US, Taiwan reshaping supply chains: AIT

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 From left, Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu, American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Director Brent Christensen and National Communictions Commission Chairman Chen Yaw-shyang hold signed copies of a joint declaration on 5G security at the 5G Policy Forum organized by the AIT yesterday in Taipei.
 Photo: Peter Lo, Taipei Times

The US is working with Taiwan to restructure global supply chains under the shared values of transparency and accountability, American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Director Brent Christensen said, according to a transcript released by AIT yesterday.

Christensen made the remarks on Tuesday at the International Investment Forum in Taipei hosted by the Mergers and Acquisitions and Private Equity Council of Taiwan.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the risks of over-reliance on one country or supplier for critical materials, such as medical supplies and pharmaceuticals, and for industries that are of strategic importance to shared economies, Christensen said.

Washington aims to diversify and bring supply chains closer to end users, and ensure that countries like China do not hold supply chains hostage for political purposes, he said.

The US works with like-minded partners, including Taiwan, Japan and the EU, to develop new supply chains based on shared values, he added.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co's (TSMC, 台積電) plans to boost investment in the US send "an unmistakable signal that the future of high-tech supply chains remains in the US-Taiwan nexus," Christensen said.

Highlighting the importance of accountability, transparency, reciprocity, respect for the rule of

law and human rights, he said: "We would call these American values. We would also call them Taiwan values."

At another forum in Taipei yesterday, the AIT and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US issued a joint declaration on 5G security, echoing the Prague Proposals.

The Prague Proposals resulted from a 5G security conference hosted by the Czech Republic in May last year, and attended by officials and experts from more than 30 countries.

The US' 5G Clean Path, announced by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in April, is an end-to-end communication that does not use any transmission, control, computing, or storage equipment from extremely problematic, untrusted IT vendors, such as Huawei Technologies Co (□□) and ZTE Corp (□□), Christensen said at yesterday's forum.

The joint statement said that 5G suppliers should provide products and services that enable fair competition and downstream development by the maximum number of market participants.

It listed four criteria for evaluating 5G suppliers: Network hardware and software suppliers should not be subject, without independent judicial review, to control by a foreign government; suppliers should be financed openly and transparently; they should have transparent ownership, partnerships and corporate governance structures; and they should exemplify a commitment to innovation and respect for intellectual property rights.

Taiwan, on the front line of cyberdefense, has pre-emptively excluded hardware and software with cybersecurity risks, Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu (□□□) said.

All of Taiwan's 5G suppliers — Chunghwa Telecom Co (□□□□), Taiwan Mobile Co (□□□□□), Far EasTone Telecommunications Co (□□□□), Asia Pacific Telecom Co (□□□□) and Taiwan Star Telecom Co (□□□□) — are listed in the US' Clean Path, showing that Taiwan is a trustworthy partner, he said.

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The joint declaration signals that Taiwan-US cooperation in protecting cybersecurity has become institutionalized, Wu said, adding that Taiwan would continue to work with the US and other like-minded countries to develop 5G network standards.

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