

Xi-Biden talks show it is time to act

Written by Paul Lei 李保

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With the whole world watching, US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Nusa Dua, Indonesia. The meeting has been interpreted differently by the US and China, while other countries have offered their own assessments, but it is certain that US-China tensions have been mitigated, and the probability of war lowered.

Taiwan should seize this opportunity to upgrade its defensive capabilities. The nation must strive to consolidate its national power in the latter half of Biden's term.

Biden and Xi have known each other for years, having met when both of them were vice presidents.

However, this week was the first time they met in person as presidents. As leaders of the world's two superpowers, Biden and Xi have a lot to deal with: the politico-economic situation in the post-COVID-19 era, Russia's war in Ukraine, nuclear proliferation by Iran and North Korea, as well as tensions in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea as a result of the US-China competition. It remains to be seen how Biden and Xi will draw their respective "red lines."

As the Biden-Xi talks came to an end, the two countries did not issue any joint communique, but judging from post-meeting information, Washington and Beijing have restarted mutual communications.

After US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei, China unilaterally cut off regular activities with the US on military matters, global climate cooperation, economic collaboration and diplomatic relations. After the Biden-Xi meeting, such exchanges have restarted, with the exception of on military matters.

At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27), representatives from the US and China met, while US Secretary of State Antony Blinken is to visit China in January.

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Recent events will help the two nations establish “buffer zones” to avoid potential conflict and ease the crisis resulting from deteriorating ties.

Meanwhile, the cross-Taiwan Strait military situation would be curbed.

Taiwan should take advantage of the “half-time” created by the Biden-Xi talks by bolstering its defensive capabilities in the next two years to remedy the period of self-defeat during the administration of former president Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九). It must seize the chance now, otherwise in two years, it will have to contend with a changed situation when Xi might confront a new president in the US, as well as the change in leadership in Taiwan.

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Translated by Liu Yi-hung

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