

## You Si-kun and ties with the US

Written by Sim Kiantek 簡安  
Friday, 13 March 2020 06:30

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American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Chairman James Moriarty met with President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) and Legislative Speaker You Si-kun (游錫堃) on Thursday last week.

When You raised the question of re-establishing diplomatic relations between Taiwan and the US, Moriarty said that “the two countries” share common values and interests, and that “the two countries” have open and transparent market mechanisms.

Moriarty’s reference to Taiwan and the US as “two countries” was an indirect response to You’s question and an extension of his own remarks at the start of his meeting with Tsai, when he said: “I look forward to discussing the next chapter of US-Taiwan cooperation with President Tsai.”

This is a big change of direction by Moriarty.

When Moriarty arrived on Dec. 1, 2003, as the envoy of then-US president George W. Bush, he urged then-president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) to cancel a referendum regarding Taiwan’s relations with China to avoid angering Beijing.

When he came to Taiwan again in December 2017, his purpose, according to former US deputy national security adviser Stephen Yates, was to keep an eye on proposed amendments to the Referendum Act (公投法) and stop them from being enacted.

Given this background, it is remarkable that he is now speaking openly about Taiwan and the US being two countries, with no concern about angering China.

On Feb. 13, You told AIT Director Brent Christensen that he hoped Taiwan and the US could establish diplomatic relations, but Christensen did not dare to reply.

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The next day, China's Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) accused You of using the COVID-19 outbreak as a cover for promoting Taiwanese independence.

You responded with a Facebook post thanking TAO spokesman Ma Xiaoguang (馬曉光) for raising his international profile, so that more attention would be paid to his efforts to promote diplomatic relations between Taiwan and the US.

Four days later, You received a letter from an 88-year-old former Nationalist Army soldier that threatened You and his family; the same writer threatened You at the beginning of this month, warning him not to promote Taiwan-US diplomatic ties.

You has scored this step forward in parliamentary diplomacy after being legislative speaker for just over a month.

It is ridiculous that his achievement should be obscured by a tide of silly reports about something he said about police patrol boxes.

[Editor's note: You on Thursday last week said that the police patrol box next to his residence was empty, implying that officers had not been patrolling the neighborhood or checking the box.]

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Translated by Julian Clegg

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