fever

The new enthusiasm for penmanship has driven tremendous growth in sales of fountain pens, ink, and paper.

According to one newspaper report, online retailer *PChome24h Shopping* has seen an eight-fold increase in its sales of such products. Brick-and-mortar stores

have been keeping pace. Ty Lee, the owner of the well-known Taipei fountain pen retailer *Xiaopin Yaji*, has had to hire ten shop assistants to manage all his customers, and is still struggling to keep up with demand. Lee says that he sold off several years' worth of colored-pencil inventory when the coloring-book craze took off last year. Now that the public has caught the penmanship fever, fountain pens have become his best sellers. "We're completely sold out of the three major Japanese brands of fountain pens. We can sell as many as they can make."

"People pick up a pen and want to write a little something." Yan, who repairs fountain pens professionally and calls himself a "pensmith," describes pen collecting and penmanship as a lifestyle. The two interests are closely connected, and some hobbyists end up catching the "stationery bug." The craze isn't limited to pens. Inks are also becoming far more diverse. In the old days, there were basically three color choices: black, blue and red. Nowadays, hundreds are available, luring the Lemmings ever deeper into their hobby.

Just write

Printed text simply can't match the warmth of a handwritten note. But wouldn't it be

great if computers could emulate your own personal handwriting? It might not be as far away as you imagine.

Last year, a font company called *justfont* launched the new "just-write" brand,

which focuses on creating characters that look handwritten. Company owner Michael Yeh says he got the idea to create "individual handwriting" fonts from his father's lovely handwriting. He made inquiries among font makers in Shanghai and Hong Kong, but found either the prices to be too high or the fonts too ugly, and decided to develop the idea himself. Yeh spent more than a year developing his first font. When he ran a trial of his service from October through December 2015, he discovered that far more people than he'd expected shared his vision. He limited the trial to six personal fonts per month, and quickly filled his quota. Yeh's company has since developed more than 100 customized "handwritten" fonts.

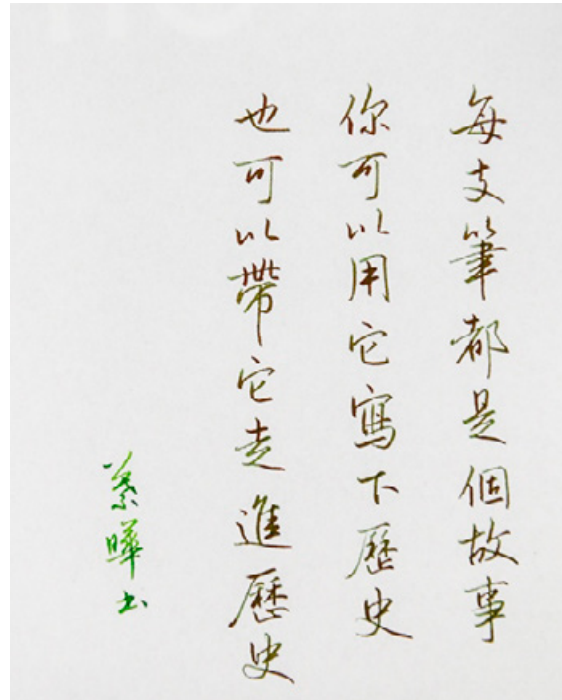
When justwrite comes across an especially pretty writing style, the company attempts to negotiate a partnership with the creator to bring it to market. Examples include the *Grandma Xionggou*, *Mr. Eggplants*, and *Mei-a fonts*. And the buzz around Ethan Yeh's "Yeh Calligraphy" font has already generated more than 300 pre-sales. Lee enjoys teaching penmanship





and has been doing so with increasing zeal. He has also developed a 30-minute method for improving people's handwriting. "It's hard to change people's writing style once it has developed. You have to get them to cast away their old style and start over."

"Calligraphy is about turning your thoughts into ink on paper."



Yan too believes that many people are incapable of writing without a computer or mobile device, and sees written Chinese as evolving from its pictographic and ideographic origins into a phonetic system. "The current enthusiasm for practicing penmanship needs to continue if we're to keep calligraphy alive."

Taiwanese barista named 2016 world champion

Berg Wu won the World Barista Championship (WBC) in Dublin, Ireland, on June 25, the first Taiwanese and only the second Asian to win the honor since the competition started in 2000.

The competition pitted national champions from more than 50 countries against each other in four days of competition at the World of Coffee Show in the Irish capital. The competitors each had to prepare four espressos, four cappuccinos, and four original signature drinks to exacting standards in a 15-minute performance set to music. Top 12 competitors advanced to the semifinal, and then six advanced to the finals. The prizes Wu won include an espresso machine, a grinder, a nine-day trip to Brazil, and a trip to Swiss Water's decaffeination plant in Vancouver, Canada.

The other five finalists are from Canada, France, Japan, the Netherlands and the United States. Wu majored in electrical engineering in college and earned his master's degree at the Graduate Institute of Electronics Engineering of National Taiwan University. He worked as an engineer for several years and started to sell coffee as a vendor in Taipei in 2004 until he opened his own shop "Simple Kaffa" in 2011. Wu has been Taiwan's national champion for the WBC competition for the last three years, and ranked seventh in the 2014 WBC competition.



Since 98 percent of coffee is water, good coffee needs to use quality water, said Wu. The water used for coffee needs to have the correct pH value, TDS (total dissolved solids) value, and high or low mineral content (hard water or soft water), he said. Replying to



World Barista Championship Facebook

a question on his personal and professional goals for the next decade, Wu said he would like to share his experiences and knowledge so he can "inspire and help others who would like to start a journey in specialty coffee," according to the WBC website.

Premier views Brexit as crisis as well as opportunity

Premier Lin Chuan sees the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union not only as a crisis but also as a business opportunity for Taiwan, Cabinet spokesman Tung Chen-yuan cited the premier as saying on June 27.

According to Tung, Lin met with several economic and financial officials to discuss the impact of the June 23 Brexit vote. After the meeting, the premier asked the Ministry of Economic Affairs to devise measures to strengthen business ties between Taiwan and both the UK and the EU. Tung said that after the Brexit vote, Britain and Europe are expected to seek closer business ties with Asia to blunt the impact of a British departure from the European bloc. Thus, international interest in investing in the Taiwan market could increase. The UK vote caught global financial markets off guard because markets had anticipated that the camp supporting staying in the EU would win. When the result became known, it sent global equity markets as well as the British

pound and the euro plunging. In the June 27 meeting, Lin said while uncertainties do exist and Brexit could produce some negative effects, a crisis is also an opportunity for growth. The government will continue to closely watch the political and economic situation in Europe, he said.

On June 24, the weighted index on the Taiwan Stock Exchange closed down 2.30 percent in the wake of the Brexit vote after foreign institutional investors sold a net NT\$13 billion worth of shares on Taiwan's stock exchange. Despite the massive selling, foreign institutional investors still bought a net NT\$7.78 billion in shares on the Taiwan Stock Exchange in the week ending on June 24, according to the period after 24.

Source: Focus Taiwan, Executive Yuan

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