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## Two Congressmen Look at “One China”

*The Honorable Robert E. Andrews and The Honorable Steve Chabot*

### REPRESENTATIVE ROBERT E. ANDREWS:

One can make a compelling moral case for the proposition that the democratic and freedom-loving people of Taiwan should determine for themselves the shape of their future. It is a moral case that I accept and support, but I'm here this morning to make the case that a policy that recognizes in the first instance the right of self-determination for the people of Taiwan is critical to the strategic interests of the United States of America.

I am a radical democrat with a small d. I believe that history teaches us that the security of the American people, the prosperity of the American people, and the welfare of the American people are best served when as many states in as many places as possible practice democracy.

I am hard-pressed to cite any example in modern history—and, in fact, I can think of none—where one democratic state attacked or invaded another democratic state. Democracies don't attack each other because democracies use violence as a last resort, not as a first resort. It is in the best interests of the United States to promote democracy, whether it is in the Middle East, South Africa, Europe, the former Soviet states, or, most especially, in Asia with respect to Taiwan and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Thirty years from now, whoever is President, whoever is in the Congress of the United States of America, will no doubt face a world in which there is one other dominant country that will vie for influence and power in the economic, diplomatic, and most probably military spheres. That other nation will be

### Talking Points

- We have a chance in the next 25 years to create conditions under which the PRC will evolve toward being a democratic trading partner and ally of the United States or careen toward being a military rival of the United States.
- The core principle of American democracy in foreign policy should always be the propagation of democratic states around the world. Such is the right policy toward the issue of Taiwan in this decade.
- If the United States considers Taiwan as part of China, if the United States opposes Taiwan independence, then the United States must, *ipso facto*, recognize the sovereign right of China to use force to effect the unification of Taiwan with China.
- It may be impolite to say so, but “one China” is a fiction—and a dangerous fiction—that most of the international community has bought into in order to mollify China.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at:  
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the People's Republic of China. The PRC by that time will likely have 1.3 billion people. It will be able to call to arms as many as five times more men and women than the United States can call to arms.

If the economy of the PRC grows for the next 25 years at the pace at which it has grown for the past 25 years, China will enjoy in real terms an economy that is capable of producing a military budget that is almost twice the size of the U.S. military budget today, without spending a greater share of its GDP on the military. The leaders of that nation will not have to choose between guns and butter to produce a military force that will be nearly twice the size of America's military force as it exists today.

### **Influencing the Future**

We have a chance in the next 25 years not to determine that future, but to influence it; to create an environment and create conditions under which the PRC will either evolve toward being a democratic trading partner and ally of the United States or careen toward being a military rival of the United States. The lives our children and grandchildren will live 30 years from now will be darker and more ominous if the second path occurs. In the next two-and-a-half decades, we will have the opportunity to try to influence the evolution of the People's Republic of China toward the first path.

The future of the people of Taiwan is the future of the people of the United States. It's the same issue. The people of Taiwan are confronting that issue today. If we understand what we are doing, we ought to be confronting that issue as well. But whether we understand it or not, over the course of the next two or three decades, we will certainly confront that choice; and that choice is whether we respond in the face of an oligarchic government by compromising our principles or by adhering to them.

The core principle of American democracy in foreign policy should always be the promotion of democracy—not in all ways, not at all times, and not in the same manner in every country, but the core goal and core value should be the propagation of democratic states around the world. Such is the right policy toward the issue of Taiwan in this decade.

There are those who would argue that this would represent a reversal of American policy, most especially since 1979. I would submit that they are wrong in their interpretation of history. More important, they are wrong in their prescription for America's future.

I think that a more studied analysis of the history of our relations in Asia since 1951 would show that the United States has never recognized the idea or the legal claim that the sovereignty of Taiwan is a matter for determination in Beijing. To the contrary, we have always recognized the legal claim that questions about the sovereignty of Taiwan are a matter of negotiation, a matter of mutual assent between the people of Taiwan and their freely and democratically elected government and the government that rules in the People's Republic of China.

### **Defining "One China"**

This seminar, I understand, was organized around the idea of a "one-China" policy. I think we do have a one-China policy. I think we should have a one-China policy. But the definition of that policy should be a matter of mutual assent.

What does that mean? It means to me that if the democratically elected government of Taiwan one day reaches an agreement, which it feels is appropriate for its citizens, that results in Taiwan being part of an integrated China, we should recognize that agreement; however, if such an agreement is not possible, which today it is not, or if it is rejected by the democratic leadership of Taiwan, then we should recognize Taiwan as a free and independent state.

There are those who will say that this is unduly provocative, that it will disrupt the relations between the United States and the PRC and lead us toward that dreaded second path of superpower military competition in the next two to three decades. I respectfully submit that I can't think of an analysis that's more wrong than that, and I believe there's historical precedent for this.

### **Ronald Reagan and the "Evil Empire"**

For years, the policy of the United States toward the Soviet Union after the Second World War was recognition of the inevitability of Soviet rule after Yalta and a policy of mutual coexistence. Mutually assured destruction was the more ominous articula-

tion of that policy. Détente was the more hopeful articulation of that policy under President Richard Nixon.

In 1981 and 1982, President Ronald Reagan dramatically changed our orientation toward that policy. In a speech to the British House of Commons that was rather mockingly referred to as the “Evil Empire” speech, President Reagan announced a whole new orientation for U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union. Parenthetically, I must say that those who mock the Evil Empire speech probably have never read it. I would commend it to you.

In this speech, President Reagan said that force is always a last option for the United States and that, in a case of confrontation between nuclear superpowers, force is not even an option at all. But he also said unequivocally that the goal of the United States’ policy toward the Soviet Union was the promotion of democracy and human rights within the Soviet Union. This was regarded as a wildly radical proposition in 1982.

One can quarrel about how we got to the events of 1989, 1990, and 1991. There are those who claim that President Reagan’s rhetorical leadership was unrelated to those events. There are those who claim that it was pivotal to those events. I’m more of the view that it was pivotal to those events, but the point is that the events occurred. The authoritarian regime within the Soviet Union and its client states collapsed.

There have been many problems since then, but I don’t know a Member of Congress or a serious commentator on the world stage who would trade the situation we have today for the one that we had in 1978 when it comes to our relations with what used to be the Soviet Union.

### **A Policy of Radical Democracy**

How did this happen? I believe it happened because the United States practiced a policy of radical democracy when it came to the Soviet Union, and I believe we should practice the same policy when it comes to the People’s Republic of China. Our goal with respect to the PRC should be to create conditions under which the PRC can evolve toward a democratic state. It is in our own national interest to do so.

Taiwan is pivotal to that policy. If we are ambiguous about Taiwan’s status, then we are ambiguous about Taiwan’s moral standing, and we are ambiguous about our own strategic goals. I do not believe we can afford that ambiguity.

Do I advocate military confrontation with the PRC? Of course not. Do I advocate any sort of belligerent policy toward the PRC? Of course not. But I would suggest that any trade decision, any diplomatic decision, any decision that has global scope should be made with the objective of promoting the conditions that would lead to the evolution of a democratic state in that area of the world.

There are two specific signals I think the United States should send with respect to Taiwan and its role in this process.

The first is the vigorous advocacy for Taiwan to be represented in the World Health Organization (WHO). There is a very practical reason for this that did not exist even a year ago: It is called SARS. How much more limited would the effect of SARS have been if Taiwan’s government had been fully engaged in the work of the World Health Organization? As a practical matter, it was foolish to maintain that exclusion. As a matter of principle, it was morally bankrupt to maintain that exclusion. I believe the United States should advocate for Taiwan’s inclusion in the WHO and other international bodies.

Second, I think that our half-a-loaf policy toward the sale of defensive weaponry to Taiwan is a mistake. I commend the Bush Administration for its decision—made about 18 months ago—to transfer some radar defensive technology to the Taiwanese. I believe it did not go far enough. I believe that the Aegis radar technology, which is a defensive technology and quite relevant given the military situation in that area of the world, is the appropriate technology that should be transferred to the government of Taiwan.

These will be provocative acts. They represent a very different approach to this problem than we’ve heard for the past 24 years in this country.

But President Reagan’s speech in the House of Commons represented a very different approach to what we had heard about the Soviet Union, and today there is no Soviet Union. There are many problems in that area of the world, but there is

much promise and much potential because we stood as radical democrats. That's what we need to do again.

### The Choice Before Us

The people of Taiwan stand every day as radical democrats in their lives, in their work, in the conduct of their diplomacy and their governance. I believe we should follow their lead, not simply because it's the right thing to do to support the moral standing of these fine people but because it is in our strategic interest. America is more secure when we are surrounded by democracies.

Given the certainty of the evolution of the People's Republic of China as a major force in world affairs, we have a choice. We can be ambiguous and watch that evolution take place, perhaps toward a bellicose adversary that will recreate the Cold War of the 1950s and 1960s or something worse, or we can create conditions under which that evolution takes place in a very different way toward a democratic, capitalist trading partner of the United States.

The choice that we will face in the next 25 years is the choice that the people of Taiwan face every single day. We should cast our lot with those who practice democracy, with those who don't simply acknowledge American values but who live them. And we should take a lesson from our own values and our own friends and live them in our policy with respect to Taiwan.

—*The Honorable Robert E. Andrews (D-NJ) is a member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, its Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Science, and Research and Development, and its Subcommittee on Intelligence and Counterterrorism. He is also a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, a member of its Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness, and ranking minority member of its Subcommittee on Employer–Employee Relations.*

**REPRESENTATIVE STEVE CHABOT:** Just 10 days ago, on September 6, 150,000 people marched in the streets of Taipei—in the largest demonstration Taipei has ever seen—to demand that government agencies, companies, and private institutions which use “China” in their names replace it with “Taiwan.” I don't want to prejudice the issue one way or the other, but I personally see nothing wrong with those

sentiments. In fact, I think they are a healthy reminder of what's at stake in Taiwan.

First, let me say that America's interests are my uppermost concern—not just our strategic and economic interests, but, even more important, our interests in protecting and promoting our values as a nation. Those values include democracy, representative government, the rule of law, free markets, and a people's sovereignty over their own nation. These are values that Taiwan's people share with Americans, and it does America no good to avert its eyes when totalitarian states threaten democracies that share our values.

### Erosion of American Interests in Taiwan

Over the past several years, I'm afraid I have seen America's interests in Taiwan eroded by a thoughtless reverence for the shibboleth of “one China.” Too many Americans—even high government officials—seem to think that one China somehow means that the United States accepts that democratic Taiwan is a part of communist China.

This hit home with me last year, in July of 2002, when I was in China with the House Asia Subcommittee and we had a chance to visit China's National Defense University, which is the major training academy for China's military strategists and thinkers. During our visit, we had pretty frank discussions with Chinese army generals, in which Taiwan came up repeatedly.

The thrust of their position was that Taiwan's separation from China in 1949 was somehow akin to the American Civil War. They pointed to the Chinese Civil War, and they tried to justify Beijing's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan and declared China had a right to use force to bring Taiwan under Beijing's control. They were convinced of the legitimacy of the use of force against Taiwan, a legitimacy that was based on their sovereignty over the island. And they thought—because the United States had a one-China policy—that we agreed with their argument.

We explained that Beijing's differences with Taipei should be resolved through diplomacy and through discussions rather than any sort of military action or threat of any type of hostility. I emphasized over and over again that the United States Congress, in particular, had a strong commitment to stand with Tai-



wan, and I tried to send a clear message to China that—as President Bush has said very clearly—we will “do whatever it takes” to help Taiwan defend itself.

Of course, I said I fervently hoped it wouldn't come to that. Our delegation also hoped that, by making it clear to China that we will stand with Taiwan, that day will never come.

But, in the year since then, China's military buildup continues. If the annual reports our committee gets from the Pentagon are accurate—and I have every confidence that they are—the Chinese People's Liberation Army is amassing an armed force that will be able to launch operations against Taiwan in a matter of years. Already China has deployed a force of 450 short-range ballistic missiles targeted against Taiwan, and that number is increasing at a rate of 75 missiles a year.

### Does “One China” Encourage China's War Threats?

Like others, I hope the Chinese military expansion is just intimidation and bluster, but I fear that it is not. And I am coming to a horrifying realization that Washington's one-China policy may actually be encouraging China in its threats of war.

“How?” you ask. Because Chinese leaders think America already agrees that Taiwan is part of China, and they think that America opposes Taiwan's independence.

For the Chinese, that is half the battle. If the United States considers Taiwan as part of China, if the United States opposes Taiwan independence, then the United States must, *ipso facto*, recognize the sovereign right of China to use force to effect the unification of Taiwan with China.

Let me spell this out a bit more. In October of 1976, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asked his top China hands, “If Taiwan is recognized by us as part of China, then it may become irresistible to them. Our saying we want a peaceful solution has no force: it is Chinese territory. What are we going to do about it?” Indeed, that is the conundrum today.

Arthur Hummel, at the time the State Department's senior China hand (and later ambassador to Beijing), responded very logically to Kissinger's anxieties. “Down the road,” Hummel said, “perhaps

the only solution would be an independent Taiwan.” Hummel and Kissinger both understood the nuance of one China and why it is dangerous to grant formal recognition of China's claim.

At the time—October 1976—everyone in the State Department understood what America's position on the Taiwan issue was: The United States did not, and does not, recognize China's claim to Taiwan. This was clear at the time of our normalization with China in 1979, when we “acknowledged the Chinese position that Taiwan is part of China.” But immediately after that, then-Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher assured the U.S. Senate, “That is not our position.” And in 1982, President Ronald Reagan gave the so-called Six Assurances to Taiwan's president. The Fifth Assurance was that “the United States has not changed its long-standing position on the matter of sovereignty over Taiwan.”

And what was that “long-standing” position? As the State Department wrote in a letter to Senator John East in September of 1982, “The United States takes no position on the question of Taiwan's sovereignty.” That being the case, it is clear to me—and it should be clear to the Administration—that while America might recognize one China, one China does not include Taiwan.

### Taiwan Independence: Fact or Fiction?

It is an incontrovertible fact that the United States treats Taiwan as an independent country. We deal with Taiwan economically, militarily, strategically, politically, diplomatically, commercially, and in every other way as separate from China.

This isn't odd. There is no country on Earth that treats Taiwan as though it were a part of China. Not even China treats Taiwan as if it were part of China—for the obvious reason that there is no People's Republic of China governmental, military, economic, or commercial presence in Taiwan and never has been.

It may be impolite to say so, but “one China” is a fiction—and a dangerous fiction—that most of the international community has bought into in order to mollify China. But ask yourself what sort of a country, much less a major world power, threatens war—even nuclear war—over a fiction?

In February of 2000, when China again threatened Taiwan with armed invasion, President Bill Clinton responded by stating firmly that the United States “will continue to reject the use of force as a means to resolve the Taiwan question. We will 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.*”

It seems to me that if “Taiwan independence” has the assent of the people of Taiwan, then it’s not a fiction. And if Taiwan’s president says, “Taiwan is an independent, sovereign state, with the ‘Republic of China’ on this side and the ‘People’s Republic of China’ on that side—one side, one country,” that’s also no fiction.

I’ll tell you what it is: It’s an inconvenient truth. Woe betide the political leaders of the United States if they willfully reject the truth simply because it’s inconvenient.

When I hear rumors that President George W. Bush is opposed to Taiwan independence, I dismiss them because I know the President doesn’t have any philosophical problem with an independent Taiwan. The President and his top foreign policy aides constantly refer to Taiwan as a “country” and sometimes even make the mistake of calling it “the Republic of Taiwan.”

This is understandable because Taiwan is not a fiction. Moreover, according to the United States Code—by statute—Taiwan is considered an independent country for the purposes of U.S. law.<sup>1</sup> There is no metaphysical problem anywhere in the U.S. government with an independent Taiwan.

If there is opposition to Taiwan independence in the Administration or in the Congress, it is solely because China threatens to go to war with Taiwan if Taiwan declares independence, and American leaders know that if there is a war, the United States will help defend Taiwan and that war will be a costly one.

### **Does “One China” Make War Less Likely?**

But does our one-China policy make war less likely? I can’t see that it does. In 1938, Britain and

France had a virtual “one-Germany” policy which recognized Hitler’s claims to the Sudetenland, and Franco–British appeasement on the issue led to Hitler’s occupation of Czechoslovakia and ultimately to World War II in Europe.

More recently, in 1990, the U.S. seemed to follow a “one-Arab” policy. On July 25, the American ambassador in Baghdad told Saddam Hussein, “We take no position in territorial disputes between Arabs, like your border disagreement with Kuwait; our only interest is that they be resolved peacefully.” As you all know, the “border disagreement with Kuwait” was that Saddam Hussein claimed Kuwait as Iraq’s 19th province. The American ambassador’s assurance that the United States didn’t take any position on the issue only encouraged Saddam to believe that America wouldn’t intervene in Iraq’s armed invasion of Kuwait.

Why do we have a one-China policy that gives Beijing’s leaders the same impression that Saddam had in 1990? The simple answer is that, during the Cold War, the United States saw China as an invaluable ally against the expansion of the Soviet Union, and for two decades, China was a useful partner. China, for its part, set aside its complaints about Taiwan in order to stabilize ties with Washington.

But the Soviet Union is long gone, and with it, the grand organizing principle of the strategic partnership between the U.S. and China has also disappeared. Now the rising hegemonic power in Asia is China. Let’s face it: China is a militarily powerful dictatorship. It has an expanding economy, which, by the way, relies on free access to America’s markets in order to grow.

So there is no reason, either strategically or economically or morally, why the United States should be timid in the face of China’s threats to go to war over Taiwan. China relies on the United States, not the other way around, and as the world’s preeminent power, we must not tolerate China’s threats.

Would the United States tolerate China’s threats of war if Korea did not unify with China? Taiwan is an even bigger market for U.S. exports than South Korea, yet we would never put up with a Chinese

1. Section 4(b)(1) of the Taiwan Relations Act states that “whenever the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan.”

demand for suzerainty over Korea. And what about Japan or Southeast Asia? In the 1960s, Chinese revolutionary movements flourished in the region, but we always sided with the independent democracies of Asia against the Chinese dictatorship—except in the case of Taiwan.

### **Recognizing Reality**

With the Cold War over, the Soviet Union extinct, and post-Tiananmen China tightening, not relaxing, its grip on the political, civil, and religious rights of its people, I do not see that humoring China on the Taiwan issue serves America's interests any longer. China is no longer a valued ally against the expansionary, totalitarian Soviet empire. In fact, China itself is a totalitarian state, and by threatening war against a prosperous, dynamic, and militarily potent democracy, China certainly gives the impression of being expansionistic.

Some may ask, "What do you do if China goes to war over Taiwan?" I would answer: "whatever it takes" to defend a democracy against tyranny. I would do it for Korea, for Japan, for the Philippines. It cannot be in America's interests to cede Taiwan, rhetorically or otherwise, to dictatorial China.

Do I want to abandon the one-China policy? I answer that so long as one China is not understood to mean that Taiwan is part of China, then I have no problem with it. But if carelessness or inattention to nuance or force of habit leads America's political leaders to the mistaken conclusion that Taiwan is part of China, then "one China" must be done away with.

The United States must declare that, while we do not support Taiwan independence, neither do we have any philosophical problem with it. If that is what the people of Taiwan want, they have every right to have it. After all, the sovereignty over Taiwan doesn't rest in Beijing or in Taipei, but with Taiwan's people.

—*The Honorable Steve Chabot (R-OH) is member of the House Committee on the Judiciary; a member of its Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law and Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security; and chairman of its Subcommittee on the Constitution. He is also a member of the House Committee on International Relations and its Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and Subcommittee on the Middle East and Central Asia.*