

Document 15.2: Excerpts from the 1979 “U.S.–PRC Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations” and the (U.S.) Taiwan Relations Act of 1979

Joint Communiqué

1. The United States of America and the People’s Republic of China have agreed to recognize each other and to establish diplomatic relations as of January 1, 1979.
2. The United States of America recognizes the Government of the People’s Republic of China as the sole legal Government of China. Within this context, the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan.
3. The United States of America and the People’s Republic of China reaffirm the principles agreed to by the two sides in the Shanghai Communiqué and emphasize once again that:
4. Both wish to reduce the danger of international military conflict.
5. Neither should seek hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region or in any other region of the world and each is opposed to efforts by any other country or group of countries to establish such hegemony.
6. Neither is prepared to negotiate on behalf of any third party or to enter into agreements or understandings with the other directed at other states.
7. The Government of the United States of America acknowledges the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China.
8. Both believe that normalization of Sino-American relations is not only in the interest of the Chinese and American peoples but also contributes to the cause of peace in Asia and the world.

The United States and China will exchange Ambassadors and establish Embassies on March 1, 1979.

Source: U.S. Department of State.

Separately, the United States issued a statement on Taiwan:

1. On that same date, January 1, 1979, the United States will notify Taiwan that it is terminating diplomatic relations and that the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of China is being terminated in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty. The United States also states that it will be withdrawing its remaining military personnel from Taiwan within four months.
2. In the future, the American people and the people of Taiwan will maintain commercial, cultural, and other relations without official government representation and without diplomatic relations.
3. The United States is confident that the people of Taiwan face a peaceful and prosperous future. The United States continues to have an interest in the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue and expects that the Taiwan issue will be settled peacefully by the Chinese themselves.

Source: *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter, 1978*, bk. 2. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1979. 2266.

Taiwan Relations Act

...SECTION 2.

(a) The President having terminated governmental relations between the United States and the governing authorities on Taiwan recognized by the United States as the Republic of China prior to January 1, 1979, the Congress finds that the enactment of this Act is necessary—

(1) to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific; and

(2) to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan.

(b) It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to preserve and promote extensive, close, and friendly commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan, as well as the people on the China mainland and all other peoples of the Western Pacific area;

(2) to declare that peace and stability in the area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States, and are matters of international concern;

(3) to make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means;

(4) to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States;

(5) to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character; and

(6) to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.

(c) Nothing contained in this Act shall contravene the interest of the United States in human rights, especially with respect to the human rights of all the approximately eighteen million inhabitants of Taiwan. The preservation and enhancement of the human rights of all the people on Taiwan are hereby reaffirmed as objectives of the United States....

Source: U.S. Department of State.