

Lai, Pelosi talk security issues, China

Written by Taipei Times

Sunday, 30 January 2022 07:32 -



Vice President William Lai, top left, US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, top right, and Representative to the US Hsiao Bi-khim hold a video conference on Friday.

Photo courtesy of the Presidential Office via CNA

Vice President William Lai (賴清德) discussed security and economic issues, as well as China, with US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi during a virtual meeting on Friday, Representative to the US Hsiao Bi-khim (蕭美琴) said.

The meeting lasted about 30 minutes and touched on security issues, economic affairs and shared values, Hsiao told reporters after the meeting.

Pelosi expressed concern over the status and security of the Taiwan Strait, as well as human rights in China, ahead of the Beijing Winter Olympics that begins on Friday, Hsiao said.

The US has announced a diplomatic boycott of the Games, citing “genocide and crimes against humanity” in China’s Xinjiang region, which Beijing dismissed as a “self-directed political farce.”

US athletes would still attend the Games, but they would not be joined by US government officials.

Pelosi also voiced her support for Taiwan’s participation in the WHO’s activities and mechanisms, saying that she had previously conveyed her views directly to the WHO’s director-general over the matter, Hsiao said.

Pelosi recognized Taiwan’s efforts to fight COVID-19 and said the nation should not be excluded from the WHO, Hsiao said, adding that the conversation between Lai and Pelosi was “relaxed” and “amicable.”

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The meeting was held shortly after Lai arrived in San Francisco for a stopover on his return trip from Honduras.

Lai later wrote on Twitter that he was pleased to meet with Pelosi, who he described as “a champion of human rights and true friend to Taiwan.”

“We are committed to working together to strengthen the US-Taiwan partnership,” Lai added.

In San Francisco, Lai was again welcomed by American Institute in Taiwan Chairman James Moriarty, before heading to the Hyatt Regency hotel, where dozens of Taiwanese expatriates greeted him.

Speaking about his trip to Honduras, Lai told a virtual meeting with representatives of the Taiwanese community that he had received a warm welcome in the Central American nation.

During his 43-hour stay in Honduras, Lai attended the inauguration ceremony of Honduran President Xiomara Castro, during which he had a brief conversation with US Vice President Kamala Harris.

He also held talks with Castro and other Honduran officials, as well as Belizean Prime Minister John Briceno.

Lai said that senior Honduran government officials, including Castro, have expressed their appreciation of the country's ties with Taiwan and said they looked forward to improving bilateral cooperation.

The 62-year-old Honduran president had said during her presidential campaign that she would switch recognition to China if she won, although her transition team later said the new

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government would maintain diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

At a news conference in Tegucigalpa, Lai said the issue regarding Honduras' ties with Taiwan had been "satisfactorily resolved."

Lai said that Taiwan would make every effort to maintain its relations with its Central American ally and seek to work with like-minded countries, such as the US, to help improve the lives of Hondurans.

During the virtual talks with the Taiwanese community, Lai also thanked the US government for its support of Taiwan.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2022/01/30](#)