



Backgrounders

Executive Summary

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STATING AMERICA'S CASE TO CHINA'S HU JINTAO: A PRIMER ON U.S.–CHINA–TAIWAN POLICY

JOHN TKACIK, JR.

As Washington prepares for the April 29 arrival of China's heir apparent, Vice President Hu Jintao, the misinformation that beclouds U.S.–China relations should encourage U.S. policymakers to refresh their understandings of the principles that guide U.S. policy toward Taiwan so that their statements will not be taken out of context or assigned a broader meaning than intended.

The friction between Washington and Beijing over U.S. relations with Taiwan has been widely discussed since mid-March after Beijing cancelled some naval exchanges with the United States. By mid-April, however, new U.S.–China military exchanges had started, U.S. naval ship calls at Hong Kong had resumed, and concerns that Beijing would cancel Vice President Hu's visit had dissipated. China's denunciation of the Taiwan defense minister's attendance at a recent business conference in Florida, where he conferred with top U.S. officials, may reflect political imperatives in the run-up to the Chinese Communist Party's Sixteenth Party Congress in six months.

In his diplomatic debut as a key player in Beijing–U.S. policy, Hu is under pressure to keep the U.S. relationship with Taiwan from getting firmer. One of his talking points is said to be a demand that Washington at a minimum not bring

Taiwan into any security alliance, and he hopes it is an issue on which Washington can reassure him. But the success of his visit will be measured in Beijing by reactions in the Western media. If Hu impresses American audiences as an intelligent, articulate, forward-thinking leader, his political stock will rise at home. If his trip founders on controversy, especially over the Taiwan issue, some in Beijing will argue to keep the putatively more experienced President Jiang Zemin on the scene to handle foreign affairs.

To prepare properly for Hu's visit, Administration and congressional leaders must be fully cognizant of key elements of U.S. policy toward China and Taiwan. Among the most important: the "one-China" policy, which in fact does not recognize Beijing's claims to Taiwan, and the "Three Communiqués," general statements of U.S. positions that

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are bounded by the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979, which treats Taiwan as a “country” for the purposes of domestic law. China’s military buildup across the Strait has obliged the Bush Administration to abandon a stance of “strategic ambiguity” toward China and Taiwan and has underscored America’s determination to protect its important political and economic interests in Taiwan.

During the visit, Washington should encourage China to improve relations with Taiwan and secure peaceful resolution of the sovereignty issue. Specifically, Washington should:

- **Stress that the commitments in the U.S.–China communiqués are two-way streets.** U.S. reduction of arms sales to Taiwan has always been conditioned on China’s peaceful approach to Taiwan. China’s threat to the island, especially its missile and submarine activities, has grown over the past decade, and America’s response thus far has been appropriate.
- **Make clear that defense sales to Taiwan are based on an accepted condition of normalization in U.S.–China relations.** Despite China’s differences with the United States on this matter, Deng Xiaoping agreed to go forward with normalization because of China’s strategic interests vis-à-vis Vietnam and the former Soviet Union. Both normalization and U.S. defense sales to Taiwan are facts of life in the U.S.–China relationship.
- **Stress that increasing China’s military threat to Taiwan will require the United States to supply Taiwan with the most appropriate defense systems available.** The TRA mandates that the United States “make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.” These may include systems interconnected with U.S. undersea and missile defense networks, such as DDG–51 cruisers equipped with Aegis combat systems.
- **Explain that the U.S. understanding of the “one China” statement in the communiqués is not the same as China’s “one China” principle.** Beijing well understands this difference.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter formally recognized the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as the “sole legal government of China” and withdrew recognition of the “Republic of China” on Taiwan. Although Washington has “acknowledged” China’s position that Taiwan is part of China, it has not accepted that position. In 1982, Washington assured Taiwan that “the position of the United States on the matter of sovereignty over Taiwan has not changed.” It is still that the “United States takes no position on the question of Taiwan’s sovereignty.”

- **Encourage China’s leaders to engage Taiwan’s elected leaders in dialogue to resolve the differences without preconditions.** China has refused to open a dialogue with Taiwan’s elected leaders because Taiwan refuses to acknowledge—as a precondition to such talks—that Taiwan is under the sovereignty of the PRC. The time has come for China’s leaders to explore Taiwan’s proposals of “political integration,” “confederation,” “a common market,” and “a future one China” in a precondition-free context.

The Bush Administration’s clarity in the U.S.–China strategic dialogue is a positive development. It informs Beijing that its actions have consequences. If China continues its threatening military buildup across the Strait, U.S. support for the island will strengthen. China can be part of a cooperative effort to secure peace in that important region or, alternatively, can pursue destabilizing military activities that increase Washington’s determination to defend its interests in Taiwan and the western Pacific.

Faced with economic and social crises, Beijing should readily acknowledge that the United States is China’s most important export market and that solid trade relations with America are vital to economic growth. But for all relations between China and the United States to improve, China must step away from its hostility toward Taiwan and look for peaceful ways to improve relations.

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STATING AMERICA'S CASE TO CHINA'S HU JINTAO: A PRIMER ON U.S.–CHINA–TAIWAN POLICY

JOHN TKACIK, JR.

As Washington prepares for the April 29 arrival of China's heir apparent, Vice President Hu Jintao, the depth of misinformation that beclouds relations with China should encourage policymakers to refresh their understandings of basic documents and principles that guide U.S. policy toward Taiwan so that no statements can be taken out of context or assigned a broader meaning than intended.

In recent weeks, much has been said about the friction between Washington and Beijing over America's relations with Taiwan. Part of the concern arose when Beijing cancelled some naval exchanges with the United States in mid-March.¹ Yet by mid-April, China was meeting with U.S. Navy representatives in Shanghai for three days of "military maritime consultations" on how to avoid incidents on the high seas and in international air space, and U.S. naval ship calls at Hong Kong have resumed.

Concerns that Beijing would cancel Vice President Hu's visit have dissipated.²

China's leaders have long understood that the United States has clear and important interests in Taiwan. America's commercial and economic relationships with Taiwan are more than a half-century old, and the U.S. defense commitments to the island—prescribed in the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979³—have been a primary element of the U.S.–China relations since then. Even though some U.S. Administrations

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1. On March 15, 2002, a Chinese vice foreign minister summoned the U.S. ambassador in Beijing to make a formal protest about Washington's long-term defense relationship with Taiwan, the latest in a long chain of Chinese demarches since Washington and Beijing "normalized" their relations on January 1, 1979. On March 19, China let it be known that it was preparing to cancel naval exchanges with the United States in retaliation for Washington's allowing Taiwan's defense minister to meet his American counterpart in Florida. See "Ming Pao Dispatch: Jiang Zemin Calls for Casting Away Illusions About the US Role on the Taiwan Issue; Beijing Reconsiders the Possibility of Hu Jintao's Visit to Washington," *Ming Pao* (Hong Kong), March 20, 2002, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) *Daily Report*, FBIS–CHI–2002–0320.
2. See "Ming Pao Dispatch," *op. cit.*
3. 22 USC 3302.

have been more solicitous than others of China's sensibilities regarding Taiwan, the U.S. policy has not changed in 23 years.

China's recent denunciation of the attendance of the Taiwan defense minister at a business conference in Florida, where he conferred with Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, may reflect China's political imperatives in the run-up to the Chinese Communist Party's Sixteenth Party Congress in six months more than it reflects its concerns about that meeting.⁴ Vice President Hu is also under pressure to, at a minimum, keep the U.S. relationship with Taiwan from getting any firmer than it already is. One of his talking points is said to be a demand that the United States at least not bring Taiwan into any security alliance, and he hopes that is one issue on which Washington can reassure him.⁵

Although Hu hopes to avoid returning to Beijing "empty handed" from the summit in Washington,⁶ the real success of his visit will be measured by the reaction of the Western media to his visit. If Vice President Hu impresses his American audiences as an intelligent, articulate, forward-thinking leader, his political stock will rise in Beijing. If his trip founders on controversy, especially over the Taiwan issue, there are at least some in Beijing who would argue to keep the putatively more experienced President Jiang Zemin on the scene to handle foreign affairs.

The following discussion will address the frequently asked questions regarding key elements of U.S.–China and U.S.–Taiwan policy.

FORMAL STATEMENTS OF POLICY

The "One China" Policy

Ever since the end of World War II, the United States has evinced a commitment to a "one China" policy that recognized only one government as the sole legal government of China. In 1949, when Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's armies decamped to Taiwan at the end of the Chinese civil war, Washington continued to recognize Chiang's "Republic of China" as the government of all China. In late 1978, Washington announced that it would break relations with the regime in Taipei and formally recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the "sole legal government of China." (See *infra*, "The Normalization Communiqué.")

However, Washington's "one China" policy does not mean that the United States recognizes Beijing's claims to sovereignty over Taiwan.⁷ On the contrary, on July 14, 1982, Washington gave specific assurances to Taiwan that the United States did not accept China's claim to sovereignty over the island (see *infra*, "The 'Six Assurances' to Taiwan"),⁸ and the U.S. Department of State informed the Senate that "[t]he United States takes no position on the question of Taiwan's sovereignty."⁹

To understand the principle of "one China," both in U.S. terms and for the Chinese, it is important to understand the terms of three separate bilateral

4. James Kynge, "Charity Scandal Linked to Chinese Power Struggle," *Financial Times*, April 1, 2002, p. 4; see also "Li Peng Says He Didn't Bug Jiang's Plane," *Agence France-Presse*, February 18, 2002, at <http://www.taipetimes.com/news/2002/02/18/story/0000124327>, and "Anger at Li Peng As Investors Protest," *Agence France-Presse*, January 17, 2002.
5. Zhu Jianling, "Yuedi Fang Mei, Hu Jintao jiang zu wu yu Tai jiecheng Junshi Tongmeng (Hu Jintao will urge against a military alliance with Taiwan in his visit to the US)," *China Times* (Taipei), April 11, 2002, at <http://www.chinatimes.com>.
6. Kang Zhangrong, "Hu Jintao fang Mei, kongpa bu hui kongshou er gui (Hu Jintao's US visit, he can't return empty handed)," *Commercial Times* (Taipei), March 20, 2002, at <http://www.chinatimes.com>.
7. See, for example, "Transcript: Sec. Powell En Route to Canberra July 29, 2001 (Outlining results of visit to Asia Pacific region) (4820)," at <http://www.usinfo.state.gov>. Powell told reporters that he had raised the issue of the differing American and Chinese views of the "one-China" policy: "SECRETARY: ...I think it got us past that, and allowed them to make sure that I had a clear understanding, which I did, of the one-China policy as they see it and allowed me to reinforce to them our one-China policy understanding as well, based on the TRA and the three communiqués."
8. For a detailed description of the U.S. "one China" stance, see Ambassador Harvey Feldman, "A Primer on U.S. Policy Toward the 'One-China' Issue: Questions and Answers," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1429, April 12, 2001.
9. Hearings, *The Taiwan Communiqué and the Separation of Powers*, Subcommittee on the Separation of Powers, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, 97th Cong., 2nd Sess., September 17 and 27, 1982, p. 140.

NOTE: Nothing written here is to be construed as necessarily reflecting the views of The Heritage Foundation or as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress.

communiqués as well as the plain language of the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.

The “Three Communiqués”

An often-heard phrase in the U.S.–China policy lexicon is “the Three Communiqués.”¹⁰ Whenever Beijing is irritated by Washington’s contacts with Taipei, the Chinese allege that the United States has violated its “commitments” in “the Three Communiqués”—separate bilateral pronouncements made between 1972 and 1982 that established the boundaries for U.S. policy toward China.¹¹ These are:

- **The Shanghai Communiqué**, issued by President Richard M. Nixon and Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai on February 28, 1972, at the close of Nixon’s historic visit to China, in which the leaders outlined their respective strategic visions;
- **The Normalization Communiqué**, issued by President Jimmy Carter and China’s Deng Xiaoping on December 16, 1978, which announced the formal establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries; and
- **The August 17 Communiqué**, issued in 1982 by President Ronald Reagan and Deng Xiaoping, which stated that the United States “intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to an ultimate resolution” in return for China’s adoption of a “fundamental policy” of peaceful reunification with Taiwan (see *infra*, “The ‘Six Assurances’ to Taiwan”).

The Shanghai Communiqué. As a statement of the national strategic visions of China and the United States in the early 1970s, the lengthy Shanghai Communiqué not surprisingly includes statements of China’s support for the Viet Cong, the Pathet Lao, and the Khmer Rouge revolutions in

Indo-China and for the North Korean regime. China also stressed its opposition to “the revival and outward expansion of Japanese militarism” and its support for a “neutral Japan” (that is, one not allied with the United States). China’s portion asserts that it “firmly opposes any activities which aim at the creation of ‘one China, one Taiwan’, ‘one China, two governments’, ‘two Chinas’, an ‘independent Taiwan’ or advocate that ‘the status of Taiwan remains to be determined.’”

In the U.S. portion of the communiqué, President Nixon outlined America’s interests in Asia. In an effort to convince China that the United States had no preconceptions about the outcome of China’s relations with Taiwan, the communiqué states that:

The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position.

Significantly, however, the United States did not endorse China’s position. Furthermore, the U.S. statement does not address the possibility that, at some time in the future, one side of the Taiwan Strait would maintain that it was not part of China.¹² Today, some three decades after the Shanghai Communiqué was signed and after a decade of robust democratic development, Taipei insists that Taiwan is an “independent and sovereign nation” and not a part of the People’s Republic of China.¹³

The Normalization Communiqué. In the Normalization Communiqué of December 16, 1978, the U.S. government stated that it “recognizes the Government of the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal government of China.” The United States subsequently broke relations with the Repub-

10. The English texts of the three communiqués are available at <http://www.usembassy-china.org.cn/irc/policy/index-c.html>.

11. See James Kelly, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, “US Policy Toward the Asian Pacific Region,” text of briefing for Asian press, March 14, 2002, at <http://www.fpc.gov>. Kelly stated that “our cross-Strait policy in fact is unchanged, and it has to do with the familiar language of our one-China policy—bounded by the three U.S.–Sino communiqués, governed by the Taiwan Relations Act, and focused on peaceful resolution across the straits.”

12. The United States clearly knew this was a possibility. In his first meetings with Chinese premier Zhou Enlai in July 1971, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger cautioned that “if the Taiwan Independence Movement develops without us, that is not in our control.” See Memorandum of Conversation, July 11, 1971, pp. 10–11, at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB66/ch-38.pdf>.

lic of China on Taiwan, which up to that point it had regarded as the legal government of China. Additionally, “the Government of the United States of America acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.” When questioned on this point during hearings on the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, the Carter Administration agreed that it had acknowledged the “Chinese position” that Taiwan is part of China but emphasized that “the United States has *not* itself agreed to this position.”¹⁴

However, the Carter Administration conditioned the “normalization” of relations with China on the acknowledgment that the United States would continue to sell military equipment and services to Taiwan. Chinese Communist Party Chairman Hua Guofeng implicitly acknowledged this condition at a press conference on December 16 when he said that “our two sides had differences on this point” but that China nonetheless agreed to move ahead with normalization.¹⁵

In fact, the decision to accept continued U.S. arms sales to Taiwan was made by none other than China’s “paramount leader,” Deng Xiaoping. One U.S. diplomat opined that “Deng Xiaoping’s concerns over continuing arms sales to Taiwan were stifled for the moment” by China’s strategic imperative of preparing for an imminent invasion of Vietnam (which came on February 19, 1979). Indeed, a senior Chinese diplomat admitted that China “swallowed the bitter pill” of continued arms sales to Taiwan “for strategic reasons.”¹⁶

At no time during the normalization negotiations—conducted directly between Deng and Ambassador Leonard Woodcock—were the Chinese led to believe that the U.S. defense commit-

ment to Taiwan would cease absent the consent of the people of Taiwan. President Carter gave Woodcock explicit instructions on that point (see *infra*, “The August 17 Communiqué on Arms Sales to Taiwan”).

The August 17 Communiqué on Arms Sales to Taiwan. By 1982, America’s robust sales of arms to Taiwan had become politically embarrassing for the Chinese leadership, and Deng Xiaoping ordered his diplomats to re-engage Washington on the issue. Deng wanted a U.S. commitment that it would cease selling weapons to Taiwan, if not at some date certain, then at least at some time in the future.

At that time, the Reagan Administration viewed China as an important strategic Cold War partner against the Soviet Union in general and especially with respect to the Soviet war in Afghanistan. Though Secretary of State Alexander Haig attempted to persuade President Reagan that China’s leaders had “little room to maneuver,”¹⁷ the Administration’s negotiators informed the Chinese that the President would not agree to a cessation of arms sales.

In the course of talks leading up to the August 17 Communiqué, the U.S. negotiators acknowledged that the Chinese had stated they “would raise the [Taiwan arms] issue again after normalization.”¹⁸ The most the United States would agree to state was that “it intends to reduce gradually its sales of arms to Taiwan, leading over a period of time to an ultimate resolution.” However, this reduction was conditioned “absolutely” on China’s pursuit of a “peaceful resolution” of its differences with Taiwan.

To avoid any misinterpretations of the diplomatic jargon in the document, President Reagan issued a

13. President Lee made this assertion several times between 1997 and 2000. See, for example, “President Li Delivers Speech to Paraguayan Parliament,” Taipei Chung-Yang Jih-Pao, September 16, 1997, p. 2; see also Dr. Ing-wen Tsai, Chairperson of Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council, “A New Era in Cross-Strait Relations? Taiwan and China in the WTO,” Heritage Foundation Lecture No. 726, January 14, 2002, at <http://www.heritage.org/library/lecture/hl726.html>.

14. *Taiwan Enabling Act Conference Report, Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Together with Additional Views on S. 245*, Report 96–7, U.S. Senate, March 1, 1979 (for legislative day February 22), p. 7; emphasis in original.

15. As reported in the U.S. media on December 17, 1979, and a central point in congressional consideration of the Taiwan Relations Act conference. See *Taiwan Enabling Act Conference Report*, p. 47.

16. John H. Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide: An Insider’s Account of Normalization of U.S.–China Relations* (Lanham Md.: Rowan and Littlefield, 1997), pp. 184–185.

17. Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *Caveat* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), p. 214.

18. See Para. 2 of the Communiqué.

presidential letter to accompany the State Department announcement of the communiqué on August 17, 1982. In that letter, he declared:

Regarding future U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, our policy, set forth clearly in the communiqué, is fully consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act [of 1979]. Arms sales will continue in accordance with the Act and with the full expectation that the approach of the Chinese Government to the resolution of the Taiwan issue will continue being peaceful.... The position of the United States Government has always been clear and consistent in this regard. The Taiwan question is a matter for the Chinese people, on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, to resolve. We will not interfere in this matter or prejudice the free choice of, or put pressure on, the people of Taiwan in this matter.

In addition, President Reagan issued a confidential presidential directive, initialed by both the Secretary of Defense and the new Secretary of State, to specify that the U.S. willingness to reduce arms sales to Taiwan is conditioned absolutely upon the continued commitment of China to the peaceful solution of Taiwan–PRC differences. President Reagan declared that the linkage between these two matters was a “permanent imperative of U.S. foreign policy.” In addition, the President averred that it is essential that the quantity and quality of the arms provided Taiwan be conditioned entirely on the threat posed by the PRC, and that both in quantitative and qualitative terms, Taiwan’s defense capability relative to that of the PRC be maintained.¹⁹

Further, the President instructed the State Department to inform Congress of the sale of 250 more F5–E fighter aircraft to Taiwan the day after the August 17 Communiqué was issued, and on August 18, Assistant Secretary of State John Holdridge so informed the Congress.²⁰

The “Six Assurances” to Taiwan

One major complication in the negotiations leading up to the August 17 Communiqué was the sudden dismissal of Secretary Haig on June 25, 1982, which Haig attributed in part to his advocacy at the negotiations.²¹ On July 14, 1982, a month before the communiqué was issued, President Reagan conveyed six White House commitments to Taiwan President Chiang Ching-kuo. In these “Six Assurances,” the President made clear that in the U.S. negotiations with China,

1. The United States had not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan;
2. The United States had not agreed to hold prior consultations with the Chinese on arms sales to Taiwan;
3. The United States would not play any mediation role between Taiwan and Beijing;
4. The United States had not agreed to revise the Taiwan Relations Act;
5. The United States had not altered its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan; and
6. The United States would not exert pressure on Taiwan to enter into negotiations with the Chinese.²²

The Sovereignty Issue. Every U.S. Administration has acknowledged that the Six Assurances are an integral part of U.S. policy toward Taiwan.²³

19. See Jim Mann, *About Face, A History of America’s Curious Relationship with China, From Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), p. 127.

20. Stephen P. Gibert and William M. Carpenter, eds., *America and Island China: A Documentary History* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1989), p. 330. See also Patrick Tyler, *A Great Wall* (New York: Public Affairs Books, 1999), p. 226. Tyler notes that President Reagan personally informed several congressmen of the decision on July 28. Former Secretary of State George P. Shultz, in *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1993), pp. 384–385, notes that Holdridge briefed the Senate on the F–5E sale on July 27.

21. Haig, *Caveat*, p. 215.

22. Testimony of John H. Holdridge, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, in hearing, *China–Taiwan: United States Policy*, Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, 97th Cong., 2nd Sess., August 18, 1982, pp. 15–16. Holdridge described the Six Assurances in his memoir, *Crossing the Divide*, p. 232.

Perhaps the most important of the six has been the fifth—the U.S. position on “sovereignty over Taiwan.” This position was explicated in a State Department memorandum to the U.S. Senate in 1970, which said that “as Taiwan and the Pescadores are not covered by any existing international disposition, sovereignty over the area is an unsettled question subject to future international resolution.”²⁴

The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979

The Taiwan Relations Act (P.L. 96–8), signed by President Carter on April 10, 1979, was designed to ensure that Taiwan would continue to be regarded “as a country for the purposes of U.S. domestic law,” despite the lack of formal diplomatic recognition since Washington officially recognized Beijing as the sole legal government of China in 1979.²⁵

The first portion of the TRA succinctly outlines the basic elements of U.S. policy toward Taiwan. It declares that Washington’s decision to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing “rests on the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means.” Moreover, the act declares that is the policy of the U.S. government “to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion” against Taiwan. Further, the TRA mandates that the United States maintain U.S. defense articles and services “in such a quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.”

THE HISTORICAL RECORD SINCE 1979

China’s Questionable Commitment to “Peaceful Resolution”

China’s reformist leadership pursued a relatively peaceful approach to Taiwan throughout the 1980s. In the August 17 (1982) Communiqué, the Chinese side declared that it had “promulgated a fundamental policy of striving for peaceful unification of the Motherland” and asserted that a “Nine-Point Proposal” of September 1981 was “a further major effort under this fundamental policy to strive for a peaceful solution to the Taiwan question.”²⁶

In 1986, Beijing began to encourage large numbers of Taiwan businesses to invest in export-processing operations in China; and in 1987, Taiwan loosened its prohibitions on Taiwan investment in China. As economic and trade relations between China and Taiwan warmed, the overall atmosphere across the Strait improved dramatically—until June 4, 1989, when a demonstration by China’s burgeoning pro-democracy movement in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square was brutally suppressed by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Beijing’s confidence in its own legitimacy in dealing with Taipei would be undermined in the 1990s by such pro-democracy demonstrations as well as by the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

China’s posture toward Taiwan became increasingly more hostile during the 1990s as the democratizing Taiwan attempted to assert a separate

23. Secretary of State Colin Powell reiterated this during testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 8, 2001. He confirmed that the Assurances “remain the usual and official policy of the United States.” See *Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for the Fiscal Year 2002 Foreign Operations Budget*, transcribed by Federal News Service, March 8, 2001.

24. The memorandum is cited in a subsequent memo by Robert L. Starr, U.S. Department of State, Office of the Legal Advisor (LEA), entitled “Legal Status of Taiwan,” Memorandum to Charles Sylvester, Director of the Office of Republic of China Affairs (EA/ROC), July 13, 1971. The 12-page legal memorandum was written during the time when Kissinger was on a secret visit to Peking (Beijing), but without knowledge of that visit. See Tsai, “A New Era in Cross-Strait Relations?” In that lecture, Dr. Tsai, one of Taiwan’s most accomplished attorneys, was careful not to assert China’s sovereignty over the territory of Taiwan and the Pescadores. She acknowledged only that “when the Japanese Government surrendered its sovereignty over Taiwan after the War, the Government of the Republic of China took control and continued to function in Taiwan, after losing the Chinese civil war. However, it gradually lost political recognition from the major countries.” This is consistent with the U.S. position that the matter of sovereignty remains undetermined.

25. *Ibid.*

26. See Holdridge, *China–Taiwan: United States Policy*, pp. 14–15. See also Paul D. Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs, in hearing, *Taiwan Communique and Separation of Powers*, Subcommittee on Separation of Powers, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, Senate Hearing No. 98–88, March 10, 1983, p. 11, and Senate Report No. 98–63, June 1983, p. 4, and footnote.

identity. For example, Taipei has insisted at least since 1993²⁷ that in any negotiations, Beijing must recognize Taiwan's status as an equal. In 1991, after the Soviet Union's collapse left China's military without a clear mission, the PLA sought to justify its continued modernization by focusing on the mission to "liberate" Taiwan. The PLA modernization effort was structured around a Taiwan invasion scenario and deterrence of U.S. support for the island.

At the core of this activity were efforts to procure advanced arms from the new Russian Federation. In 1992, for example, China made the first purchase on a contract to buy advanced Sukhoi 27 fighter jets. In response, the United States felt compelled to authorize the sale of F-16 fighters to Taiwan.

Despite that sale and the French sale of Mirage 2000-5 fighter jets to Taiwan, Beijing opened dialogue with Taiwan in October–November 1992. The next year, in April 1993 in Singapore, the personal representatives of Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui met openly for the first time.

However, when a Taiwan delegation arrived in Beijing in August 1993 for follow-up meetings, Beijing's Foreign Ministry issued a harsh "white

paper" on the Taiwan issue, quickly souring relations.²⁸ On November 21, 1993, Jiang Zemin told a group of reporters at a meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) forum in Seattle that "there is only one China, and that is the People's Republic of China, and Taiwan is a province of China."²⁹ The question of China's commitment to "peaceful resolution" of the sovereignty dispute with Taiwan once again claimed center stage.

China's Missile Buildup Opposite Taiwan

In July 1995, in reaction to Taiwan's efforts to forge closer ties with the United States, China conducted missile tests in a 100-kilometer-square area some 85 miles north of Taiwan on the Strait, blocking all maritime traffic into Taiwan's northern ports. The tests included at least six launches of nuclear-capable M-9 missiles. Fearful of angering Beijing, the U.S. Department of State commented only that it believed China's missile tests "do not contribute to peace and stability in the region."³⁰

Emboldened by this tepid reaction to the missile tests, China announced a second round of missile tests in the Taiwan Strait on August 10. From August through December 1995, the Chinese continued large-scale military exercises virtually uninterrupted; this was widely seen as a way to

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27. Taiwan's *Guidelines for National Unification*, adopted by the Executive Yuan (cabinet) on March 14, 1991, assert that principles of "parity and reciprocity" must govern talks between Taiwan and China. By 1993, Taiwan had asserted that it was a separate "state" from China. See "Economic Minister Refutes Jiang Zemin's One-China Speech," from Taipei China Broadcasting Corp. News Services, *Hookup* program (in Mandarin), November 21, 1993, transcribed by BBC at 212300 CE/Badgley DB052211.003 MY 22/0751Z NOV. Taiwan economic minister P. K. Chiang asserted to reporters at the Seattle APEC summit that "our country and communist China are currently two sovereign states, neither of which is subordinate to the other. Taiwan's policy is for the government to face problems with a practical attitude before the conditions are ripe for reunification (in the hope of) implementing by stages a Two-China policy under the general direction of One China in the Future." The report quoted Chiang as explaining that "China is a neutral historical, geographical, and cultural name. No doubt Taiwan is part of China, but so is mainland China." In May 1994, Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui asserted that Taiwan "will continue to adhere to the principle of rationality, peace, equality and reciprocity to develop cross-Strait relations."
28. Beijing's August 30, 1993, white paper on *The Taiwan Question and the Reunification of China* reiterated that the PRC "is the sole legal government of China and Taiwan is a part of China," declared that the United States was responsible for the "Taiwan Question," and stated flatly that Taiwan membership in the United Nations was "out of the question." The Taiwan delegation cancelled its talks in Beijing and returned to Taipei on September 2, 1993.
29. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Taipei), *Waijiao Bu Xinwen Gao* [Foreign ministry press release], R-T252-1, November 22, 1993.
30. See U.S. Department of State, *Noon Briefing*, July 24, 1995; spokesman Nicholas Burns told a questioner that "we do not believe this test contributes to peace and stability in the area," adding that "it's been the long-standing policy of the United States to seek to promote peace, security and stability in the area of the Taiwan Strait. This is in the interests of the United States, the People's Republic of China, and Taiwan." Asked whether the United States considers the test a provocation, Burns replied: "We don't believe that it contributed to peace and stability in the area. We've made that clear to the Chinese government."

intimidate Taiwan's populace before the island's first-ever presidential elections, which were to be held on March 19, 1996.

Veiled Threats Against the United States

By late January 1996, at least one report in *The New York Times* cited Chinese army plans for an attack against Taiwan that would consist of one conventional missile strike a day for 30 days: "Preparations for a missile attack on Taiwan and the target selection to carry it out have been completed and await a final decision by the Politburo in Beijing." A former U.S. diplomat said that Chinese general Xiong Guangkai had asserted that China could act militarily against Taiwan without fear because U.S. leaders "care more about Los Angeles than they do about Taiwan"—an apparent indirect threat to use nuclear weapons against the United States if it were to come Taiwan's defense.³¹

On March 8, 1996, after several weeks of warnings, China again began missile launches in the area, firing at least four unarmed M-9 medium-range missiles into the sea near Taiwan. Three missiles landed 50 miles from Taiwan off the southern port of Kaohsiung, and one hit within 12 miles of land near the northern port of Keelung, blocking all merchant sea traffic into Taiwan for days. In response to this Chinese aggressiveness, President Clinton ordered two U.S. Navy aircraft carrier battle groups to the Taiwan Strait area, and there were no further Chinese missile tests in the Strait.³²

Since 1996, China has maintained this hostile military posture toward Taiwan; and in August 1999, it began sending advanced jet fighters near the Taiwan Strait "center line."³³

Shortly before Taiwan's second presidential election on March 18, 2000, China issued another "white paper," which called for the use of "all drastic measures possible including the use of force" if Taiwan did not declare itself part of China and agree to negotiations by a date certain.³⁴ The Chinese threat was so alarming that President Clinton felt compelled to address it directly in a speech two days later, declaring that

we'll continue to reject the use of force as a means to resolve the Taiwan question, we'll also continue to make absolutely clear that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan.³⁵

Nonetheless, since then, China not only has held continual military exercises, but also has increased its force of short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) deployed opposite Taiwan. The force has grown from less than 50 SRBMs in 1999 to between 350 and 400 by April 2002.³⁶

On March 19, 2002, the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) declared that "China continues to upgrade and expand the conventional short-range ballistic missile force it has arrayed against Taiwan."³⁷ Commenting on China's ever-growing missile threat to Taiwan, in a speech in March

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31. Patrick Tyler, "As China Threatens Taiwan, It Makes Sure U.S. Listens," *The New York Times*, January 24, 1996, p. 1; Gen. Xiong is identified as the official in Mann, *About Face*, p. 342.
32. Art Pine, "U.S. Faces Choice on Sending Ships to Taiwan," *Los Angeles Times*, March 20, 1996, p. A1; see also Steven Mufson, "China Blasts U.S. for Dispatching Warship Groups," *The Washington Post*, March 20, 1996, p. A1.
33. See Zou Jingwen, *Li Denghui Zhizheng Gaobao Shilu* [A true Account of Lee Teng-hui's Rule], (Taipei: INK Chengyang Publishing, 2001), p. 234, *infra*.
34. China State Council, Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office, "The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue," February 21, 2000, which declared *inter alia* that the "government of the 'Republic of China,' has long since completely forfeited its right to exercise state sovereignty on behalf of China and, in reality, has always remained only a local authority in Chinese territory," and "if the Taiwan authorities refuse, *sine die*, the peaceful settlement of cross-Straits reunification through negotiations, then the Chinese government will only be forced to adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force, to... fulfill the great cause of reunification." See <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/features/taiwanpaper/taiwanb.html>.
35. William J. Clinton, "Remarks by the President to the Business Council," Washington, D.C., February 24, 2000.
36. Bill Gertz, "China Assembles Missiles Near Coast Facing Taiwan," *The Washington Times*, April 2, 2002, p. A3. See also Bill Gertz, "Chinese Missiles Concern Pentagon," *The Washington Times*, April 3, 2002, p. A3. Gertz's news stories were based in part on "Foreign Missile Developments and the Ballistic Missile Threat Through 2015," the Unclassified Summary of a National Intelligence Estimate, at http://www.cia.gov/nic/pubs/other_products/Unclassifiedballisticmissilefinal.htm.

2002, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz rhetorically told the Chinese that “building up your missiles” does not appear to be “part of a fundamental policy of peaceful resolution.”³⁸

The U.S. Policy of “Ambiguity”

Within the U.S. State Department, the dissonance between the reality of the U.S. defense commitment to, and its *de facto* recognition of, Taiwan and the legal fiction of a “one China” policy has been referred to as “ambiguity.” Such ambiguity allows the United States to pursue normal relations with China so long as it pretends not to have normal relations with Taiwan. This “understanding” between Washington and Beijing was reached in December 1978 and became the subject of news commentary by Henry Kissinger on September 7, 1999.³⁹ In an opinion editorial, Kissinger criticized Taiwan President Lee for “violating” that “understanding” by declaring on July 9, 1999, the “two states doctrine” (see *infra*, “Taiwan’s ‘Two States’ Doctrine”). What Kissinger failed to acknowledge, however, is that Taiwan has had no part in formulating that “understanding” between China and the United States, and it could hardly be said to be bound by it, especially in light of the Six Assurances.

“**Strategic Ambiguity.**” The Clinton Administration developed a policy of “strategic ambiguity” about Taiwan after President Lee Teng-hui made a private visit to his college alma mater, Cornell University, in New York in June 1995. China interpreted the approval of Lee’s visa by the U.S. State

Department as an indication that the U.S. commitment to “one China” was in danger.

The Clinton Administration both cautioned Taipei that it could not necessarily count on U.S. support if China were to take military action against it and told Beijing that it could not rule out the possibility that the United States would intervene on Taiwan’s behalf in such a conflict.⁴⁰ Calling President Lee’s visit to Cornell a provocation, the Administration called on Lee to cease activities that might stir up Beijing’s hostility even further.

If any similar warning was given to Beijing, it failed to make an impression. Chinese missiles began to fall within 12 miles of the Taiwan coast in March 1996, and President Clinton found it necessary to dispatch two U.S. Navy carrier battlegroups to the Strait for Taiwan’s defense. It became clear that the policy of “strategic ambiguity” was not sufficient.⁴¹ For the remainder of Clinton’s term, however, Washington continued pressuring Taiwan to refrain from “provoking” Beijing. The Bush Administration has abandoned the “strategic ambiguity” policy.⁴²

The Clinton Administration’s “Three No’s” About Taiwan

The “strategic ambiguity” policy proved confusing. Hardliners in the Chinese leadership saw it as evidence that China’s threats against Taiwan (and the United States) were effective. After China launched its first missile “tests” toward Taiwan in July 1995, President Clinton wrote a secret letter to Chinese President Jiang Zemin to articulate, for the

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37. George J. Tenet, Director of Central Intelligence, “Worldwide Threat—Converging Dangers in a Post 9/11 World,” testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, 107th Cong., 2nd Sess., March 19, 2002.
38. Gertz, “China Assembles Missiles Near Coast Facing Taiwan.” A Pentagon spokesman stated on April 2, 2002, that “These missiles are clearly designed to project a threatening posture and to try and intimidate the people and the democratically elected government of Taiwan.” See Gertz, “Chinese Missiles Concern Pentagon.”
39. Henry Kissinger, “Storm Clouds Gathering,” *The Washington Post*, September 7, 1999, p. A19.
40. Senator Richard Lugar, “Timely Exit for Ambiguity,” *The Washington Times*, May 17, 2001, p. A16. See also Michael Dobbs and R. Jeffrey Smith, “U.S. Warships to Reduce China–Taiwan Tensions,” *The Washington Post*, March 12, 1996, p. A2.
41. See a joint letter by The Heritage Foundation and the Project for the New American Century, August 24, 1999, calling on the Clinton Administration to “declare unambiguously that it will come to Taiwan’s defense in the event of an attack or a blockade against Taiwan.” The letter was signed by 25 prominent conservatives, including Richard L. Armitage (now Deputy Secretary of State), John R. Bolton (now Undersecretary of State), I. Lewis Libby (now Vice President Cheney’s Chief of Staff), and Paul Wolfowitz (now Deputy Secretary of Defense). See http://www.heritage.org/news/99/nr082499_letter.html.
42. David Lague, “This Is What It Takes,” *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 25, 2002, p. 22. The first sentence reads, “It’s unambiguous: ‘Strategic ambiguity’ is dead.”

first time, the “Three No’s” policy of his Administration.⁴³ That is, the President said, “no two Chinas, no Taiwan independence, no Taiwan membership in the United Nations.”⁴⁴ The Chinese press characterized President Clinton’s position in the letter as “opposing” Taiwan’s separate status from China.

Although President Clinton’s letter was publicized in both the Chinese and Taiwan press, it was not printed in the U.S. media. By the time Jiang Zemin made a state visit to the United States in October 1997, the substance of the letter had been assimilated into the State Department lexicon. It was uttered a few times during that visit and later became a State Department formulation for China policy.⁴⁵ After that, the Clinton Administration insisted that it does not “support” Taiwan’s separate identity, but it also never stated that it “opposed” it.⁴⁶ China made the “Three No’s” a touchstone of U.S.–China relations and insisted that President Clinton publicly declare them on his state visit to China in June 1998.⁴⁷ The President obliged.

As explained more fully below, the Bush Administration does not support the “Three No’s” policy toward Taiwan.⁴⁸

Taiwan’s “Two States” Doctrine

Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui and many Taiwanese were stunned by President Clinton’s “Three No’s” public statement in China in 1998. Lee ordered a comprehensive reappraisal of Taiwan’s stance on China, which took a year to complete. On July 9, 1999, he articulated what could be called a “two China” doctrine in an interview with *Deutsche Welle*. According to Lee:

since our [Taiwan’s] constitutional reform in 1991, we have designated cross-strait ties as nation-to-nation, or at least as special state-to-state ties, rather than internal ties within “one China” between a legitimate government and a rebellion group, or between central and local governments.⁴⁹

Taiwan’s new government under Chen Shui-bian has refrained from using the term “state-to-state ties” to describe Taiwan’s posture toward China. Its stance on Taiwan’s sovereignty is that “the Republic of China has been a sovereign and independent nation since 1912” and that both Beijing and Taipei should continue

43. In *Ta Kung Pao* (Hong Kong), August 3, 1995, quoted in John W. Garver, *Face Off: China, the United States and Taiwan’s Democratization* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), translated by FBIS.

44. These principles were first raised in 1971 by Zhou Enlai in his secret meetings with Kissinger. At the time, Kissinger said that “we did not advocate a ‘two Chinas’ or a ‘one China, one Taiwan’ solution, but would accept any political evolution agreed to by the parties, we hoped that this evolution would be peaceful, and Chou said the PRC would try to keep it so.” However, Kissinger also stressed that “some events in Taiwan might be beyond our ability to control.” See Kissinger memorandum to the President, July 14, 1971, p. 13.

45. State Department spokesman Jamie Rubin explained, “We certainly made clear that we have a one China policy, that we don’t support a one China or one Taiwan policy, we don’t support a two China policy. We don’t support Taiwan independence, and we don’t support Taiwanese membership in organizations that require you to be a member state. We certainly made that very clear to the Chinese.” See U.S. Department of State, *Noon Briefing*, October 31, 1997.

46. The State Department apparently does not construe the phrase “no support” as meaning “oppose.” In a different context, State Department spokesman James Foley was asked, “Do you all oppose independence for Kosovo under any circumstances at any time?” Foley replied, “well, we have made clear that we do not support Kosovo independence. I don’t care to elaborate on that.” See U.S. Department of State, *Noon Briefing*, February 11, 1999.

47. “The PRESIDENT: ...I had a chance to reiterate our Taiwan policy, which is that we don’t support independence for Taiwan, or two Chinas, or one Taiwan-one China. And we don’t believe that Taiwan should be a member in any organization for which statehood is a requirement. So I think we have a consistent policy.” See White House, “President’s Comments at the Shanghai Library,” transcript, June 30, 1998.

48. U.S. Department of State spokesman Richard Boucher confirmed the demise of the formulation on March 19, 2001, during the Department’s *Noon Briefing*: “If I were to go back into the entire history of the Three No policy, you would find it wasn’t ever stated quite the same way, and I don’t intend to state it that way today. We adhere to the One China policy, and I will stick with that. And if we decide to say more, I will get back to you.”

49. *Central Daily News*, Taipei, July 10, 1999.

to debate, among themselves and in the international setting, on the sovereignty issues. Despite the sovereignty controversy, it is very clear that each side exercises full control and jurisdiction over a clearly delineated territory and there is no issue of political subordination to each other. The Republic of China on Taiwan does exist, and is a full-functioned country.⁵⁰

President Chen Shui-bian has, however, lent his prestige to the use of the term “state-to-state.” Despite its non-use in public, the “state-to-state” formulation remains at the core of Taiwan’s policy approaches toward China.⁵¹

The Bush Policy: Unequivocal Support for Taiwan

In an interview with ABC News on April 25, 2001, President George W. Bush was asked, “if Taiwan were attacked by China, do we have an obligation to defend the Taiwanese?” He responded, “Yes, we do...and the Chinese must understand that,” adding that the United States would do “whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself.”⁵²

The same day, the President’s 100th day in office, he reiterated the U.S. obligation to “help Taiwan defend herself” under the Taiwan Relations Act in interviews with other major U.S. news media, such as CBS, NBC, CNN, and *The Washington Post*. He said, for example, that

The Chinese must understand that we’ve got common interests; but there’s going to be some areas where we disagree and, evidently, one area where we disagree is whether or not the United States ought to provide defensive arms for Taiwan, which I have done.⁵³

This “whatever it takes” statement was viewed with alarm in some quarters, but it clearly conforms with the policies of five successive U.S. Administrations and is in fact mandated by the Taiwan Relations Act.⁵⁴ President Bush has put his declaration to “do whatever it took” to help Taiwan defend itself into action, improving military cooperation with Taiwan, supporting dignified receptions for Taiwan leaders who visit the United States, and offering repeated support for Taiwan even during two visits to China—something no other U.S. President was prepared to do.⁵⁵

50. Dr. Ing-wen Tsai, “A New Era in Cross-Strait Relations?”

51. Former President Lee Teng-hui shared the stage with President Chen Shui-bian at an “Academia Historica” seminar on Taiwan history. He declared that “special state-to-state” relations had become the “bottom line” in cross-Strait negotiations. See “‘State-to-State’ the Bottom Line: Lee,” *Taipei Times*, October 24, 2001, at <http://www.taipeitimes.com/news/2001/10/24/story/0000108454>. President Chen’s top China policymaker, Dr. Tsai Ing-wen, is said to have been the architect of the “Special State-to-State” formulation in 1999. See Zou Jingwen, *Li Denghui Zhizheng Gaobai Shilu* [A True Account of Lee Teng-hui’s Rule], pp. 222–226.

52. A transcript is available at <http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/taiwan010425.html>.

53. All of these appearances occurred on April 25, 2001. On the CBS *Early Show*, President Bush acknowledged that Beijing and Washington disagree on “the extent to which the United States upholds its obligations under the Taiwan Relations law and...I’ve upheld our obligations in a very serious fashion, providing equipment for Taiwan so she can defend herself.” On the NBC *Today Show*, he averred that “I’m going to fully implement, I’m going to abide by the spirit of the Taiwan Relations law,” and pledged to make decisions “that will help Taiwan defend herself and we will help Taiwan defend herself, that the spirit of the Taiwan Relations law and I will continue over my time as president to review Taiwan’s defensive needs and if I think it’s in our country’s interest to sell (weapons) to them.” In his CNN interview, Bush said that “my administration strongly supports the ‘one China’ policy, that we expect that any dispute to be resolved peacefully...nothing has really changed in policy as far as I’m concerned.” Bush also said that “I certainly hope Taiwan adheres to the ‘one China’ policy, and a declaration of independence is not the ‘one China’ policy.”

54. The Taiwan Relations Act (22 USC 3301) mandates that the United States be able to resist Chinese force against Taiwan and provide Taiwan with sufficient arms for its self-defense. TRA Section 2(b)(6) states: “It is the policy of the United States—to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.” Section 3(a) mandates that the United States “will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.”

As one scholar describes it, President Bush, during his China trips in October 2001 and February 2002, “showed a willingness to meet Chinese leaders’ symbolic needs for summitry, while sustaining a tough U.S. stance on bilateral differences and limiting U.S. requests for Chinese support.”⁵⁶

In April 2001, President Bush approved the largest single tranche of defense equipment to Taiwan, including four Kidd-class destroyers, eight diesel submarines designed to counter blockades and invasions, 12 P-3C Orion Aircraft, and Paladin self-propelled artillery systems valued at over \$4 billion. Moreover, the White House will review within the next two years Taiwan’s request for the Aegis destroyers, which are able to perform search and missile guidance functions and can track 100 or more targets simultaneously.

Regarding China, Administration officials now refer to the U.S.–China relationship as “candid, constructive and cooperative.” Secretary of State Colin Powell used this description in testimony before the House Committee on International Relations in February 2002, saying that

a candid, constructive, and cooperative relationship is what we are building with China—candid where we disagree, constructive where we can see some daylight, and cooperative where we have common regional or global interests.⁵⁷

A NEW U.S.–CHINA–TAIWAN LEXICON

To prepare for the visit of Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao on April 28, the Administration and congressional leaders must be fully cognizant of the basic elements that underscore U.S. policy toward China and Taiwan. In interactions with their Chinese counterparts, the discussion should focus on steps that China can take to improve its relations

with Taiwan and secure a peaceful resolution of the sovereignty issue.

Specifically, when Vice President Hu visits Washington, the Administration and U.S. policymakers should:

- **Stress that the commitments in the U.S.–China communiqués are two-way streets.** When confronted with Chinese complaints about “violations of the communiqués,” U.S. officials must remind their interlocutors that China’s belligerence in East Asia, and against Taiwan and South China Sea islands in particular, has alienated its neighbors and obliged America to respond as it has. The reduction of arms sales to Taiwan is conditioned absolutely on China’s peaceful approach to Taiwan. Regarding increasing interaction between Taiwanese and U.S. officials, the United States never gave China any specific assurances as to how it would conduct unofficial relations with Taiwan. Though solely a matter for the United States to decide, in some cases it is determined by agreements that have been signed between the American Institute in Taiwan and its Taiwan counterpart.
- **Make clear that defense sales to Taiwan are based on an accepted condition of normalization in U.S.–China relations.** Despite differences with the United States on this matter, Deng Xiaoping agreed to go forward with normalization anyway. Americans understand that China’s strategic interests vis-à-vis Vietnam and the former Soviet Union pressured Beijing into agreeing to continued U.S. defense sales. Nevertheless, normalization is now a fact of life in the U.S.–China relationship.

55. “Whatever it takes” is now a part of official U.S. policy. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said in a closed-door speech on March 11, 2001, that “as President (George W.) Bush and others have said, the United States is committed to doing whatever it takes to help Taiwan defend itself.” See Andrea Shalal-Esa, “U.S. Vows to Do What It Takes to Aid Taiwan Defense,” Reuters, April 9, 2002. The full text of the speech was made available to Reuters and Bloomberg news agencies under a Freedom of Information Act request.

56. Robert Sutter, “Grading Bush’s China Policy: A–,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 8, 2002, at <http://www.csis.org/pacfor/pac0210.htm>.

57. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, testimony at budget hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, February 5, 2002, at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2002/7797.htm>.

- **Stress that increasing China’s military threat to Taiwan, especially submarine and missile deployments, will require the United States to supply Taiwan with the most appropriate defense systems available.** The Taiwan Relations Act mandates that “the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability.”⁵⁸ These may include systems interconnected with U.S. undersea and missile defense networks, such as DDG–51 cruisers equipped with AEGIS combat systems.
- **Explain that the U.S. understanding of the “one China” statement in the communiqués is not the same as China’s “one China” principle.** In fact, the Chinese side has understood this difference all along. In 1979, President Carter formally recognized the government of the People’s Republic of China as the “sole legal government of China” and withdrew U.S. recognition of the Republic of China on Taiwan as the legal government of China. Although the United States has “acknowledged” China’s position that Taiwan is part of China, it has *not* accepted that position. As President Reagan assured Taiwan President Chiang Ching-kuo in 1982, “the long-standing position of the United States on the matter of sovereignty over Taiwan has not changed.” It was indeed a “long-standing” position, but out of deference to Chinese sensibilities, it was one that has not been articulated in public since 1970. Nonetheless, the U.S. position remains that, “as Taiwan and the Pescadores are not covered by any existing international disposition, sovereignty over the area is an unsettled question subject to future international resolution.”⁵⁹
- **Encourage China’s leaders to engage Taiwan’s elected leaders in dialogue to resolve the differences without preconditions.** China has refused to open a dialogue with Taiwan’s elected leaders because Taiwan refuses to acknowledge—as a precondition to such

talks—that Taiwan is under the sovereignty of the People’s Republic of China. The time has come for China’s leaders to explore Taiwan’s proposals of “political integration,” “confederation,” “a common market,” and “a future one China” in a precondition-free context.

CONCLUSION

The Bush Administration’s imposition of clarity in America’s strategic dialogue with China is a positive development. Primarily, it informs Beijing that its actions have consequences. If China continues its threatening military buildup across the Taiwan Strait, U.S. support for the island will strengthen. The Administration should emphasize its commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act rather than focus on the Three Communiqués to remind China’s leadership that America not only has vital national interests in a democratic Taiwan, but also has statutory obligations to provide Taiwan with the articles it needs to avert aggression.

In the war on terror, the strategy in Asia has been to improve U.S. power and influence in the region through economic and military policies, strengthening ties with America’s allies and friends, especially Japan, and opening ties with other world power centers, such as Russia and India. But Washington should make it clear that China either can be a part of a cooperative effort for securing peace in that important region or can pursue its destabilizing military buildup and increase Washington’s determination to defend its security interests in Taiwan and the western Pacific.

Facing internal economic and social crises, Beijing should readily acknowledge that the United States is China’s most important export market and that solid trade relations with the United States are vital to economic growth. Leaders in both China and the United States well recognize that if relations between their nations are to improve, China must step away from assertive behaviors and look for peaceful ways to improve relations with Taiwan.

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58. 22 USC 3302.

59. See Starr, “Legal Status of Taiwan.”