

Ted Cruz urges Pelosi to invite Tsai to Washington

Written by Taipei Times

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US Senator Ted Cruz speaks at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington on Wednesday.

Photo: Bloomberg

US Senator Ted Cruz on Wednesday said he has signed a letter to House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, urging her to invite President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) to visit Washington and give an address to the US Congress.

During a question-and-answer session after he gave a speech at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington on the Senate's role in US foreign policy, Cruz was asked by a Central News Agency reporter how he would like to see the US' Taiwan Travel Act enforced, and if he supported a visit by Tsai this year.

Cruz was a cosponsor of the act, which encourages visits by high-level US and Taiwanese officials.

"Yes, I support President Tsai coming and delivering a speech to Congress. I just recently signed a letter, urging the Speaker of the House to invite her," he said.

A meeting with Tsai in Houston, Texas, last year during her stopover on a trip to Central America was "positive and beneficial," he said.

Before the meeting, the Chinese government had sent him a letter asking him not to meet with Tsai, he said.

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“Anyone who knows me would know that such a correspondence is unlikely to be successful,” he said.

“But I had great fun responding to that letter, explaining to the government of China that I would meet with whoever I damn well please. They have no authority to dictate who I meet with any more than I have authority to dictate who they meet with,” he said.

Taiwan is “an extraordinary story of standing up against Chinese oppression and creating an economic jewel and powerhouse,” he said.

Anyone wanting an illustration of whether freedom or totalitarianism works can compare Taiwan and China side by side, he added.

Serving on the US Senate Armed Services Committee, he has worked to be a leading defender of Taiwan by introducing legislation — some of which has been passed — to strengthen the US’ relationship with Taiwan, he said.

China is one of the US’ rivals and “has constantly pressed Taiwan into submission, and tried to stifle Taiwan and maintain the fiction of the “one China” policy,” he said.

In his speech, Cruz said US allies can be divided into four categories: friends, enemies, rivals and problematic allies, adding that Israel, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan are friends.

Iran is an enemy, and the possibility of a nuclear-armed Iran is the greatest national security threat facing the US and the world, and North Korea falls into this category as well, as North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has threatened to launch nuclear weapons at the US, he said.

Turkey and Saudi Arabia are problematic allies, and the killing of Saudi Arabian journalist

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Jamal Khashoggi was a “horrific, state-sponsored murder,” he said.

China is the US’ top geopolitical rival, followed by Russia, he said, adding that he was glad that liberals have recently discovered the true nature of these states.

“Dealing with China is fraught with risks, from espionage to full-borne military threats. For too long we failed to acknowledge the risks from China,” he said.

Cruz said that he has introduced and helped pass legislation barring the US Department of State from funding Beijing’s Confucius Institutes, as well as discontinuing China’s participation in the Rim of the Pacific military exercises.

“We need to make sure that we maintain military presence to deter them, and should be prepared to use sanctions and diplomatic pressure if necessary,” he said.

“We need to make sure Taiwan, Japan, Ukraine are protected from these hostile rivals,” he said, adding that he has pushed for more port calls and sharing of military information with Taiwan.

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