

## Trump-Xi meeting needs attention

Written by Taipei Times Editorial  
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US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) are to meet in Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida tomorrow and on Friday.

The Chinese are sure to bring up the Taiwan question, as they always do, and request the US accept and abide by Beijing's "one China" principle.

How Trump will respond is likely causing government officials to lose sleep.

How will the summit affect Taiwan?

The US policy on Taiwan and China is based the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and the Three Communiques.

Washington has agreed to acknowledge, though not recognize, "one China" and promulgated the TRA to maintain relations with Taiwan.

However, Trump has not been following the long-standing US policy since his election as US president. His acceptance of a telephone call from President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) broke from decades-long precedent observed under the TRA. Trump also questioned the US' "one China" policy and suggested renegotiating trade and exchange rate causing major excitement in Taiwan and concern in China.

Beijing responded to Trump's departure from convention not only with threats and diplomatic pressure, but also by working in the background along official and unofficial channels.

After US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited China last month, he released a statement whose wording resembled statements released by Beijing. China regarded this as a diplomatic victory and thought that the US' position had returned to its conventional stance, closer to

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China's.

The department later said that Washington's position has not changed.

Tillerson is a novice diplomat and has been less cautious in his wording than a seasoned diplomat would have been. However, the subtle change set off alarm bells.

Former American Institute in Taiwan director William Stanton said that the Trump administration is unprepared and that he is "kind of afraid" of what might happen when Trump meets Xi.

The government, through the Mainland Affairs Council, said that the Republic of China is a sovereign nation and expressed the hope that the US takes its core interests seriously and delivers on the promises it has made to Taiwan.

It is unlikely that a fourth communique will be signed at the meeting. Trump's stance on "one China" will play a crucial role during the summit: Whether he will hold on to the US' "one China" policy or accept Beijing's "one China" principle is critical.

Taiwan needs to pay attention to what the two leaders say after the meeting, as well as the semantics.

With Trump in the White House, certain assurances that Taiwan previously relied on have been called into question.

A new type of superpower relations is being formed between the US and China, and Taiwan has no way of knowing whether it will be used as a bargaining chip.

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Taiwan must clearly define its role in the new Taiwan-US-China relations, but should not react too negatively, which might rock the boat.

According to Taiwanese national security agencies, the best approach would be to monitor the situation and react in a rational manner.

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