

**Maintaining Peace and Stability is a Joint Responsibility and in the Best
Interests of both Sides of the Taiwan Strait**

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Good morning. To all the distinguished scholars, thank you for taking part in this conference. And those of you joining us online, thank you for tuning in. I would also like to thank the Heritage Foundation and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy for holding this event.

It is a great honour to have this opportunity to share with you the current situation in the Taiwan Strait and the Republic of China government's cross-Strait policy. The central message I hope to get across today is that maintaining peace and stability in cross-Strait relations is a joint responsibility and in the best interests of both sides.

In order to unpack cross-Strait relations, it is important to understand the China we are dealing with at hands. Recently, we have witnessed two major political agendas unfold; one was the US presidential

election and the other was the fifth plenum of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) nineteenth Central Committee. Both events not only had impacts on the domestic and external development of the US and China, respectively, but the projecting of US-China bilateral relations, which in turn affects regional security as well as the global political and economic order. However, amid such changing dynamics, the CCP continues to uphold the principle of “the party leads everything” and advocate the superiority of its governance.

Based on the experience of more than seventy years of cross-Strait exchanges, we believe that the lack of democratic reform to establish a new governance system has deprived the CCP to develop the breadth of approaches and diverse thinking needed to pragmatically deal with risks and changes. This said, as **the CCP now faces rising challenges in dealing with risks and changes**, its decision-making and governance model also fuel uncertainty over international order and global development.

Moreover, **Beijing's military threats against Taiwan has overshadowed China's image as a great power**. Since the beginning of this year, we can see that the CCP has stepped up its suppression and coercion against Taiwan. Its military harassment has gravely undermined the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and the long-term tacit understanding based on peaceful intention and mutual restraint between the two sides.

The CCP aims to use their actions to create fear and psychological pressure among the Taiwanese people. The Beijing authorities also seek to

force Taiwan to compromise under a political framework that leaves no room for the existence of the Republic of China (Taiwan). It goes without saying that what's happening in the Taiwan Strait is in sharp contradiction to the CCP leader's recent claim, which stressed that China will never seek hegemony or expansionism.

Despite effort on the ground to dispel doubts over China's claim to embrace peace, the CCP's regional military expansion is telling a different story. In fact, it is just a matter of time before things backfire and seriously harm the CCP's image on the international stage. Not to mention the CCP's aggressive actions have already prompted neighboring countries to deepen cooperation to respond to and contend with China.

Peace in the Taiwan Strait is closely linked to regional prosperity. This said, Taiwan will continue deepening relations with the US and engaging in international cooperation to fulfill our role as a responsible stakeholder under the Asia-Pacific security strategy. To be sure, over the past years, Taiwan has solidified our bilateral relations with the United States while forging closer exchanges and cooperation.

With bipartisan support in the executive branch as well as the congress, Taiwan-friendly bills were adopted and arms sales package passed. These developments powerfully demonstrate that the alliance between Taiwan and the United States is based on a solid foundation of shared values and principles. Most importantly, by jointly build an alliance

of interests for security and prosperity, a robust **Taiwan-US relationship helps to deepen regional peace and interests.**

This administration fully understands what a peaceful and stable cross-Strait relationship means to the security of the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Therefore, as most of you may be well aware, President Tsai Ing-wen recently has once again reiterated that maintaining the stability of cross-Strait relations is the joint responsibility of both sides and called on to facilitate meaningful dialogue based on parity and dignity.

Looking forward, and in line with Taiwan's **firm commitment to maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait**, we would like to call the CCP authorities' attention to the following two points,

First, **peace in the Taiwan Strait is in the interests of all parties and the leader on the other side of the Strait should shoulder equal responsibility.** Taiwan is determined to maintain stability across the Strait. We hope that China could set aside its suspicions; stop thinking that it can achieve its political goals through coercion; and instead deal with cross-Strait issues pragmatically.

Second, **the CCP should move beyond the narrow political framework set for Taiwan and seek out possibilities for communication and dialogue.** The root cause of the continuous deterioration in cross-Strait relations today is the political preconditions placed unilaterally by the CCP authorities on cross-Strait interactions. We call on the Beijing authorities to

stop imposing their framework on Taiwan, but to show flexibility, wisdom, and creativity. Only when goodwill between the two sides can continue to grow can there be meaningful dialogues to reduce misjudgment and misunderstanding. And furthermore gives our two sides the opportunity to discuss ways to live in peace.

Democracy and freedom have become not only the common values cherished by Taiwanese people, but a way of life in Taiwan. The twenty-three million people have the right to decide their own future. Looking to the future of cross-Strait relations, it is important for the international community to recognize and value Taiwan's contribution to global economy, security, and governance. As Taiwan stands fast to safeguard peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, international support of Taiwan's cross-Strait policy helps to ensure that the liberal principles uphold by Taiwan and the whole world are not to be undermined. We'd also like to call upon the international community to continue urging the Beijing authorities to act in a manner befitting a great power and shouldering the duty to maintain peace. It is about time for Beijing to start acting with prudence and restraint, without abusing its power.

With these few remarks, I thank you all for joining us today. I look forward to learning from the many insights to be presented by the experts and scholars here today. Last but not least, I wish this conference the fullest success. Thank you! Thank you very much!