

The Taiwan-Related Laws Signed by President Trump: The Policy Implications

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Abstract

Even though Donald Trump spoke with President Tsai Ing-wen on the phone before he took office, he was not truly friendly to Taiwan. Trump's administration was concerned with trade negotiations with China, which limited his ability to leverage the "One China" policy to contain Beijing. Although President Trump signed the Taiwan Travel Act before finalizing trade negotiations with China, he did not send any cabinet members to visit Taiwan until 2020, and did not sell F16V fighter jets to Taiwan until August 2019. President Trump's relationship with Xi Jinping deteriorated in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese fighter jets increasingly frequently entered Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone, and the relationship between the United States and Taiwan improved significantly. The Senate and the House of Representatives opposed China's aggressive actions, passed Taiwan-friendly bills, such as the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act, which were signed by Trump. The team, led by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the staff of the National Security Council, accelerated the improvement of relations with Taiwan in 2020, which also challenged the U.S.-China relationship more than at any point since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Key Words: Donald Trump, Taiwan Travel Act, TAIPEI Act, Mike Pompeo, US Congress