

# LECTURE

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## The Construction of a New Taiwan–U.S. Partnership Based on Liberty, Democracy and Mutual Prosperity

*The Honorable Si-Kun You*

**Abstract:** *As Taiwan and the United States undergo major domestic changes, the international political and economic situation will predictably experience significant changes as well. Facing these changes, the Taiwan–U.S. partnership in this new era should continue to build on our existing solid foundation, make use of the great opportunities presented to the two countries, and further strengthen several key areas with a new vision.*

I am honored to visit The Heritage Foundation again at a time when both Taiwan and the United States have elected new presidents and are marching toward new milestones. Today, I would like to share with you some of my humble opinions concerning Taiwan–U.S. relations and the Asia-Pacific region, and I look forward to hearing your feedback.

The year 2016 is special for both Taiwan and the United States. In early 2016, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which was founded in Taiwan, won both the majority in the Legislative Yuan and the presidency for the first time in history through democratic elections, symbolizing Taiwan’s significant achievement in the progress of democratic consolidation. The people of the United States also made a major political decision at the end of 2016, electing Mr. Donald Trump, who emphasizes “America First,” as the 45th President of the United States. On behalf of President Tsai and the people of Taiwan, I would like to convey our most sincere congratulations.

As Taiwan and the United States undergo major domestic changes, the international political and economic situation will predictably experience significant changes as well. Facing these changes,

### KEY POINTS

- In early 2016, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won both the majority in the Legislative Yuan and the presidency for the first time. The wholesale change in government symbolizes Taiwan’s significant achievement in the progress of democratic consolidation.
- In the future, the priorities of promoting a new model of economic and trade cooperation between Taiwan and the U.S. should focus on innovation.
- The United States should continue to help Taiwan enhance its self-defense and strengthen its ability to deter outside threats according to the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances so that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait can be effectively maintained.
- The U.S. should take the lead to help Taiwan to participate in more international organizations and international activities.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/hl1281>

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I believe that the Taiwan–U.S. partnership in this new era should continue to build on our existing solid foundation, make use of the great opportunities presented to us, and further strengthen the following areas with a new vision.

### **Strengthen Complementary and Mutually Beneficial Economic and Trade Cooperation**

As you may know, Taiwan is the ninth-largest trading partner of the United States. Taiwan has long been a large importer of U.S. products. Investments made by Taiwanese companies in the U.S. create more than 320,000 jobs every year. In recent years, Taiwan’s government has also organized many trade and investment missions to the U.S. to actively deepen economic and trade cooperation between our two countries.

In the future, the priorities of promoting a new model of economic and trade cooperation between Taiwan and the U.S. should focus on industrial innovation. Drawing from the past experiences of Taiwan–U.S. collaboration in the ICT [information and communications technology] industry, the United States should continue to promote industrial upgrade while Taiwan focuses on process R&D [research and development] and production capacity. Taiwan and the U.S. should strive to deepen cooperation in human-resource development, investment, and trade. This way, I believe we will be able to stimulate our employment, revive our industries, and create a mutually beneficial situation for both Taiwan and the U.S.

In order to achieve the goal of Taiwan–U.S. economic and trade shared prosperity as early as possible, I would like to call for a Taiwan–U.S. Free Trade Agreement and Bilateral Investment Agreement, both of which will create better institutional support and momentum for economic and trade cooperation between our two countries.

### **Maintain Peace and Stability in the Asia-Pacific Region**

The Taiwan Strait, South China Sea, and East China Sea are crucial to the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region, and Taiwan happens to be located at the intersection of these three areas. The anti-democratic actions of the PRC [People’s Republic of China] to suppress dissidents in mainland China and Hong Kong, and its irrational

behavior of causing tensions and conflicts in related maritime areas are widely known. When I was invited to deliver a speech at your foundation in 2006 as DPP Party Chairman, I pointed out that “Taiwan’s experience shows that, as a rising power lacking democracy with an authoritarian government structure, China will attempt to use its economic power to damage the normal functioning of another democratic country. If China has been able to influence Taiwan, it is also capable of exerting influence on other countries.”

During recent months, China continually sent its fighter planes and aircraft carrier around Taiwan’s territorial waters and airspace. It also constructed ports for large ships and airports for fighter planes in the South China Sea. In the future, China’s military power will be expanded to threaten the second island chain, causing more instability and tension in the region. Taiwan has always hoped that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait will be able to build peaceful and stable relations through sensible attitudes and pragmatic consultations. Our goodwill and commitment has not changed. We are strongly opposed to wars, but we will never bend under pressure.

History has taught us that unilateral goodwill cannot bring peace. It will only be misinterpreted by the opponent and eventually lead to tragedy. Only a truly democratic China will bring about real peace. Before China becomes a true democracy, it is necessary for Taiwan to acquire sufficient defense capabilities to deter China’s military threat in order to maintain stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the Asia-Pacific region. I also mentioned in my speech in 2006 that “faced with China’s 800 missiles pointed at us, and the growing imbalance of military forces across the Strait in China’s favor, Taiwan must strengthen its self-defense and fortify our determination to preserve our democracy and sovereignty.” I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the bipartisan support from the U.S. Congress in passing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 late last year, whose provisions further strengthened the substantive relations between Taiwan and the U.S.

In the future, we hope that the United States will continue to help Taiwan enhance its self-defense and strengthen its ability to deter outside threats according to the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances so that peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait can be effectively maintained.

## Help Taiwan Participate in International Organizations and Activities

In recent decades, Taiwan has faced many challenges in the international community. However, we have not only achieved significant economic accomplishments and completed democratic reforms, but also dedicated ourselves to international humanitarian aid and assisting developing countries. In addition, I would like to stress again that Taiwan is the only democratic country in the Chinese-speaking world—and the one most likely to influence China’s democratic development. That is the main reason why mainland China is doing everything it can to prevent Taiwan from joining international organizations and participating in international activities.

The international community has always aimed to promote China’s democratic development through engagement. However, China, with its economic might, has expanded its counterattack on democracy, and spares no effort to stifle Taiwan’s international space. In the age of globalization,

many things are interconnected. Isolating Taiwan from international organizations such as the United Nations and its affiliated organizations will only halt China’s democratization. It is not only unfair to the 23 million people of Taiwan but will also hinder global efforts towards health, disease prevention, information security, crime prevention, and anti-terrorism. I would like to call for our American friends to take the lead and help Taiwan to participate in more international organizations and international activities.

In conclusion, I wish for thriving prosperity in both Taiwan and the U.S. I also wish for a stronger partnership between Taiwan and the U.S. and for everlasting peace and prosperity for our two countries and the Asia-Pacific region. Last but not least, thank you all for listening. I wish you good health and good luck. May God bless us all. Thank you!

—*The Honorable Si-Kun You is former Premier of the Republic of China (Taiwan).*