



# 《九六台海危機：決策、教訓及展望》國際研討會

## The 1996 Strait Crisis: Decisions, Lessons & Prospects An International Conference

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I want to offer thanks to FICS, Chairman Chang King-yuh, President Lin Chong-pin, Vice President Alexander Huang and the Foundation Staff for inviting me to this important conference. I am honored to be asked to give some brief keynote remarks.

I want to start by noting my connections with Taiwan. I have visited many times and have lived here for three years altogether, including two years right after I graduated from college. I made a number of good friends at that time and have had the good fortune in the years since to make numerous new friends and professional colleagues, and I deeply value those associations.

As a result of those personal and professional experiences, I not only have some feeling for Taiwan as a place—and the extraordinary changes over the past forty-five years, I think I can also identify in many ways with the people here and their hopes and aspirations.

As a U.S. government official for many years, I worked on the question of normalization of relations with the PRC. I believe that sound U.S.-PRC relations are of fundamental importance to the United States, to the world—and to Taiwan.

Strong U.S.-PRC relations are critical to the successful management of a whole range of international issues, and will become more so as time passes. They contribute importantly to peace and prosperity in this region. They are essential for proper handling of urgent questions of the day such as Iran and North Korea. They also will be essential to coping with longer-term challenges such as the quest for adequate energy, which will affect the well-being of everyone on the planet.

Thus, while I fully understand the frustration, resentment and even anger that many people in Taiwan feel in having to cope with the island's unique and somewhat awkward international situation, I believe the U.S. "one China" policy is the right policy. While it prescribes only unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan, the fact is that, not only are our two governments able to communicate continuously and clearly—if they choose to do so—but it affords Taiwan enjoys a level of security that would otherwise be impossible.

Were Sino-American relations confrontational, as in the past, rather than cooperative and constructive, I am quite convinced that the risk of the PRC engaging in more assertive or even aggressive behavior toward Taiwan would be considerably higher.

A premise of maintaining that policy to the benefit of all parties, however, is that no one—not the PRC, not the United States, and not Taiwan—will take actions that disturb peace and stability or that make management—and hopefully peaceful resolution—of cross-Strait issues more difficult. I think it will be the very long time before anyone can seriously consider what the eventual permanent relationship between the two sides should be. And in the meantime, Americans would like to see positive relations across the Strait prosper.

The events being reviewed at this conference grew out of not only specific events but also perceptions a decade ago that Taiwan was pushing the envelope on independence, and doing so in a way that—at least in Beijing’s eyes—implicated the United States. You will discuss throughout the rest of the day the differing views at the time, what decisions were taken and why, and with what consequences. So, I will not dwell on those here. I would only note that different agendas and inadequate communication played a central role along all three legs of the U.S.-PRC-Taiwan triangle.

I am deeply concerned that, while the situations are by no means identical, today we are once more in danger of pursuing divergent agendas on key issues, and failing to maintain adequate communication, and that, as a result, harmony in U.S.-Taiwan relations, and potentially even stability in cross-Strait relations, could be put in jeopardy.

It would be foolish to pretend that U.S.-PRC relations are not a central consideration for the United States, for all of the obvious reasons. It would be misguided, however, to interpret recent decisions in Washington, as somehow having come from a desire to please Beijing as from PRC pressure.

I am no longer a government official, and I do not speak for the U.S. government. But I think it is quite obvious that the recent decisions were directly related to policies and actions adopted in Taiwan that were seen in Washington as going on previous understandings and commitments and that, if carried further, would inevitably harm very important U.S. national interests.

This is not a matter of absolute right and absolute wrong. It is also not an issue that in any way calls into question U.S. support for democracy in Taiwan or for Taiwan’s right to decide how to run its own affairs.

But, as the United States has shown on many occasions and in many places around the world, support for democracy does not mean the U.S. will support every policy or action that such democracy produces. Instead, while giving due respect to the choice of the people and their democratically elected government, the United States will respond in light of how it sees its own interests affected.

President Bush has highly praised democracy in Taiwan. But he is also known for saying that actions have consequences.

Obviously, if the Republic of China constitution were amended in ways that touched on cross-Strait relations—including, for example, questions of sovereignty, territory and independence or unification, there would be a crisis. Exactly how the PRC would act, and exactly how the United States would act, would be importantly driven by the exact scenario that was playing out, and who was seen as responsible for precipitating the crisis.

Leadership is a key component of how well all three actors manage their relations. And what concerns Americans today is that our respective leaders may be operating on different assumptions and aiming at significantly different goals. It isn't that there is a lack of constant communication. Your national security officials and ours, your representative in Washington and ours in Taipei, are all able people who, with the support of their highly professional staffs, are in frequent touch with each other exchanging ideas, conveying messages and explaining the reasons behind various policies and actions.

The issue is that our leaders see things differently. There is some concern in Washington, for example, that momentum could build in a “bottom-up” constitutional reengineering process that would simply overwhelm prudence and good judgment, crossing clear “red lines” and spelling disaster for Taiwan. This would, of course, potentially involve the United States in a conflict with the PRC. Having said that, and I want to underscore that while there is some real concern about that nightmare scenario, most people who understand the situation here do not expect that to happen. They are well aware of the obstacles to such a scenario presented by the stringent requirements for passing constitutional amendments.

The problem that more Americans see is this. In a democratic process people are free to express their views—and Americans obviously support that. But whereas the government here had previously said that certain sensitive issues should be excluded, it now says that it not only endorses the democratic right of the people to raise anything, but that it will consider all such proposals “with an open mind.” For many Americans, this change at the very least creates anxiety and uncertainty about whether the government here sees the requirements for maintaining peace and stability in ways that are compatible with how the government in Washington does.

As I said earlier, it is not a matter of absolute right or absolute wrong. We all have our own views about “right” and “wrong” and what should be done. And at the end of the day, it is not a matter of whether one view prevails over another.

What will matter is how, even in light of the differences, the leaderships handle the situation. I obviously cannot speak for Taipei. And while I cannot speak for Washington, either, I am confident that, if the United States judges that its important equities are not being given sufficient weight, it will respond in ways that reflect and seek to correct that situation.

I see no benefit to anyone from such an action-reaction scenario.

I have not spoken much about the PRC. But I will say that I think Beijing also needs to reflect on whether its policies have contributed to positive cross-Strait relations. In frankness, I believe many have, but many have not. For example, the Mainland's military buildup opposite Taiwan is certainly troubling. And Beijing's continuing obstruction of Taiwan's efforts to achieve "observer" status in the World Health Assembly—just carried out again—is unjustified and self-defeating. But all of that is the topic of another talk.

I hope I made clear at the outset that I feel personal bonds with the people of Taiwan and, as a matter of policy, I think the United States has by and large pursued a correct course that has been not only in the American interest but also in the interest of Taiwan's security, political development and prosperity. Against that background, I will simply close by saying that I hope very much that wisdom and sound judgment will prevail in both capitals in a climate of mutual respect and restored mutual trust, so we can leave the recent unsettled period behind us and move to a period of renewed harmony that will benefit the people of Taiwan and the United States. This is something they—we—all deserve.

Thank you.