

Taiwan not part of China, Pompeo says

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US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo speaks during a media briefing on Tuesday at the US Department of State in Washington.

Photo: AFP

The government yesterday welcomed a statement by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo that “Taiwan has not been a part of China,” saying that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait should maintain the “status quo” based on equal dignity.

During a telephone interview with the *Hugh Hewitt Show* radio program aired on Thursday, Pompeo was asked to comment on the US’ commitments to Taiwan’s security and the opinions of radical elements of the Chinese Communist Party that Taiwan should be “retaken by force if necessary.”

In response, Pompeo said it was important to “get the language right.”

“Taiwan has not been a part of China, and that was recognized with the work that the [former US president Ronald] Reagan administration did to lay out the policies that the United States has adhered to now for three-and-a-half decades, and done so under both administrations,” he said, referring to Reagan’s “six assurances” made to Taipei in 1982.

“I actually think this is in fact bipartisan. I think the central understandings that this is a model for democracy that the people who live on Taiwan ought to be honored by having the Chinese live up to the commitments that they have made — I think this is something that both parties can agree to,” he said.

“You’ve seen our announcements with respect to weapon sales to Taiwan to assist in their defense capabilities. All of these things are designed to live up to the promises that have been made between, frankly, China and the Taiwanese people,” he added.

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Pompeo also highlighted the importance of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue among the US, Australia, India and Japan, saying that it would build a set of common understandings that deliver increased security in the region for travel and navigation.

In Taipei, Presidential Office spokesman Xavier Chang (張中江) said in a statement yesterday that it is an indisputable fact that the Republic of China is a sovereign state of 23 million Taiwanese who love freedom and democracy, and are glad to make contributions to the global community.

Both sides of the Strait should, based on the principle of equal dignity, jointly maintain the peaceful and stable “status quo” across the Strait, he said.

Taiwan would continue to fulfill its international obligations, making positive contributions to cross-strait and regional peace, stability and prosperity, he said.

“The Republic of China is a sovereign state, not part of the People’s Republic of China, which is a fact as well as the status quo,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Joanne Ou (歐陽瑜) said in a separate statement, thanking Pompeo for his support.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that China would strike back against any moves that undermine its core interests.

Speaking in Beijing, Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Wang Wenbin (王文斌) said that Taiwan was an inalienable part of China and that Pompeo was further damaging US-China ties.

“We solemnly tell Pompeo and his ilk, that any behavior that undermines China’s core interests and interferes with China’s domestic affairs will be met with a resolute counterattack by China,” he said, without elaborating.

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