

President Ma Meets Senior Officials from the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

Apr 29, 2010

President Ma Ying-jeou met with Mr. Thomas J. Tradewell Sr., Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW), and Mr. Allen Kent, Adjutant General of the VFW, at the Presidential Office on the morning of April 26. The president extended a cordial welcome to the gentlemen on their visit to Taiwan.

The president noted that the VFW is an extremely influential organization in the United States and has been a consistent supporter of the ROC over the past 60 years. The VFW has three million members, including congressmen and even vice presidents, he said.

President Ma furthermore commented that members of the VFW frequently express their support for Taiwan at assemblies and through petitions. For instance, he said, the VFW has expressed its support for the Taiwan Relations Act, as well as Taiwan's participation in various international activities.

President Ma said that Taiwan maintains frequent contact with the VFW via the ROC Veterans Affairs Commission (VAC). He said that the VAC frequently sends officials to meet with counterparts at the VFW, and the two agencies have extremely close relations. The VAC, he said, previously sent officials to meet with US Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki. Such interactions have contributed to consistently close and friendly relations, he said. In addition, the president said, Taiwan has sought assistance from the VFW in procuring F-16 C/D high-performance jet fighters. President Ma pointed out that Taiwan is gradually moving towards an all-volunteer military, which is the system that the United States has adopted since the end of the Vietnam War. The United States has quite a bit of experience in this regard that Taiwan could learn from.

Commander-in-Chief Tradewell expressed his appreciation to President Ma for taking time out of busy schedule to meet with them. He also said that he and his colleague are extremely pleased to be able to visit Taiwan. Commander-in-Chief Tradewell expressed his hope to exchange opinions on a broad range of topics of mutual interest with the VAC during this visit, adding that he would like for both sides to share related experiences.

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Commander-in-Chief Tradewell and Adjutant General Kent were accompanied to the Presidential Office in the morning by Veterans Affairs Commission Minister Tseng Jing-ling to meet President Ma. Also sitting in on the meeting was National Security Council Deputy Secretary-General Lee Hai-tung.