

In the wake of Chinese President Xi Jinping's (習近平) state visit to Washington last week, it might be time for a review of Taiwan-US relations, a panel of academics said on Wednesday.

"It would be worth considering a national conference on the future of US-Taiwan relations," Project 2049 Institute executive director Mark Stokes said.

Addressing a Hudson Institute discussion on "Xi Jinping's Visit: What it Means for Taiwan," Stokes said the national conference should bring together all schools of thought, ranging from those who wanted to accommodate China to those who advocate independence.

Hudson Institute director of Chinese strategy Michael Pillsbury said that as far as it is known, Taiwan was not a subject of friction between Xi and US President Barack Obama during their private talks.

"There was a summit in which Taiwan did not come up," Pillsbury said.

"Is this the time to think about improving US-Taiwan relations and strengthening deterrence in case there is something possible involving the use of force?" he asked.

He said that while there had been hints that "something of importance" happened at the summit, outsiders would have to wait 30 years for the details to be declassified.

Pillsbury said that judging from what had been released so far, there was almost no discussion of Taiwan, and Stokes agreed that the summit was unlikely to have much impact on the nation.

Stokes said that in the US there were wide-ranging and different schools of thought on Taiwan and a national conference on the future of Taiwan relations could bring them together and allow free expression.

He also called for a national committee to be formed to study Taiwan-US relations.

Stokes said it was important for the White House to act quickly and deliver to Taiwan a package of outstanding arms — including destroyers — that has already been approved.

He said that US industry should be given a “blanket” marketing license to assist Taiwan in the development of diesel-electric submarines.

At the same time, the US should help Taiwan to refurbish its existing submarines and provide program management services, Stokes added.

Stokes and research fellow at the US non-profit Ian Easton called for changes to Washington’s agreement with the nation that imposes severe restrictions on military and political visits.

In particular, the US president should be able to have telephone calls with Taiwan’s president, they said.

However, Pillsbury said that this might be akin to the US husband in a 40-year marriage telling his wife, or China, he would not be home because he was spending the night with his old girlfriend, or Taiwan.

He said the act would be “self deterring” because the “husband” would know there would be consequences.

“You are not sure what it would be, but because you are breaking an implied commitment, the reaction could be quite strong,” he said.

## Taiwan-US ties review due: academics

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Easton said Beijing had failed to improve the cross-strait relationship and that it was time for Taiwan to “double down” and pivot back to the US, “its only true ally and friend.”

Asked what advice he would give to Taiwan’s next president, Pillsbury said: “The new president should ask for a policy review of the relationship with the US — a detailed policy review.”

He said Taiwan should explore the possibility of expanding its relationship with the US and examine the terms of the current ties.

Pillsbury said the next president should ask if times had changed, and if Taiwan and the US should “rebalance and try some new ideas.”

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