

## **Statement on the Defense of Taiwan**

**August 20, 1999**

The People's Republic of China continues to threaten military action against the democratically-elected government of Taiwan. It has therefore become essential that the United States make every effort to deter any form of Chinese intimidation of the Republic of China on Taiwan and declare unambiguously that it will come to Taiwan's defense in the event of an attack or a blockade against Taiwan, including against the offshore islands of Matsu and Kinmen.

The United States should also make clear that while it is prepared to accept any resolution regarding Taiwan's future status to which both sides voluntarily agree, the future of Taiwan must reflect the will of the people of Taiwan as expressed through their duly elected government. If the people of Taiwan do not want to be united with the mainland until China becomes a democracy, the United States has a moral obligation and strategic imperative to honor that determination.

Efforts by the Clinton Administration to pressure Taipei to cede its sovereignty and to adopt Beijing's understanding of "One China" are dangerous and directly at odds with American strategic interests, past U.S. policy, and American democratic ideals. Failure to stand by Taiwan and live up to the spirit and letter of the Taiwan Relations Act in the present crisis can only exacerbate tensions and may well lead to serious miscalculation by Beijing.

The time for strategic and moral "ambiguity" with regard to Taiwan has passed. We urge the administration and leaders in Congress to make a clear statement of America's commitment to the people of Taiwan. Such a commitment is consonant with our nation's interests and ideals, and will help ensure peace in East Asia.

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