

Taiwan not negotiable for US

Written by Taipei Times

Friday, 13 October 2017 07:01 -



Former American Institute in Taiwan Chairman Richard Bush on Monday speaks during an interview in Washington.

Photo: CNA

A meeting between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) set to take place in Beijing next month should not have any major effect on Taiwan, former American Institute in Taiwan chairman Richard Bush said on Monday.

Bush, who serves as codirector of the Brookings Institution's Center for East Asia Policy Studies, said in an interview with the Central News Agency in Washington that Taiwan would not be a bargaining chip in the Trump-Xi discussions.

It would not be a good idea for the US to use Taiwan as a bargaining chip, nor would it serve US interests, Bush said, adding that he was not very concerned about the impact that the Trump-Xi summit could have on Taiwan.

Asked if and how China would change its attitude toward Taiwan following the 19th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Bush said only time would tell.

It is unlikely that Xi would normalize the relationship with Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government, because doing so would on some level indicate an acknowledgment of the legality of such a government, Bush said.

However, if China was waiting for the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) to return to power, then it would not be a good idea to continue to suppress the country as it has been doing since

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President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) took office in May last year, Bush added.

Continuing to suppress Taiwan would only make Taiwanese unhappy, and fuel anti-China and anti-unification sentiment, he said.

Tsai had extended olive branches on multiple occasions, Bush said, adding that it is up to China to respond.

A key focus at the CCP congress would be how Xi attempts to change China's interaction with Taiwan, he said.

Since Beijing froze communications across the Taiwan Strait due to the DPP administration's refusal to acknowledge the so-called "1992 consensus," Tsai has adhered to the "four noes" in cross-strait relations.

"Our goodwill will not change, our commitments will not change, we will not revert to the old path of confrontation and we will not bow to pressure," Tsai said in her Double Ten National Day speech on Tuesday.

China has yet to reciprocate Tsai's friendly gestures.

The "1992 consensus" refers to a tacit understanding between the KMT and Beijing that both sides of the Taiwan Strait acknowledge that there is "one China," with each side having its own interpretation of what "China" means.

Former Mainland Affairs Council chairman Su Chi (蘇起) in 2006 said that he had made up the term in 2000.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2017/10/13](#)