



**Transcript of DPP Secretary-General Lin Yu-chang's speech at Global Taiwan Institute's event, *A Conversation with DPP Secretary-General Lin Yu-chang: "Deepening Taiwan's Democracy in 2024"* :**

Good afternoon everyone. It's my pleasure to be here, and I would like to thank GTI for providing this excellent venue and opportunity.

In 2019, after stepping down as acting DPP chairman, I was invited to the US. Then, as now, I had the chance to share my views here at GTI with democratic friends who care about Taiwan. At the time, I used the theme "Anchor of Liberal Democracy in the Asia-Pacific" to discuss Taiwan's importance to the international liberal democratic camp and Indo-Pacific security. I suggested that the US could reconstruct the political and economic architecture between Taiwan and the US from the perspective of Indo-Pacific security.

I raised at the time that "between the Strait, there is no Taiwan question, only a China question." I said that the key to Indo-Pacific security lies in Taiwan, and the key to Taiwan's security lies in economic security.

Over the past five years, many far-reaching events have occurred in the world. Notably, during COVID-19, Taiwan demonstrated its strong epidemic prevention capabilities, economic resilience, and technological strength, allowing the world to see that Taiwan is an indispensable key force and proving that Taiwan can make outstanding contributions to mankind.

Today, again at GTI, I would like to share a few observations.

First of all, former President Ma Ying-jeou once said that if cross-Strait relations were not good, Taiwan's economy would not be good. It now seems that this is not the case. Since COVID, Taiwan's economy has only gotten better.

Before 2019, Taiwanese people brought money into China. Now, they are leaving China and investing in Taiwan. From 2020 to 2023, the balance of deposits in Taiwan's banking industry increased to an average of \$3.4 trillion NTD, or over \$100 billion US dollars, per year.

The DPP government has been in power for 8 years, with economic growth averaging 3.16 percent per year. Taiwan's GDP per capita has surpassed South Korea's.

As China suspended ECFA tariff agreements on 146 Taiwanese products, Taiwan's stock market reached a record high, its market value surpassing Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index. Back in 2020, China and Hong Kong accounted for 43.9 percent of Taiwan's exports, while the US plus ASEAN accounted for 30 percent. Today, in 2024, China and

Hong Kong account for 30.9 percent, while the US and ASEAN accounts for 42.5 percent. What we have witnessed is a structural reversal in Taiwan's export market.

Today, Taiwan is not only at the core of the global semiconductor and information communications industries, but also at the core of global AI development.

At the same time, we have also made the largest social investment in our history. Successive DPP governments have put in place policies that prioritized early childhood care, as well as long-term care for the elderly. We have increased rental subsidies and introduced measures to close the college tuition gap. The purpose: to reduce the burden of people's lives and strengthen social resilience.

In 2023, we managed to shrink the income gap between the top 20 percent and the bottom 20 percent.

These achievements come from the efforts of the Taiwanese people, and show that the DPP is leading Taiwan on the right path.

Second, Taiwan's will to defend itself, as well as our investments in national security, continue to grow stronger.

In his inauguration speech, President Lai emphasized that peace is the only option. We have the ideal of pursuing peace, but we must not have illusions about China.

The reality is that China's intention to seize Taiwan has never changed depending on which party is in power in Taiwan. The only differences are its strategies and means.

In Chen Shui-bian's era, China used shells and missiles; in Ma Ying-jeou's era, it used money, or what we call silver bullets; in Tsai Ing-wen's era, it used shells, missiles, silver bullets, and cognitive warfare; now, under President Lai, China is using all of the above, as well as disinformation and legal battles in an attempt to disrupt and infiltrate Taiwanese society.

After President Tsai took office, she promoted military reforms and the domestic production of aircraft and ships. Taiwan's defense budget grew from \$358 to \$607 billion NTD in eight years, a 70 percent increase. President Lai is committed to continuing these policies. Next year, Taiwan's defense budget will reach \$647 billion NTD, a new high.

Compulsory military service has been restored to one year starting this year, with more than 83 percent of our citizens agreeing with this policy. Even among young people aged 18 to 29 who may be directly affected, more than 70 percent support the decision.

As Minister of the Interior, I made efforts to strengthen whole-of-society defense resilience, expand investment in civilian training, strengthen the systems for goods preparation and distribution, and enhance the security of our energy and critical infrastructure—so that when the country faces an emergency or natural disaster, the government and society can maintain normal operations.

Third, in the face of new challenges to Taiwan's democracy, the DPP, now in its ninth

year in power, is steady, experienced, confident and capable. Looking ahead, we are confident that we will consolidate and deepen the achievements of Taiwan's democracy.

Back in 2000, the DPP had no experience in central governance. It faced a situation where it was in power for the first time and the opposition held the majority in parliament, which was indeed full of challenges. But in 2024, although we face an opposition-controlled legislature again, the situation is completely different. Thanks to experience gained from the first time in power, as well as the eight years of power since 2016, the DPP is a mature and experienced ruling party.

Regrettably, after Fu Kun-chi, convener of the KMT Legislative Yuan Caucus, returned from his visit to China this April, the KMT launched efforts to paralyze the government, in the name of oversight and reform. Their 'reform' bills represented an overreach of legislative power, and their passage through improper means sparked the Blue Bird movement that saw tens of thousands of young people taking to the streets.

To defend Taiwan's constitutional system, we have asked for a Constitutional Interpretation of the bills. Right now, the justices have issued a temporary suspension. Regardless of the outcome, what is certain is that Taiwan's domestic politics will face new challenges. In 2026, the DPP will mark its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As the number one brand among Taiwan's political parties, the first in protecting Taiwan, the first in governance, and the first in fighting corruption, the DPP must be younger and more open. It must not become aged, rigid or degraded in its mentality.

The new government has just marked its 100<sup>th</sup> day in office. According to various polls, President Lai's approval and confidence ratings stand at close to 60 percent. This is a remarkable result, and we will continue to work hard.

Thank you.