

Tsai and US senator reaffirm relations

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President Tsai Ing-wen, right, talks to US Senator Cory Gardner, left, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific and International Cybersecurity Policy, at the Presidential Office in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

Taiwan hopes to hold more frequent negotiations and discussions with the US on purchasing defensive weapons, which not only helps to maintain peace across the Taiwan Strait, but also benefits the US and other nations that cherish similar values, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) said yesterday during a meeting with US Senator Cory Gardner.

Gardner, chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific and International Cybersecurity Policy, told Tsai that he would reassert the Taiwan Relations Act when pursuing legislation of an Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) aimed at bolstering ties with US allies in the region.

Gardner also underlined the importance of high-level exchanges between Taiwan and the US, while expressing the hope to normalize US arms sales to Taiwan, thereby consolidating bilateral collaboration.

According to an NBC television news report, US President Donald Trump has postponed selling weapons to Taiwan out of concern about irritating Beijing, as he hopes that China would assume a pivotal role in resolving the North Korean issue.

Taiwanese government agencies did not confirm the report, while the military said that the report was based on speculation.

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Tsai said during the meeting that she was glad to meet with Gardner again after the senator visited Taiwan in June last year, and that she would want to take the opportunity to thank him for his continued support and assistance for Taiwan in the US Senate.

Taiwan-US relations have seen positive developments since Trump took office and the two nations have worked closely together to maintain regional stability, Tsai said.

The president said that a delegation led by Representative to the US Stanley Kao (高志彬) in March attended a meeting of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State — held by the US Department of State — and that Taiwan would invest capital and donate equipment for demining missions in Iraq.

She thanked Gardner for proposing the ARIA to strengthen the US commitment to its Asian allies, while expressing the hope that Taiwan-US relations would continue to move forward.

She said that the nation is looking forward to signing trade treaties with the US, while expressing confidence that cooperation on industrial development would be mutually beneficial for both US and Taiwanese businesses.

She said that she hopes the US would ensure Taiwan's security by continuing to honor the "six assurances" and the Taiwan Relations Act, which were included in the Republican Party's presidential campaign platform last year.

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