

## Senator calls for independence support

Written by Taipei Times

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President Tsai Ing-wen, right, poses for a photograph with US Senator Marsha Blackburn yesterday.

**Photo: EPA-EFE**

It is important for democracies to support Taiwan as it works to preserve its independence and freedom, US Senator Marsha Blackburn said at a meeting with President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) yesterday.

“It is important ... that freedom-loving nations support Taiwan as they seek to preserve their independence,” said Blackburn, who is a member of the US Senate Armed Services Committee.

Blackburn, a Republican representing Tennessee, said she looks forward to continuing to help support the people of Taiwan as “they push forward as an independent nation.”

The senator has been critical of Beijing, which she described as an “adversary” of the US.

“I will continue to stand with [Taiwanese] and their right to freedom and democracy,” Blackburn wrote on Twitter after arriving in Taipei on Thursday, adding that Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) “doesn’t scare me.”

Tsai praised Blackburn for sponsoring a bill in the US Congress that aims to “bolster US backing for Taiwan to enhance our self-defense capabilities.”

The president was likely referring to the draft Taiwan democracy defense lend-lease act, introduced in the US Senate last month.

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The bill would support “the United States’ partnership with Taiwan by authorizing a defense lend or lease program with the government of Taiwan,” Blackburn said.

Tsai said the Russian invasion of Ukraine and China’s military exercises in the Taiwan Strait showed that authoritarian countries are disrupting and threatening the world order.

She urged democracies to “further unite and cooperate in jointly holding a firm line of defense of our values, freedom and democracy.”

Tsai also expressed hope that Taiwan could join the US-initiated Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, saying that like-minded countries should deepen economic and trade cooperation to create secure and resilient supply chains.

Blackburn met with National Security Council Secretary-General Wellington Koo (顧立雄) yesterday to discuss security and trade issues, and is to depart today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

She also gave a keynote speech at the ministry’s Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs in Taipei yesterday afternoon.

US Department of State spokesperson Vedant Patel said in Washington that US lawmakers “have gone to Taiwan for decades and will continue to do so.”

“We’re going to continue to take calm and resolute steps to uphold peace and stability in the region and to support Taiwan in line with our long-standing policy,” Patel told a news conference on Thursday.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2022/08/27](#)