

Challenges Posed by the CCP in the Taiwan Strait

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Opening Remarks by

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Chairman Ding, Director Christensen of AIT, Distinguished Scholars and Experts, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning!

The international situation has changed rapidly recently and it has become hard to predict what will happen next. As mainland China faces grave internal and external challenges, the Taiwan Strait and greater region are also affected. Today, I would like to take this opportunity to share some views on the current cross-Strait situation.

1. The institutions and governance model of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) pose unknowns for development

Over the past 70 years, mainland China has followed a development path of "socialism with Chinese characteristics." It has made many achievements in economic growth, but its governance system has continued to be the centralized model of "party leading the government" and "stability above all."

The outside world has warned of the risks posed by the CCP's lack of democratic oversight and checks and balances in governance,

as well as the vacuum left during power transitions. Also, in its 19th National Congress Report, the CCP emphasized the need to strive for a "better life" for the people. It said that the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved. What Chinese society faces now is a contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life.

However, democratic governance continues to be absent in the thinking of the top leadership in Beijing as it seeks China's national rejuvenation as a major world power. The CCP has also ignored the people's key demands and wrongly suppressed the people's basic rights. The course of "left on politics and right on economics" has caused growing social contradictions and created a highly uncertain outlook for development.

2. Forecasts of the CCP's efforts to cope with internal and external challenges are not optimistic

Facing the challenges posed by internal and external developments, the CCP has continued to wield the "three magic weapons" it used during the revolutionary period, namely: "united front work, armed struggle, and party-building." Internally, the CCP has increased pressure and control. Externally, it has used huge economic incentives, combined with its "sharp power" and "hard power", to undermine democracy and normal socio-economic functions. Despite Beijing's attempts to create an environment conducive to the expansion of communism, the international community has repeatedly exposed the reality of Beijing's mixed up political agenda.

Taiwan is on the frontline of the CCP's deployment of "three magic weapons". Early this year, Xi Jinping announced the so-called "Xi's five points" to advance unification agenda under "one country, two systems." He also indicated that the Mainland would not renounce the use of force. This is an official declaration that the People's Republic of China (PRC) will annex the Republic of China (ROC). The CCP's provocations not only threaten peace in the Taiwan Strait, but also gravely violate international law and the principle of peace in international relations. The standard reaction to this confrontational and oppressive system has brought unusual tensions to the situation in Asia. In addition, it has further torn the CCP regime apart from its own people and the international community.

3. Taiwan's determination to defend sovereignty and democracy is a force for regional stability

Taiwan has never been a part of the PRC, from a historical perspective or under international law. The 23 million people of Taiwan will never accept Beijing's "one country, two systems." Nor will they ever bow to the threats of this hegemonic power. Facing the Mainland's growing aggression, the ROC government has vowed to remain accountable to the people of Taiwan and firmly defend the nation's sovereignty and democracy. This is our bottom line. We "will not buckle under pressure and will not engage in rash behavior when we have support." Taiwan will never abandon its commitment to "peaceful coexistence and reconciliatory dialogue."

In the meantime, we have also adopted measures to strengthen our defenses for democracy. We warn the authorities in Beijing to

rightfully assess the situation, to maintain the demeanor of a great power, and to prudently show self restraint. We urge them to truly keep the well-being of the people in mind, to give up the unilaterally designed "one country, two systems" political framework for Taiwan, to resume communication and dialogue, and to handle cross-Strait relations pragmatically. Only by doing so can we reduce risk of repeated misjudgments concerning the situation in the Taiwan Strait.

4. Conclusion: The key to cross-Strait peace lies in democratic reforms in mainland China

The Mainland's enduring unwillingness to face up to the Republic of China is the cause of the current impasse between the two sides. Beijing alone bears the responsibility for this. This reality is something the Mainland authorities cannot avoid facing. The key to cross-Strait peace lies in the democratization of mainland China and Taiwan offers the best experience to learn from.

Mainland people are demanding their basic human rights. However, democracy is not imposed. Democracy is not a product of monitoring and repression, nor is it found in mendacious legal texts. Democracy is about honoring the concept of popular sovereignty where sovereignty belongs to the people. It is the people who command the government. The CCP can only resolve the contradictions it faces by embracing political reforms, implementing liberal democracy, and respecting human rights. Only then will the people be fully convinced.

In closing, I would like to thank you all again for participating in this event and wish the symposium every success. Thank you!