

**Implications of US Senior Officials' Asia and Europe Trips: Taiwan's
Perspectives
Press Release**

The Prospect Foundation

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The Prospect Foundation hosted the event on “Implications of US Senior Officials' Asia and Europe Trips: Taiwan's Perspectives”, featuring guest speakers Dr. Cheng-Fung Lu, an associate Professor from National Quemoy University and Dr. Liang-Chih Evans Chen, an Associate Research Fellow from Institute for National Defense and Security Research. The Prospect Foundation Chairman, Dr. Tan-Sun Chen, gave the opening remarks and President, Dr. I-Chung Lai moderated the event.

Biden Administration Prioritizes Teaming-up with Allies and Is Not Shy from Steep Competition

In Dr. Lu's opinion, when the US former President Trump's term came to an end, US-China relations were at a historical low point and it's unlikely to have fundamentally improvement in the near future. The Biden administration has continued the Trump administration's practice of sending U.S. Navy ships to the South China Sea in freedom of navigation operations, to show that the US doesn't accept China's territorial claims in the area and to reassure allies that America will maintain military presence in the area.

The meeting in Alaska gave both US and China a chance to reset their stormy relationship over technology, human rights, trade and military leadership in Asia. Yet Dr. Lu pointed out that President Biden has forecasted “steep competition” with China and his administration is teaming up with allies around the world.

2+2 Meetings Aim for Better Coordination among Allies and Partners

Dr. Chen shared the same view. He said US senior officials' visits to Asia and Europe, including Japan, Korea, India and Belgium, demonstrate the Biden Administration's promise to revitalize American relations with its allies and partners. The Biden administration repeated that the United States cannot materialize its foreign policy alone, Washington has to revitalize American relations with its allies and partners and to return to key international institutions in order to fulfill the promise that “America

is back.” Dr. Chen said that the Biden Administration places diplomacy prior to military actions in its foreign policy. However, this does not imply Washington is discarding any military approach in securing its security and interests. Instead, the United States continues to improve military capability and readiness for its armed forces for potential contingency. The 2+2 meetings between US-Japan and US-Korea and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin’s visit in India are parts of the endeavors for better coordination among allies and partners.

Differences among Allies and Partners Impose Challenges on Counterbalancing China’s Aggressiveness

However, Dr. Chen pointed out that US allies have different perceptions of China’s threat and distinct expectations of US-China relations. Those differences raise difficulties for Washington to implement strategies counterbalancing Beijing’s challenge. To Seoul, for example, the real threat is Pyongyang not Beijing, and the economic connection between Korea and China certainly will weigh in Seoul’s decision-making. It would be fair to say, if there is a conflict between US and China in Indo-Pacific, Seoul is highly unlikely to join US-led military action against Beijing.

Dr. Chen also assessed that the involving parties of the regional confrontations in East Asia varies by case. If China launch attack on Itu Aba/Tai ping Island or Pratas Islands, the United States may involve itself, but it is hard to predict if Japan or Australia will assist the US in the contingency.