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Congress must end the 'One China' policy

Matthew Becker

University of Mississippi, mtbecker@olemiss.edu

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Dr. Matthew Becker: Congress Must End the ‘One China’ Policy

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Slim Smith

September 14, 2022

The “Victims of Communism Memorial,” located in Washington, D.C., has a simple dedication engraved on the front pedestal: “To the more than one hundred million victims of communism and to those who love liberty.” Chinese President Xi Jinping has stated that the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” includes the “historic mission” of unification with Taiwan, by force if necessary. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen (Democratic Progressive Party) stated on September 6 that “the situation around the Taiwan Strait continues to be tense, and the threat has never ceased.” We must not allow Taiwan to fall victim to the Chinese Communist Party.



Matthew Becker

In the wake of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi’s (D-CA) visit to Taipei, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) staged live-fire exercises and mimicked a naval blockade of the island. The People’s Liberation Army Navy has become ever more brazen, crossing the Median Line of the Taiwan Strait, which serves as the de-facto border between the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its sovereign territory. In protest, the U.S. Navy sent two warships – the USS Chancellorsville and the USS Antietam – to sail through the Taiwan Strait under a freedom of navigation transit, stating that “these ships transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State.” After Speaker Pelosi’s visit, a string of Republican and Democratic politicians have visited the island. In reference to Taiwan’s most strategic export – semiconductor microchips – President Tsai Ing-wen told Arizona Governor Doug Ducey (R) during his visit that she looks forward to producing “democracy chips” with the U.S.

Beyond the strategic importance of semiconductor microchips, why – and how – should the U.S. defend Taiwan if the time should come? The COVID-19 Pandemic has shown how much our country relies on China and the frailty of the international supply chain, of which the Taiwan Strait is a major conduit. We must support democracy against autocracy. The U.S. must not only continue our support of democratic Taiwan, we must increase it. The recent approval of \$1.1 billion in arms sales to Taipei will assist the Taiwanese to better defend themselves. In response, Chinese Embassy Spokesman Liu Pengyu stated on September 2 that this action would send the wrong signal to “‘Taiwan independence’ separatist forces.” The PRC uses this phrase to describe the democratic government of Taiwan, which Beijing views as a “wayward child” who needs to be brought back to the motherland, by force if necessary. The peaceful way would have been through the “one

country, two systems” arrangement of Hong Kong, which the PRC snuffed out. The use of force would therefore be the only way to achieve their goal of “re-unification.” How did this come to be, and what should be done?

The Three Communiqués of 1972 gave birth to the “One China” policy of the U.S., whereby we recognized that there is “one China” and that the People’s Republic of China, governed by the Chinese Communist Party, claims sovereignty over Taiwan; the caveat being that the U.S. disagrees with the claim over Taiwan. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 put in place the policy of “strategic ambiguity” towards Taiwan, whereby the U.S. may or may not come to Taiwan’s aid if China were to invade. Prior to this, the U.S. did not recognize the Chinese Communist Party as the legitimate government of China, but rather the Kuomintang government of the Republic of China, which fled to the island of Taiwan after defeat in the Chinese Civil War in 1949. President Richard Nixon (R) attempted to open up to the PRC during the Cold War. The PRC never controlled Taiwan.

Congress and the Biden Administration must change two policies: (1) ending the “One China Policy” and (2) ending our policy of “strategic ambiguity” towards Taiwan, in favor of open deterrence. By ending “One China,” I am not proposing to end diplomatic recognition of the Chinese Communist Party or the legitimacy of the People’s Republic of China. Rather, we recognize that (1) the PRC is China and (2) Taiwan is independent, without irredentist claims to the Chinese mainland. We must continue freedom of navigation transits as well. The goal of the Chinese PLA-Navy is to erase the Median Line and to create a new reality at sea, moving ever closer to the main island. The near-daily sorties by the Chinese PLA-Air Force across the Median Line are designed to have the same effect – to incrementally degrade Taiwan’s ability to defend itself by creating a “new normal,” where the PRC incrementally imposes its military presence. These actions then degrade our ability to conduct freedom of navigation transits as well as preventing the shipment of arms to Taipei.

Ending “strategic ambiguity” would put to rest any questions of American resolve, as our hesitancy did in fact embolden Russia at the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine. There must be zero doubt of our actions should the Chinese Communist Party use force to “bring home” Taiwan. If Beijing were to do so, it would mean not only the death of democracy, but also the establishment of “re-education schools” for the majority of the Taiwanese people. These “schools” would mirror the situation in Xinjiang on a grander scale, due to the Taiwanese experience with democracy and identity. If this day were to pass, Congress must not act in the manner it did towards Ukraine, where the majority of Republicans and Democrats acted as if Ukraine was doomed to fail. The Taiwanese people, like the Ukrainians, will put up fierce resistance in defense of liberty and their way of life.

Our country is in a great power rivalry with the PRC for leadership of the international order. We must continue to be a defender of freedom – at home and abroad. I ask readers to contact your representatives in support of Taiwan.

Dr. Matthew Becker teaches on politics and security issues at the University of Mississippi. He has a doctorate in Political Science from Ole Miss and a master's in International Affairs from Florida State University. Dr. Becker was a Boren Fellow in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The views expressed are his own and do not reflect those of the university. He may be reached at MatthewBeckerPHD@gmail.com.

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