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US, Taiwan Urge Working Together for Important Computer Supplies

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The United States and Taiwan are natural partners when it comes to important computer parts, the head of an American research group said this week.

Brent Christensen is director of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT). He said that increasing this cooperation is important for the U.S.

The United States increasingly considers Taiwan an important part of its plan to get supplies and products from places other than mainland China. This is especially the case for computer technology and chips.

Computer chips are small pieces of hard material that contain many electronic circuits. These devices are used in computers and other electronics.

Christensen spoke at a ceremony for a new chip factory for Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation in central Taiwan. Christensen said he was there “to restate the U.S. government’s **focus** on supply chain security.”

The term supply chain describes the processes involved in producing goods and getting them to the people who will use them.

Christensen said that “both President Biden and President Tsai have rightly identified the semiconductor industry” as very important.

Semiconductors are used in electronic devices. They are materials that help control electricity or heat.

Christensen added that semiconductors were not only important for economic reasons “but also national security.” His office provided a written record of his comments.

Christensen pointed to last year’s launch of the U.S.-Taiwan Economic Prosperity Partnership Dialogue as a way the two sides can build a group, or coalition, “against the PRC’s unfair economic and investment policies.” PRC is short for the People’s Republic of China.

Taiwan's President Tsai also attended the event. She said she would guarantee that the government will fully support the development of the semiconductor industry. Tsai described the industry as a “mountain **range** protecting the country.”

Taiwan’s central part in producing chips has gained attention during the COVID-19 crisis. Demand has increased for laptops, tablets and other computer equipment that permit people to work from home.

This increased demand has helped companies like Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company. It is one of the world’s largest **contract** chipmakers.

Foreign governments and companies have also asked Taiwan to help reduce a shortage of chips used in car manufacturing. The shortage has slowed down car factory work around the world.

U.S. companies also have plans. This week Intel announced a \$20 billion plan to increase its chip manufacturing abilities.

I’m John Russell.

Ben Blanchard reported on this story for Reuters. John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

focus – *v.* to cause (something, such as attention) to be directed at something specific — + on

range – *n.* a series of mountains or hills in a line

contract -- *n.* a legal agreement between people, companies, etc.
