

Schriver eyes deeper US-Taiwan ties

Written by Taipei Times

Saturday, 18 November 2017 05:38 -



Randall Schriver, who has been nominated as US assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific affairs, sits with his children before the commencement of the Senate Armed Services Committee nomination hearing in Washington on Thursday.

Photo: CNA

Randall Schriver, who has been nominated for US assistant secretary of defense for Asian and Pacific affairs, on Thursday said he would make strengthening ties with security partners such as Taiwan a priority if his nomination is confirmed.

“If confirmed, it will be a priority to invest in our security partners in Taiwan and Singapore, and emerging partnerships with countries such as Vietnam,” Schriver said at a nomination hearing held by the US Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington.

“For this administration’s vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific to be realized, we must position ourselves to prevail in the long-term strategic competition we face vis-a-vis the People’s Republic of China,” he told the committee in his opening statement.

The US should continue to look for opportunities to cooperate with China where the two countries’ interests overlap, Schriver said, but he acknowledged that finding such opportunities would be a challenge.

“The Chinese Communist Party’s vision for a new security architecture in Asia with China at the center is in many ways at odds with our own aspiration for the region,” he said. “If confirmed, I will approach the duties of my position with an understanding that a rising China presents the most consequential security challenge of my generation.”

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In response to a question from Senator Tom Cotton on whether the level of US sales of weapons to Taiwan is sufficient to deter Chinese aggression, Schriver answered: “We have more work to do there.”

Cotton also raised the concern that China always has a quantitative advantage over Taiwan’s military and he asked whether it also had a qualitative advantage right now.

“In certain niche areas they do, but overall, I think Taiwan maintains a qualitative edge to the point where they could deter and hopefully defeat a Chinese invasion,” Schriver said. “There are scenarios short of invasion, coercion scenarios, which are very dangerous for Taiwan.”

Schriver, a former Taipei Times columnist, served as chief of staff and senior policy adviser to then-US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage from 2001 to 2003.

He took the helm of the Project 2049 Institute — a US think tank dedicated to researching security trends in Asia — after serving as deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs from 2003 to 2005.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2017/11/18](#)