

Appendix 25 -- U.S. Department of State's Statement on the Status of Taiwan (1971)

Source: *News from China* (New York: Chinese Information Service, May 1, 1971), p. 71.

April 28, 1971

. . . Press Officer Charles Bray ... gave the following description of the U.S. attitude toward mainland China. "We must deal with the practical situation as we find it. We recognize the Republic of China and have diplomatic relations with it. We have a treaty commitment to the defense of Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands on one hand. On the other hand, mainland China has been controlled and administered by the People's Republic of China for 21 years and for some time we have been dealing with that government on matters affecting our mutual interest."

Bray, in a prepared statement on the question about who exercises sovereignty over Taiwan, said: "In our view sovereignty over Taiwan and the Pescadores is an unsettled question subject to future international resolution. Both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China disagree with this conclusion. Both consider Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands are part of the sovereign state of China." "Obviously we cannot hope to resolve the dispute between these two rival governments," Bray added. "Our position has been and remains very firmly that whatever the ultimate resolution of the dispute between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the PRC on the mainland, it should be accomplished by peaceful means."

[He] said there were two ways this could be worked out-internationally, or directly by the two governments. He said that the statement on Taiwan was a considered statement. He explained that the U.S. regards the status of the island as unsettled, because in the Cairo and Potsdam declarations of World War 11, the allied powers "stated as their purpose that Taiwan should be part of China." "This statement of purpose was never formally implemented or executed," he said.

There was an opportunity at the time of the San Francisco 1951 treaty of peace with Japan to settle the question of Taiwan, but the subject was not dealt with.

"We regard the Republic of China as exercising legitimate authority over Taiwan and the Pescadores by virtue of the fact that Japanese forces occupying Taiwan were directed to surrender to the force of the Republic of China," he said.

Bray also recalled President Truman's June 27, 1950, statement, when he announced that the U.S. Seventh Fleet was being interposed between Taiwan and the mainland of China, that the determination of the future status of Taiwan "must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan or consideration of the United Nations."

The Nixon administration also follows this policy, Bray said.