

**20210915 Recorded video remarks for the Global Taiwan
Institute's 2021 annual symposium—US-Taiwan Relations:
Forging a 21st Century Agenda**

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Dear friends and colleagues;

Ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning!

It is a great honor to be invited for the fourth time to deliver remarks at this annual symposium. I would like to congratulate GTI on its fifth anniversary. Over the past five years, GTI has spared no effort to promote Taiwan-US relations, and we sincerely appreciate all your good work.

Given the recent rapid changes in the dynamics of strategic competition between global powers, I would like to address Taiwan-US relations from a broader and more strategic point of view this year. I will also share why, and how Taiwan is an indispensable partner for the United States and other democracies in today's interconnected world.

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues unabated, democratic values are facing a serious challenge. *"Freedom in the*

World 2021” report by Freedom House concluded with the alarming observation that, as major democracies turn to domestic affairs during the pandemic, global freedom continues to deteriorate and authoritarian states have been emboldened. They exert malign influence in every way it can and even preaches the superiority of authoritarianism over democracy.

The growing powerful authoritarian state is attempting to reshape the rules-based international system to serve its own agenda, especially in the fields of democratic values and human rights, security, trade, science and technology. It continues to infiltrate democracies with disinformation aiming to demolish our faith in democratic values. Its export of authoritarian governance and antidemocratic tactics are extremely harmful to democracies. These efforts intend to create the facade that one-party system is more effective than democratic system. **In short, it is waging an ideological warfare against democracy. And they seem to be gaining ground.**

This ongoing war will heat up in the coming years. This is a war vital to all democracies. This is a war vital to the way of life for future generations. This is a war that no democracy can afford to lose.

On the same occasion last year, I called on all democracies to defend shared values so that freedom could prevail. Today, I

would like to emphasize again the importance of cooperation. Democracies must work in solidarity to defend their values, especially at a time like this, to deter authoritarianism from its aggressive approach against democracy both bilaterally and multilaterally. We cannot leave the impression that it can always get its way, and get away with its rogue behavior. We welcome efforts by the US and other major democracies to raise awareness of the mounting threat, and take countermeasures through bilateral and multilateral channels. The US has reaffirmed its support for Lithuania, facing concerted authoritarian aggression for expanding ties with Taiwan. **We are also glad to see the US reengaging with multilateral and international institutions and renewing its commitment to working with allies and partners. To safeguard democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law, it's easier to achieve if we work together. We are confident that with the leadership of the US, we can win this ideological war against authoritarianism.**

Taiwan is on the front line in the confrontation between democracies and authoritarianism. Considering Taiwan's strategic significance on a geopolitical level, safeguarding its survival, freedom and prosperity is important to all democracies. Now you may ask: How and why does Taiwan matter?

First, Taiwan is a partner for shared values. Taiwan is committed to defending the universal values of democracy,

freedom, and human rights despite nonstop coercion from China. Taiwan's efforts have won global recognition. The Economist Intelligence Unit rated Taiwan as a full democracy in its "*Democracy Index 2020*", ranking Taiwan first in East Asia and 11th globally. Taiwan continues to work with other democracies to advance global efforts to consolidate democracy. Taiwan works with the US through the Indo-Pacific Democratic Governance Consultations to facilitate good governance and democracy in the region. We also engage in human rights consultations with the European Union. And under the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, Taiwan and the US have cooperated to assist regional countries in areas such as media literacy and women's empowerment.

Second, Taiwan is key to regional and global security. Taiwan is located in a strategic position in the first island chain, and is on the path of many major maritime traffic and trade routes. A democratic Taiwan plays a significant role in ensuring freedom of navigation in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. Both of them are critical to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Most importantly, a democratic Taiwan serves as a sea fortress to block China's expansionism into the wide Pacific. The PRC has claimed Taiwan as part of it to legitimize its aggression and expansionism. But isn't this irredentism precisely what gave rise to the second world war? On the same note, the Chinese

government continues to twist our nomenclature to signify its sovereignty claim over Taiwan. And when we say we want to use our real name, Beijing calls it a provocation and threatens war or retaliation. Fortunately, we have good friends in DC who know the strategic importance for Taiwan to be called Taiwan. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you.

To counter China's continued and growing use of gray zone tactics, Taiwan has developed appropriate strategies and countermeasures. Taiwan remains firmly committed to strengthening its self-defense capacity. I would like to thank the Biden administration for approving the first batch of arms sales to Taiwan, helping us deter China's military coercion. This once again demonstrates US commitment to Taiwan's security.

Third, Taiwan is an indispensable partner in reliable and resilient global supply chains. One of the main lessons we have learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, is the risk of overdependence on a single market with regard to global supply chains for critical industries. Many countries are aware of the dangers and are advocating for more resilient global supply chains.

Taiwan's top-ranked semiconductor and high-tech industries are geopolitically important. As a reliable and trustworthy partner to the US, Taiwan is working to enhance the resilience of global

supply chains.

Taiwan and the US resumed talks under the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement in June this year, covering a wide range of issues such as supply chains, semiconductors, vaccines, environment, labor, and digital trade. We look forward to deepening economic and trade relations with the US based on the existing mechanisms, and moving toward a bilateral trade agreement.

Last but not least, Taiwan has valuable experience of countering authoritarian tactics against democracy. Taiwan has long been threatened by the Chinese government on all fronts. In addition to military, economic, and cultural intimidation, Taiwan faces cyberattacks, gray zone tactics, and disinformation campaigns. Moreover, from decades of experience, as well as shared language and cultural backgrounds, Taiwan knows about China's united-front tactics very well. Taiwan has learned valuable lessons and developed various means to tackle the threats to democracy, and we are more than willing to share this knowledge with fellow democracies.

As I mentioned last year, Taiwan's success in handling COVID-19 proves that the democratic system is far more effective in responding to the pandemic than the authoritarian practice of covering up the truth and hiding the facts. **The Taiwan Model**

exposes the absurdity of the propaganda orchestrated by authoritarianism, and demonstrates the resilience of the democratic system in the face of the pandemic. The Taiwan Model is a reminder that standing firm to defend democratic values is not only the right way, but the only way to move forward.

Thanks to the GTI and many friends in the United States, Taiwan-US relations remain rock-solid and continue to grow. Looking ahead, **we believe the US can further demonstrate its credibility and reliability in the Indo-Pacific by deepening comprehensive relations with Taiwan.** Close Taiwan-US ties are key to regional peace, stability, and prosperity.

To sum up, this is a vital moment for democracies to defend their values and systems in the ideological war against authoritarian forces. All democracies need to work together closely to counter threats from authoritarianism. **We appreciate the leadership role the US has played in defending democracy, and look forward to further advancing bilateral relations with the US. And I would like to stress again, by working together, democracy will prevail, and Taiwan will prevail.**

Thank you.