

**QUJIANGHUA IN TAIWAN: TAIWANESE
DEMOCRACY AGAINST
CHINESE AUTHORITARIANISM?**

QI Dongtao & Ryan HO

EAI Background Brief No. 1354

Executive Summary

1. The Transitional Justice Bill passed by Taiwanese lawmakers on 5 December 2017 spelled the end of sites associated with Chiang Kai-shek's name in Taiwan. The renaming of streets and schools which bear his name has been made compulsory for the first time under Taiwanese law.
2. Beginning in the 1990s, the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) and other pro-democracy activists, together with the reformist faction of the KMT (Kuomintang) under President Lee Teng Hui, began to remove references to former leader Chiang Kai-shek from public life, commonly known as *Qujianghua* (去蒋化), a term first used by the Taiwanese media in the 1990s.
3. The DPP administrations under Chen Shui-bian and Tsai Ing-wen aggressively promoted *Qujianghua* during their term, much to the chagrin of the opposition KMT. Although the Chen and Tsai administrations portrayed it as a milestone in Taiwanese democracy, the KMT views it as a political attack on its historical legitimacy.
4. The legacy of Chiang Kai-shek remains highly contested in Taiwan. Supporters of the KMT view him as a hero for his role in resisting the communists and Japanese during World War II and successfully developing Taiwan's economy since the 1960s; DPP supporters however view him as a ruthless Chinese dictator against the Taiwanese.
5. From time to time, the KMT leadership has spoken out against the DPP's *Qujianghua*, affirming the party's recognition of Chiang's contribution to the island. However, its weakening position in Taiwanese politics has incapacitated the KMT from halting the DPP's offensive to vilify Chiang Kai-shek.
6. The CCP links *Qujianghua* to the plot by the DPP and pro-independence groups to promote Taiwanese independence. As *Qujianghua* will shed some of Taiwan's cultural affinities and historical links to the Mainland, the CCP equates *Qujianghua* to creeping Taiwanese independence.