

Momentum for opening doors on the global stage

Written by Tommy Lin 林德

Monday, 13 September 2021 05:39

Ahead of a meeting of the UN General Assembly on Monday next week, Irish news site Gript on Aug. 31 published an article by Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu (吳德昇) titled “Reimagining a more resilient UN system with Taiwan in it.”

In the article, Wu said that the nation’s achievements in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic and its contributions to the global supply chain are “compelling reasons for Taiwan to play a constructive role in the UN system.”

Wu also lamented the many ways in which Beijing stymies, suppresses and silences Taiwan’s voice at the UN.

Wu should be commended for refraining from using Taiwan’s official name — the Republic of China. It is an outdated formula, although habitually employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the past, which can lead to serious misunderstandings.

Instead, Wu simply referred to the nation by its widely understood name: “Taiwan,” telling the world that “Taiwan is Taiwan and China is China.”

This marked an important step toward the nation finally breaking free from its China-imposed straitjacket.

Wu pressing home this attack against China dovetails with a wider trend of European nations supporting Taiwan, despite China’s resistance.

First, the Lithuanian government in July announced that it would establish a “Taiwanese Representative Office in Lithuania,” eliciting howls of rage from Beijing. Lithuania was not acting unilaterally, and the move reflected a wider strategic stance adopted by the EU and the US.

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On Wednesday last week, the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs passed a "EU-Taiwan political relations and cooperation" report and related proposals by a landslide 60-to-4 vote, with six abstentions.

The proposals urge the EU to rename its representative office in Taipei the "EU Office in Taiwan," pay close attention to China's coercion of Taiwan, work with the wider international community to maintain stability in the Taiwan Strait and incorporate the nation as a partner in the bloc's Indo-Pacific strategy.

China's leaders again flew into a violent rage.

On Thursday, EU lawmaker Charlie Weimers called on the bloc to invite Taiwanese leaders to visit Europe and start discussions on an "EU-Taiwan Bilateral Investment Agreement."

These developments showed the international community's unified will to resist China's hegemonic designs.

Speaking at a forum on Monday, Australian Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said the country's economy had proven remarkably resilient in the face of Beijing's economic coercion.

Frydenberg also announced Australia's new "China plus" strategy, which aims to diversify the country's exports and encourage Australian businesses to expand their horizons beyond the Chinese market in an attempt to reduce dependence on China.

The same day, the UK's HMS Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier strike group docked at Japan's Port of Yokosuka, which is the home of the US' forward-deployed USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier. It was a symbolic move, demonstrating Britain's capability to deploy significant naval assets far from its shores to assist the US to conduct a large-scale naval blockade of China if required.

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Under the direction of President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), the foreign ministry has taken the first step toward achieving a diplomatic breakthrough in Europe.

Hopefully the ministry can keep up the momentum and continue opening more doors on the international stage, in particular regarding the pivotal relationship with the US, and increase concrete recognition of Taiwan in Washington.

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Translated by Edward Jones

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