

Us relations with taiwan essay sample



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The relations between the United States and Taiwan are governed by the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). The United States recognized the government of the People's Republic of China on January 1979. It also acknowledged the Chinese position of one China and Taiwan being part of China. However the United States continues to maintain unofficial contacts with Taiwan. The Taiwan Relations Act signed by President Jimmy Carter established the legal framework for conducting unofficial relations with Taiwan. American commercial, cultural and other links have been facilitated by the American Institute in Taiwan. This institute can accept visa applications for Taiwan and issue visas to US citizens seeking to travel in Taiwan. The Taipei economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States was established by the Taiwanese government. The United States has continued to provide defensive military equipment to Taiwan which declares such sales as vital for the peace and stability of the area.

The United States has maintained a policy of defending Taiwan according to the Taiwan Relations Act. However the first US-China communiqué seems to contradict this policy. US arms sales to Taiwan actually declined in the 1980s. However by the early 1990s, US policy was marked by the sale of advanced fighter jets like the F-16/A and F-16/B along with sophisticated missiles, spare parts, technical documents and cannon shells (Hickey 4). President Bill Clinton's presidency was marked by several new changes like allowing senior US economic and technical officials to visit Taiwan.

Taiwanese leaders also could make stopovers to the United States (Hickey 4). However the ban on senior Taiwanese leaders remained in force. The Clinton administration however rejected any speculation that there was a

change in the United States Taiwan policy since it still believed in the validity of one China policy.

President Bush has modified many of the policies and practices of the Clinton Administration with respect to Taiwan. President Bush repeatedly had portrayed China as a strategic competitor to the United States. In 2001, the arms policy towards Taiwan was changed with the sale of warships, Orion aircraft and diesel submarines. Many of these arms were considered a threat by the Chinese which they believed violated the second communiqué. The Bush administration responded by asserting that the arms sales to Taiwan was determined by the behavior of China (Dickson 5). The delivery of diesel submarines posed a significant challenge because of their potential offensive use. This could have violated the TRA but the huge Chinese naval capability which can blockade the Taiwanese coastline justified the sale of these submarines. The administration also announced publicly that the US would defend Taiwan in case of a Chinese attack. The United States had pursued a policy of strategic ambiguity in order to ensure that the status quo would not be changed by any side using military action. Further relations with China were strained following the collision of an American spy plane with a Chinese fighter jet (Dickson 6). Subsequently the Bush administration was forced to moderate its rhetoric towards China following the spy plane incident. The Bush administration has also increased the military cooperation and training between both countries. It also welcomed the new President Chen Shui-bian in sharp contrast to the Clinton administration's policy.

The US has also supported Taiwan's voice in organizations where its membership is not possible. The United States has tried to balance its

diplomatic relations with the PRC and Taiwan. Any clear American statement not recognizing the PRC's claim to Taiwan would result in retaliation from the PRC. Any statement by the US which recognizes the PRC claim over Taiwan might result in an invasion of Taiwan. Strategic ambiguity remains the best policy by all countries involved in the dispute. Taiwan has also assured the United States of not provoking the People's Republic of China. The United States Congress in 2007 introduced a bill which would strengthen US relations with Taiwan. The bill called for lifting curbs on visas by top ranking Taiwanese officials. US policy makers also launched a bill to support the Taiwanese membership of the United Nations. The attempt was to actively support Taiwan's membership in appropriate international organizations.

The American involvement with Taiwan dates back to the alliance with the Nationalist Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek. With the defeat of the Nationalist forces to Taiwan, the United States supported the claim by Chiang's government about being the real rulers of mainland China. An estimated five billion dollars in military and economic aid was allowed to support the Chiang regime in Taiwan (Dumbaugh, 5). The island was used as a base against the Chinese and Soviets. However President Nixon's policy of opening to Beijing was a strategic move to counter Soviet hegemony with Chinese influence. The US began to view Beijing as a strategic ally against the USSR. The United States recognized the Beijing government in 1979 as the sole representatives of China. By the early 1980s, the US had terminated its mutual defense treaty with Taiwan. With the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, China once more became a strategic rival to the United States. The expanding Chinese economy and assertive foreign policy

led to American interest in finding new and innovative ways to contain China. Taiwan at the same time became a democracy which also led to changes in the US-Taiwan relations (Dumbaugh, 5). The United States is an important trading partner with Taiwan.

The Taiwan Relations Act was passed by the United States Congress in 1979 after relations were established by the People's Republic of China. The act specifies unofficial relations with the Republic of China and gives special powers to the American Institute in Taiwan to authorize visas. The act says that all US laws will be the same for Taiwan despite the absence of diplomatic relations and recognition. The act defines Taiwan as including the islands of Formosa and Pescadores. It also requires the United States to provide Taiwan with defensive weapons needed to resist any kind of coercion or force. Despite this the act does not require the United States to take any military action against the PRC in the event of an attack. The Taiwan Relations Act has been used to justify the sale of arms to Taiwan by successive US administrations.

During the late 1990s, the United States Congress passed a resolution in which relations between Taiwan and the US would be honored on the basis of the TRA. The six assurances are a set of guidelines which were proposed in 1982 by the Republic of China. The six assurances state that the United States will not set a date for the termination of arms sales to Taiwan. Further provisions include not terminating the TRA, no mediation between China and Taiwan, no change in position about the sovereignty of Taiwan (Chang, 9). Further the US will not exert pressure on Taiwan to conduct negotiations with the People's Republic of China. Another guideline is the three communiqués

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which govern the relations between Taiwan and the United States. The communiqués are a collection of joint statements by American and Taiwanese governments (Chang, 7). The first communiqué states the principle of a unified and undivided China. The second communiqué announces normal relations between the PRC and USA. However the US would maintain cultural and economic ties with Taiwan. The third communiqué called for strengthening cultural, educational and social links between Taiwan and the United States of America.

Relations between the United States and Taiwan became much stronger after the PRC displayed a dramatic show of force consisting of missile exercises and test conducted near the Taiwanese coast in 1996. The US responded by deploying two aircraft carrier battle groups led by the Independence and Nimitz. In 1995, the United States did not react strongly to Chinese missile tests. However in 1996, the US reacted in an assertive manner which was designed as a warning to the PRC. Some analysts concluded that the show of force acted as a deterrence to Beijing's attempt to seize outlying islands of Taiwan. The US also demonstrated that it would protect its vital national security interests. The US also had to repair its relations with the PRC following the crises. The main priority for the US was to maintain regional stability. It had to maintain relations with the PRC while at the same time be committed to defending Taiwan.

The testing of a successful anti satellite missile by China on January 2007 marked a new challenge to the United States. Some analysts concluded that the attempt was meant to intimidate Taiwan's pro independence government. Chinese newspapers had written articles before the test about <https://assignbuster.com/us-relations-with-taiwan-essay-sample/>

the relationship between the mainland and Taiwan. It viewed the pro independence faction in Taiwan as being a threat to Chinese interests. The Chinese test was mostly in response to a message by Chen's government that Taiwan is not a part of China (Chai, 2). Further reasons were the use of missiles guided by satellites by Taiwan for its defense forces. The Chinese have been studying the use of satellite guided missiles in many American conflicts. Some political analysts were concerned that the missile test indicated an outbreak of war (Chai, 2). China's actions might open a new way for peace using diplomacy and negotiation.

Even though many Chinese analysts call for solving the dispute without any outside interference, track two dialogue could be useful because people from the three sides could speak about possible future courses of action. The US has encouraged cross strait dialogue but it cannot suggest or dictate any solution to the crisis. The US continues to use the policy of avoiding any interference in the peaceful resolution of the dispute. Secondly the US believes that any negotiated settlement will be abided more likely if the parties themselves have negotiated. Any mediator cannot guarantee a commitment to a peaceful resolution of the dispute because both sides might blame the mediator for any shortcomings. While the situation in the Taiwan Strait is much better than it was a decade ago, the threat of a conflict remains. The US has hoped that both sides will demonstrate a creative and innovative way to foster stability and lessen tension.

Beijing's military strategy in the Taiwan Straits dispute calls for the acquisition of amphibious and naval military capabilities that would aid any future invasion of Taiwan. The PRC also aims to counter any military

improvements to Taiwan. It also has to prepare for any US military capability which might be brought in the conflict. Beijing has also been looking into the possibility of acquiring asymmetric warfare capabilities which could be designed to blockade, terrorize or intimidate Taiwan. It has expressed interest in purchasing large amphibious landing craft capable of traversing the shallow waters on the west coast of Taiwan.

Fighters, attack helicopters, ballistic missiles, submarines, carrier detection systems and long range anti ship weapons are some of the weapons which Beijing has tried to purchase for any future conflict in Taiwan. Beijing's military planners know that Taiwan's modern air and land forces could inflict punishing losses to any Chinese amphibious assault force that lands on its coasts. China also does not have the amphibious capability to ferry tens of thousands of troops across the straits. US military superiority would also be deterrence for any Chinese adventurism over the straits. China is expected to have more than five hundred theatre range rockets which can attack any missile shield in Taiwan (Friedberg, 1). These rockets can also be used to hit US military bases in Japan, South Korea and Guam. Some analysts also claim that China has perhaps an estimated twelve ICBM's which can hit any target in the United States.

China has also engaged in espionage to acquire modern technology from the United States. A thermonuclear device tested by the Chinese during the 1990s was based on American designs of the 1980s. (Friedberg, 5). The theft of thermonuclear devices has been the most serious breach of security for the United States. It also poses significant risks for the defense of Taiwan. The United States currently is pursuing a policy of dual deterrence in which

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neither side should give the excuse for the other to launch military action. In this new approach, the US policy is to warn Taiwan of the consequences of moving towards independence. At the same time continued warnings would be issued to China from employing military force.

Many analysts say that China could launch military action against Taiwan if it was perceived as being pushed to the corner or it has a belief that it could inflict enough casualties on the US to force a pullout similar to Lebanon or Somalia. The United State's policy of dual deterrence also seeks to prevent China from launching any military action against Taiwan. For this purpose the US has recently sold weapons systems like the F-16, M-60A tanks and a modified air defense system (Kan, 17). This is in line with the policy of providing adequate defensive capabilities for Taiwan. It also serves as deterrence to China that the US will continue to support Taiwanese defense and persuade the country of the consequences of any attack on Taiwan. The US policy of dual deterrence ensures that neither side changes the status quo using military action.

US foreign policy towards Taiwan is determined by ensuring that the interests of the Peoples Republic of China, Taiwan and US are coordinated for the security of the region. Taiwan being a democracy and economic success story wants recognition from the world. Its alliance with the United States is a strategic military and economic alliance. However the United States has always sought to maintain a policy of strategic ambiguity to ensure that neither the PRC nor Taiwan provoke each other into changing the status quo. The People's Republic of China is determined to integrate Taiwan using any method. Beijing has been pursuing a policy of acquiring military capabilities

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that would allow it to successfully invade Taiwan and fight any US attempts to intervene in the conflict. The United States believes in the policy of One China and does not support the recognition or membership of Taiwan into world organizations like the United Nations. Chinese policy makers have a changing perception of American relationship with Taiwan. Most of them believe that the US is using Taiwan to counter the rising power of China (Kennedy, 18). The Americans however insist that Taipei and Beijing initiate any dialogue for a peaceful reunification and resolution of the Cross Straits dispute.

US policy towards Taiwan is determined by the Taiwan Relations Act, the six assurances and three communiqués. While the US does not officially recognize Taiwan, it still retains economic, defense, cultural and social links with the country. It has granted special powers to a non profit organization to accept visa applications and issue visas for US citizens for traveling to Taiwan. The US acknowledges the Chinese position of one China. The three communiqués define the one China policy. The US has pursued a policy of encouraging talks between both sides to resolve the cross straits dispute. However the US cannot force any solution because of the historical distrust between both sides. It can pressurize both countries to engage in negotiations which would remove the climate of distrust and foster a more open environment. The policy of dual deterrence ensures that neither side resorts to military force to change the status quo. The US has actively opposed any expression of Taiwanese independence. It has warned pro independence factions that any attempt to declare independence would result a reduction in military ties between the United States and Taiwan. It

would also send a message to China that the US does not support Taiwanese independence which would help in forestalling any military action. At the same time, the US has also pursued a policy of providing Taiwan with air and land based defensive capabilities that could make any invasion of the country a bloody affair for China.

The United States enjoys good relations with the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. The US foreign policy towards Taiwan is to give full support for the nation's economy and military capabilities. It also aims to preserve the democracy of Taiwan and deter any Chinese invasion. At the same time the US also pursues the policy of strategic ambiguity to prevent any move by Taiwan to declare independence. The US has supported the membership of Taiwan inside organizations which do not require statehood as the criteria for membership. It has opposed Taiwan's membership into the United Nations or any international organization which requires statehood.

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