

Appendix 82 - U.S. Department of State on March 1996 Taiwan Strait Tensions (1996)¹

March 15, 1996

Our fundamental interest on the Taiwan question is that peace and stability be maintained and that the PRC and Taiwan work out their differences peacefully. At the same time, we will strictly avoid interfering as the two sides pursue peaceful resolution of differences.

The Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979 forms the legal basis of U.S. policy regarding the security of Taiwan. ... However serious, the present situation does not constitute a threat to Taiwan of the magnitude contemplated by the drafters of the Taiwan Relations Act. The PRC pressure against Taiwan to date does not add up to a "threat to the security or the social or economic system" of Taiwan. ... We will continue to work closely with you, and if warranted by circumstances, we will act under Section 3© of the TRA, in close consultation with the Congress.

Overall U.S. China policy, including the Taiwan question, is expressed in the three joint communiqués with the PRC as follows:

The United States recognizes the Government of the PRC as "the sole legal Government of China. "

The U.S. acknowledges the Chinese position that "there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China. " In 1982, the U.S. assured the PRC that it has no intention of pursuing a policy of "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan. "

Within this context, the people of the U.S. will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.

The U.S. has consistently held that resolution of the Taiwan issue is a matter to be worked out peacefully by the Chinese themselves.

¹ Shirley A. Kan, "China/Taiwan: Evolution of the 'One China' Policy -- Key Statements from Washington, Beijing and Taipei", Updated December 16, 2002. *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress* (Code: RL 30341), p. 42.