

Remarks by Jaushieh Joseph Wu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China (Taiwan), at the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee of the Legislative Yuan on May 17, 2018

Honorable Chairperson, Members of the Legislative Yuan, ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning!

I am honored to be here at the invitation of the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committee to present this briefing on Taiwan's diplomatic work. In addition to promoting steadfast diplomacy through the formulation of new projects, since taking office this past February I have also prioritized a program of work for my first 100 days in office, which I hope will stimulate a new phase of diplomatic activity.

1. Responding to recent global and regional developments, safeguarding Taiwan's security and interests

Recent global and regional developments have the potential to impact Taiwan. The government will continue to follow these developments as closely as possible, responding with caution, and doing the best we can to safeguard Taiwan's security and interests.

1.1. Global outlook

With instability and conflict lying just below the surface of US-China trade relations, global and regional economics must echo and adapt to

calls for fair trade. And as Taiwan continues to pursue free trade, we must raise our economy's overall capacity to respond to the challenges that lie ahead.

The conflict in Syria recently escalated with the involvement of Israeli and Iranian forces. The resurgence of warfare in the Middle East is likely to affect the stability of the global economy, commodity prices, stock markets, and foreign exchange markets. The government will continue to monitor these developments closely.

Elsewhere, China continues to promote its One Belt, One Road initiative around the world, and is expanding its international influence through sharp power, raising concern and suspicion among many countries.

1.2. Outlook for Asia-Pacific

The Korean Peninsula has witnessed rapid and dramatic changes in recent weeks. With the 2018 Inter-Korean Summit just behind us, it now looks likely that US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un will meet in the foreseeable future. Our government will remain abreast of developments, and looks forward to seeing the relevant parties resolve their issues via peaceful dialogue.

The rapprochement between the two Koreas stands in sharp contrast to China's militaristic activities of late: It unilaterally launched the northbound M503 flight route at the beginning of the year, and has continued to construct military facilities on islands it occupies in the South China Sea, while its military aircraft and warships frequently navigate the East and South China Seas, as well as the Taiwan Strait, and circle Taiwan in an attempt to intimidate us. These actions do nothing to

support regional stability and are a grave attack upon the cross-strait status quo. Even as we strive to maintain the status quo, we must also call upon the international community to heed these developments.

Taiwan is an important member of the Indo-Pacific region. Responding to President Trump's Indo-Pacific Strategy, we will continue to strengthen cooperation with such countries as the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, in order to make contributions and play an active role in the initiative.

The government also attaches great importance to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which was signed in Chile in March, and will formally enter into force in 2019. The government will do its best to ensure that we are well prepared to join the second wave of accessions to the bloc.

2. Steadfast diplomacy already yielding many achievements

Since President Tsai took office, the government has been an active proponent of steadfast diplomacy. In combination with the efforts of the Taiwanese people, this is already yielding many achievements in terms of bilateral relations, international participation, regional cooperation, and, in particular, the New Southbound Policy.

I will now enumerate some of the brightest achievements of the government's policy of steadfast diplomacy from the past six months or so.

2.1. President Tsai's overseas visits have been successful, and heads of state of diplomatic allies and other high-level officials continue to visit Taiwan, attesting to our friendships

President Tsai recently visited several diplomatic allies in the Pacific—the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, and Solomon Islands—as well as the Kingdom of Eswatini in Africa. These visits, all of them a success, put the principles of steadfast diplomacy and mutual assistance for mutual benefit into practice, and demonstrated in concrete terms Taiwan's diverse national strengths.

In turn, heads of state and other high-level officials from diplomatic allies continue to visit Taiwan, most recently Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga of Tuvalu and Prime Minister Allen Chastanet of Saint Lucia. Prime Minister Rick Houenipwela of Solomon Islands and Haitian President Jovenel Moïse will be visiting next week and at the end of this month, respectively. All of these visits attest to our friendship with each country.

2.2. Taiwan-US relationship is advancing steadily

The relationship between Taiwan and the United States continues to advance steadily, with the two sides engaging in frequent high-level interactions. That the United States has repeatedly lauded Taiwan's contributions to a range of cooperative international affairs reflects our profound friendship and the trust that both sides have for one another.

We would like to thank the Trump administration once again for repeatedly and publicly reiterating its commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act and for affirming Taiwan's exemplary role in the Indo-Pacific region. The US State Department recently approved the

marketing license needed to sell technologies to Taiwan that will allow us to build our own indigenous submarines, and agreed that defense contractors can visit Taiwan to consult with us and provide assistance as we go about developing related plans. The US Congress also passed the Taiwan Travel Act, which has since been signed by President Trump, and the US executive branch and Congress continue to take concrete actions designed to assist our international participation.

In addition, both Taiwan and the United States continue to strengthen their substantive cooperation via the Global Cooperation and Training Framework. And last November, reciprocal immigration and customs processing mechanisms were launched for passport holders of each country: On the US side, the US Global Entry program now covers Taiwanese travelers; and on the Taiwanese side, the e-Gate service is now open to US citizens.

2.3. Taiwan-Japan relationship continues to develop

The relationship between Taiwan and Japan continues to develop. We have signed a number of agreements over the past two years, and institutionalized the resolution of maritime disputes through the Taiwan-Japan Maritime Affairs Cooperation Dialogue Mechanism. In addition, the Japanese government has expressed public support for Taiwan's international participation with unprecedented strength on multiple occasions.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other political figures were quick to send letters of condolence following the earthquake in Hualien in February. The Japanese government also dispatched a team of specialists to assist with relief efforts, while the Japanese people donated more than

NT\$74 million, all reflecting the close bond between Taiwan and Japan.

2.4. The New Southbound Policy has struck a chord with partner nations, and already achieved preliminary results

The New Southbound Policy, in place for nearly two years now, is really taking shape. Indeed, having struck a chord with partner nations, the program has already achieved a number of preliminary results.

Taiwan is now interacting with New Southbound partner nations across many more fields, at higher levels, and with greater frequency. We have posted considerable growth in bilateral trade, as well as tourist and student numbers, for example: The number of students from partner countries studying in Taiwan is now approaching 40,000, surpassing the number of Chinese students for the first time, while the total volume of bilateral trade between Taiwan and the New Southbound Policy's 18 partner countries was nearly 20 percent higher in 2017 than in 2016. And the growth of tourist numbers has also exceeded 30 percent thanks to our active promotion of mutually preferential visa schemes.

The Yushan Forum was held for the first time in October last year, increasing the New Southbound Policy's international visibility and our participation in international discourse. The government has also overseen and assisted the establishment of the associated Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation.

And recently, MOFA significantly improved the readiness of its Department of East Asian and Pacific Affairs by restructuring its staffs, resources, and allocations. This included the establishment of an Indo-Pacific Affairs Section, which will strengthen our work in the

region.

2.5. Taiwan-Europe relations are progressing steadily

The Taiwan-Europe partnership continues to deepen. High-level visits between the two sides continue, while Taiwan has signed 10 agreements or memoranda of understanding on cooperation with a number of European nations, including an agreement between Taiwan and the Czech Republic on the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion.

In a resolution adopted last December concerning the implementation of its annual report on Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Parliament reiterated its commitment to supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations and activities. This was a profoundly significant move.

In addition, the first annual Taiwan-EU human rights consultations were held in Taipei in March. The EU praised Taiwan extensively for expanding its promotion of various human rights issues, and encouraged us to tell the international community even more about the development of human rights in Taiwan.

2.6. Striving for Taiwan's international participation

We actively engaged in multilateral and bilateral dialogue during APEC meetings last November, using specific declarations and actions to echo the meetings' objectives.

Through overtures made by our diplomatic allies on World Health Day on April 7, we have also sought to participate as an observer in this year's

World Health Assembly in May, while like-minded countries have also lent support to our bid. Backing for Taiwan—and the number of public statements being made to this effect—is stronger than ever before.

3. Moving ahead while respecting the past, expanding steadfast diplomacy

Diplomacy requires unstinting effort, and it is on this basis that we are moving ahead while respecting the past—employing a spirit of pragmatism, flexibility, and innovation, and cooperating with all manner of actors both within and without Taiwan as we continue to promote steadfast diplomacy and associated work.

3.1. Consolidating relations with diplomatic allies

Upholding the principles of steadfast diplomacy and mutual assistance for mutual benefit, MOFA will make every effort to maintain existing diplomatic ties. We will continue to promote high-level mutual visits, and increase investments in our diplomatic allies. And through strategic financing mechanisms and other initiatives, we will draw on Taiwan's advantages to assist our diplomatic allies' political, social, and economic development, as well as assist domestic enterprises to expand their overseas markets. We will not engage in meaningless competition with China through checkbook diplomacy.

3.2. Enhancing bilateral and multilateral relations with like-minded countries

We will also continue to deepen relations with such like-minded countries as the United States, Japan, and European nations, strengthening dialogue, exchange, and cooperation in such areas as trade, investment, security, health care, environmental protection, security, and counterterrorism in a concerted effort to promote regional peace, stability and prosperity.

3.3. Moving the New Southbound Policy into high gear

The New Southbound Policy has entered a new phase. We are now moving the initiative into high gear through international cooperation, industrial development, economic and trade consultations, and the promotion of diplomacy, establishing strategic partnerships with friendly countries, creating industrial supply chains across the New Southbound region, and strengthening links between the Taiwanese people and the peoples and societies of our partner countries.

3.4. Seeking even more international participation

MOFA will continue to seek pragmatic, professional, and constructive means of making progress, doubling down on efforts to combine our strengths with those of domestic NGOs as we go about seeking even more participation in international organizations. And at the same time, we will leave no stone unturned when safeguarding our interests in the international organizations that we already belong to, expanding and deepening participation.

3.5. Striving to join regional economic integration mechanisms and strengthen regional cooperation

As the government continues to make every effort to join regional economic integration mechanisms—especially the CPTPP—MOFA will do all it can to facilitate these endeavors. We will also do our best to negotiate and sign bilateral economic and trade agreements. By continuing to promote the New Southbound Policy, participating in the Indo-Pacific Strategy, and striving to become a member of the CPTPP, the government will expand and strengthen cooperation with friendly countries throughout the region, allowing Taiwan to become an important partner for cooperation throughout the Indo-Pacific.

3.6. Letting the international community hear Taiwan's voice

Maintaining efforts to put even more of Taiwan's soft power on display on the international stage, MOFA is letting the world learn more about Taiwan, and making our nation's voice heard. We are increasing our use of new social media platforms in particular, strengthening public diplomacy and our capacity to speak out internationally, and actively assisting domestic NGOs in interacting with their international peers, taking a variety of approaches toward highlighting what is most special and unique about Taiwan.

MOFA has also established a Twitter account, with more than 650,000 followers to date. And one of the videos produced to promote our participation in the WHA, *A Perfect Pair*, is available in six languages via the Trending Taiwan YouTube channel and Facebook page, and has already been viewed 9.58 million times.

3.7. Fulfilling our international responsibilities

Besides continuing to assist our diplomatic allies, our government will work with other democratic countries on such global issues of common concern as regional security, health care, climate change, humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism, and information security, thus allowing us to make our contribution.

4. Conclusion

Taiwan faces more challenges than other countries in carrying out its diplomatic work. It is therefore incumbent on us to work even harder, to remain ever more alert to potential crises, and to work with greater efficiency and creativity. And we must integrate even more of our faculties, and give play to more of our strengths, if we are to allow Taiwan's diplomatic efforts to see continual progress.

I have every confidence in Taiwan and the diplomatic team at my command. We will spare no effort in surmounting challenges and safeguarding the country's dignities and interests, instilling our diplomatic work with ever more substantive meaning.

In closing, I thank the members of the committee once again for extending your support and assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thank you!