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民主進步黨
Democratic Progressive Party of Taiwan

Legislator Chen Kuan-Ting: Taiwan Must Look Beyond 2027 as China Incrementally Undermines the Status Quo





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WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Legislator Chen Kuan-Ting addressed Taiwan’s defense planning, procurement reform and domestic defense industry participation at the 25th U.S.–Taiwan Defense Industry Conference on Monday. Speaking on the panel “A Moving Deadline: Updated Threat Assessment for 2027 and Beyond,” Chen stressed that Taiwan must prepare for sustained Chinese coercion today and threats well beyond the title date.

Chen said Beijing is gradually normalizing its coercion campaign against Taiwan. Examples include Chinese military aircraft operating around the island and coast guard and other government vessels operating near Kinmen and Matsu and off Taiwan’s east coast. Chen warned that Taiwan must prepare for a range of contingencies, including attrition, blockade and gray-zone coercion. He cited China’s transformation of reefs into artificial islands and military outposts in the South China Sea as an example of how incremental actions can change the status quo over time.

“It’s not just about 2027,” Chen said. “It’s about today, 2027, and five years after 2027.”

Taiwan must also make its response to Chinese military activity more sustainable. Scrambling fighter jets to respond to every instance of Chinese air activity consumes resources and places additional demands on pilots. Radar and air defense systems can monitor and track Chinese aircraft without automatically matching every move.

Taiwan's defense budget is set to reach US\$34.9 billion in 2027. With conventional arms sales often taking years to fulfill, Chen discussed options such as Direct Commercial Sales (DCS), alongside expanded domestic manufacturing and co-production with the United States and other international partners, to meet Taiwan's defense needs.

He also called for procurement reform to give more domestic companies a meaningful opportunity to contribute to Taiwan's defense. Startups and small and medium-sized enterprises often struggle to find bidding opportunities and navigate proposal requirements. Over the past two and a half years, Chen has worked with Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense, seeking simpler procedures and greater transparency.

"We are trying to open it up for everyone, for anyone who is interested in our national defense," Chen said.

Chen pointed to the Defense Innovation Office's website as a resource for companies seeking information on defense requirements and opportunities. He also invited businesses to explore joint ventures and production opportunities at the Minxiong Aerospace and Unmanned Aircraft Systems Industrial Park in Chiayi, his constituency. The park is expected to accommodate approximately 100 companies, with applications spanning military, space and civilian sectors.

During the question-and-answer session, Chen highlighted the importance of directing limited resources toward capabilities that deliver results. He cited Ukraine's Brave1 Market, which uses performance data to help assess effectiveness and guide resource allocation.

"Whatever works well, they invest more," Chen said. "If this unit performs better than other units, then put more resources on it."

Chen said using statistics can help determine the most efficient and effective response to different threats. He also discussed working with volunteers or AI companies to help decide what to respond to and how to respond.

Legislator Chen was joined by Lin Yu-chang, the prior DPP Secretary-General and former Minister of the Interior, currently Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Indo-Pacific Security (IIPS). On the sidelines, they met with

U.S. officials, think tank scholars, and defense industry representatives from both countries. DPP U.S. Mission Director Iris Shaw and the Mission's staff accompanied the delegation.

Organized by the U.S.–Taiwan Business Council, the 25th U.S.–Taiwan Defense Industry Conference runs October 18–20 in Williamsburg, Virginia. Approximately 240 officials, defense industry representatives and think tank scholars from Taiwan and the United States are attending to discuss Taiwan's security needs, defense procurement and bilateral cooperation.

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