

The Sino-US Relationship: Case Study of the United States Policy on One China Policy

Xupueng Liu

US-China Center, United States of America

Email: xupueng@gmail.com

Abstract

Taiwan and China began a conflict when differences in the integrity of the two countries who wanted full sovereignty in one country and China made "one Chinese policy" agreed by the two countries. When the United States established diplomatic relations with Taiwan, China regarded Taiwan as a barrier to ties between the PRC and the United States and violated the "One China Policy" agreement. This research uses the descriptive method, with the concept of Strategic Ambiguity.

Keywords: China, Taiwan, US, One China Policy, Strategic Ambiguity.

----- ◆ -----

A. INTRODUCTION

Relations between China and the United States began to work well starting in the post-cold war, where the United States approached China through a re-approachment policy by the President of the United States at the time, President Nixon. This approach was formalized in the Shanghai Communique in 1972. Relations between China and the US were again at stake in the case of Tiananmen Square in 1989. Good relationships with China were seen as very important to the US. China raised interest in US relations based on principles enshrined in the 3 China - United States Joint Communique. The approaches taken by the US towards China are carried out through trade and human rights to achieve change and risk the US' ability to cooperate with China in the same mindset.

The Sino-US relationship is also unavoidable by conflicts such as Weapons and Missile Development in which the US sees China reducing its desire to restrain the spread of nuclear, chemical and technological weapons by selling Chinese missiles to other countries such as Pakistan. Security relations also affect Sino-US relationships where Chinese policies in the South China Sea dispute also undermine US goals to achieve stability in the region. Taiwan is also one of the primary triggers of conflict between China and the US caused by US arms sales to Taiwan and Taiwan's desire to improve its international status.

Since separating from China, Taiwan has until now been recognized as a country by only a few states, and even the UN only recognizes it as a province of China. The Chinese government then issued a policy called the One China Policy in which this policy issued a sound indicating that there was only one sovereign China. This policy then

influenced the relationship between China and the United States, which later became the formulation of the problem in the writing of this paper, which was poured into a case study of US policy towards the One China Policy.

The formulation of the problem in this paper is How is the relationship between Sino-US in applying the US policy to One China Policy, explaining how the relationship exists between Sino-US Explain a review of what the post-Cold War Sino-US relationship was like in terms of political, economic and human rights issues. Describe the relationship between Sino-US into a case study of US policy towards One China Policy. The benefits that can be obtained through the writing of this paper are, It is expected to understand clearly how the relationship exists between Sino-US. It is expected to provide a clear understanding and new knowledge about the post-Cold War Sino-US relationship in political, economic, and human rights issues. It is hoped to be able to provide a source of reference and inspiration for readers, especially regarding the post-war Sino-US relationship through the case studies presented.

The concept of strategic ambiguity is one of the policy concepts of the United States that seeks to defend its national interests towards China and Taiwan. This concept means that America seeks to make its relations work with China and Taiwan, without provoking each other, to maintain credibility, peace, and stability in the region. This concept arose because of the conflict between the PRC (China) and the Republic of China / ROC (Taiwan), which fought over the official status of the Chinese government. Although China and Taiwan both agree on the One China Policy, both have different interpretations of this. The PRC regards the One China Policy as a policy where the PRC fully controls all governments in China, including Taiwan, which is part of China.

In contrast, the ROC considers the One China Policy to mean the geographical and cultural unity of China. Political unity will be achieved in the future, which is not yet specified when with the ideological agreement between the PRC and the ROC. Taiwan continues to seek international support to recognize it as a country that has sovereignty.

This condition makes the United States must determine its position. For the US, China is a large potential market for business, while Taiwan is a long-standing alliance that can be trusted and becomes a significant trading partner. On the one hand, US economic interests in China will be disrupted if the US has a conflict with China over Taiwan's status. But on the other hand, if the US ignores Taiwan, then US credibility internationally and trades with Taiwan will be disrupted. This is the background for the emergence of the concept of strategic ambiguity policy, namely a system that intentionally introduces uncertainty into the decision making processes of both China and Taiwan. With this concept, the US has no uncertain policy direction to support or fight both China and Taiwan. All US policies will depend on the context in which they are made.

B. METHOD

This paper uses descriptive writing, which is the delivery of information by presenting data or a detailed description of a particular situation. The data source used in this writing is sourced from secondary data that is obtained indirectly through written documents or data, books, journals, and other sources obtained through print and internet media. Data collection techniques used are literature study and documentation by reading and analyzing various literature that is relevant to the topic, which can then be applied in this paper in this writing, using the presentation of data in the form of narration. Through this narrative form, it will be explained clearly and structured based on the topic of discussion in this paper regarding the relationship between Sino-US emphasized in the post-cold war and case studies on US policy towards One China Policy.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sino - US relationship is a term for cooperative relations that have been carried out by China and the United States since 1945. In the connections between these two countries, there are fundamental issues that form the basis of relations such as political, economic, and evolving into contemporary issues such as human rights. In studying this relationship, it starts with The Postwar Context, Post-Cold War Context, Post-Cold War Strategic Issues, Post-Cold War Economic Issues, and Human Rights Issues:

1. The Postwar Context

In the Postwar context, Sino-US relations had begun in 1949 when the PRC (Peoples Republic of China) was established. The United States sees this as a threat because there is an element of communism that the US wants to contain by its containment policy. The US here sees China as a significant threat to security in the Asia Pacific, and vice versa; China considers the US as a significant threat to China because the US seems to be building a stronghold of attack around China. The US here is said to pay great attention to China because it is influenced by the existence of complicated conflict relations between Sino-Soviet. This increasingly attracted the attention of the US around 1960, and the US then intervened in the Vietnam war because it saw that the spread of communism there would facilitate the expansion of China. Then at the end of the 60th century, during the administration of President Nixon, there was a change in direction towards improving US relations with China as one of the strategies for international political stability, such as facilitating the completion of the Vietnam war. In response to this relationship, some radical elements in China prefer to reject "imperialism" and "social imperialism." Still, on the other hand, the dominant factor agrees with the opening of relations with the US because of the reasons to avoid prolonged conflicts with the US and USSR.

The improvement in the US and Chinese relations were later known as "rapprochement" marked by the signing of the Shanghai Communique in February 1972. The commencement of US-Sino relations was also seen as a way to contain communist

forces, namely USSR, by cooperating with other communist authorities, namely China. In 1978 during the presidency of President Carter, the US and PRC agreed to undertake full diplomatic normalization. This also relates to US diplomatic relations with the ROC (Republic of China) in Taiwan with the creation of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979. Sino-US connections which have experienced fluctuating dynamics in which China was once treated unique but then along with the development of other high power Sino relations - The US is declining because of the privilege of China seems to be reduced. Even though it is diminishing, the US still maintains that China has a significant and strategic position.

2. The Impact of Tiananmen Square

The massacre at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, was a significant event for Sino-US relations and received a response from each party. The reaction from the US regarding this incident relates to the issue of human rights. The US, through Congress and President Bush, then made modifications in the relations between the two countries. Arms sales and military visits, for example, were suspended. The US is pressing China to immediately resolve the human rights problem and keep it from happening again. However, Bush did not intervene in China at that time as he did in Afghanistan and North Korea. It was this that later drew criticism from the congress because it was considered President Bush was supposed to do the opposite of before.

The response from China on this matter can be seen from a Marxist and non-Marxist point of view. From a Marxist point of view, China's growing dislike of the US is seen as intervening in its internal problems. China sees this as a domestic matter that does not need to be interfered with by the US with its monopoly capitalism. Non-Marxists then saw this as a political matter and a conflict of interests that occurred.

Deng Xiaoping then clarified China's position by speaking to Nixon in Beijing in 1989, who said that the US had interfered too deeply in Chinese domestic affairs and threatened Chinese sovereignty and national honor. Nevertheless, Deng continued to see that this Sino-US relationship must be strengthened to create world peace.

3. Post - Cold War Strategic Issues

In 1972, China's conflict with the USSR resulted in a change in behavior: the US, as the leader of the imperialist powers, wanted to help China in its struggle against the Soviet "social imperialism." With the pressure on the modernization of the post-Mao China economy after 1976, its relationship with the US was seen to be profitable in terms of trade, investment, and technology access. The formation of aspects that shape Sino-US relations also involves the political process. In strategic issues, there is a tendency to compare the economic problems or human rights issues. This applies to the US and China; in the US, several agencies and departments take care of security issues about China. While in China, the political process is less open but more pluralistic. China adheres to an authoritarian political system, but the role of its leaders is less dominating than in the Mao or Deng era.

During the post-cold war, the strategic relationship between Sino-US became very problematic. With the collapse of the USSR, the US is now the most significant power country in the world, while China has a strong influence in East Asia. This raises US concerns about China, which seems to be a regional hegemon. But at the same time, this often helps the US to have cooperative relations with China in overcoming local problems. That is why China is seen from two sides, namely strategic partners or stranger competitors for the US. In the end, Sino-US relations resumed when Bush declared war on terrorism and supported US steps to fight terrorism. China also supported the US war against Afghanistan and built cooperation with Pakistan, which at that time conflicted with India. China hopes to win US support in its campaign against Muslim separatists in Xinjiang, which are categorized as terrorists.

4. Post - Cold War Economic Issues

The United States has made a significant contribution to China's progress by becoming a vital trading partner and source of investment and technology. In the economic issue of Sino-US relations, many political aspects underlie the relationship between the two. Between China and the United States, there is a political force that benefits both economic relations or makes it an expansion. Pressing political issues arose in the context of expanding Sino-US financial relationships, which resulted in a decline in Sino-US economic relations. Chinese critical groups in the US later exploited this situation as a weapon in supporting more protectionist policies. The debate between different groups in the US was seen in the early to mid-1990s, which referred to the extension of China's status as the Most Favored Nation (MFN) in trade.

MFN is a term used to contribute to countries that have normal trade relations with the US. In the Chinese case, the status of the MFN was obtained in 1980, and the extension of the state was not debated until 1989. After a coalition of human rights activists and Chinese critics from various backgrounds tried to block the renewal of the MFN or impose conditions. However, the two US Presidents George H.W Bush and Bill Clinton decided to keep the status of China MFN. After years of negotiations, the momentum to reach an agreement was developed in 1998 and 1999, which became the starting point for strengthening the US and Chinese relations. Sino-US economic relations then focus on technology transfer, which results in an inner conflict between the US and China. The US and China have maintained their economic ties, bearing in mind that the Sino-US financial relationship has a significant impact on the sustainability of the two countries.

5. Human Rights Issues

Human rights issues have become an essential focus on the post-cold war in Sino-US relations. The underlying liberal democratic tradition shaped the approach to the point of human rights in Sino-US relations. Whatever the reality of US foreign policy, there is hope that the US government will use its influence to achieve worthy goals. On the other hand, China usually makes resistance to US efforts to influence the human

rights situation in China. China sees human rights as a domestic problem that does not have to be subject to external influences. China is forced to pay attention to these issues to avoid suffering the adverse consequences in strategic and economic relations with the US.

The US emphasis on civil and political rights also focuses on one level on individual rights, and the US is also concerned about political repression in regions such as Tibet and Xinjiang and the limits of political expression in Hong Kong since the return of the territory to China in 1997. For its part, China argues that the US approach is too influenced by Western individualism. From a Chinese perspective, political expression needs to be limited if it can jeopardize the social and economic rights of most. The issue of human rights then becomes significant between Sino-US relations. Human rights are expected to strengthen economic ties between Sino-US, which are fed by post-cold war freedom values.

6. Case Study of US Policy Against One China Policy

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a country known as a vast country with the largest population in the world. The Republic of China is controlled by Chinese nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek, who had previously been led by Chun Yat Shen. However, there was a civil war in China when communist people led by Mao Zedong entered and wanted to control China. Finally, defeat must be accepted by socialists who then go to the island of Formosa to build their own country called Taiwan.

The departure of the socialists to Taiwan did not necessarily make the conditions of politics in China improve. It is precisely diplomatic relations between China and Taiwan continue to experience upheaval. Since separating from China, Taiwan has until now been recognized as a country by only a few states, and even the UN only recognizes it as a province of China. The Chinese government then issued a policy called the One China Policy in which this policy issued a sound indicating that there was only one sovereign China. Thus, the existence of Taiwan is part of China and is not considered a country that forms itself outside of China. The Chinese government also recognizes regions such as Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan as integrated countries with China. So that cooperation or diplomatic relations with China must go through one government, and this must be at least approved by the state that wants to establish cooperation with China.

One China Policy makes Taiwan must comply with policies established by the Chinese government. However, it turns out that this policy got an adverse reaction from Taiwan. They did not want to join China under one government. Taiwan considers that its region is a sovereign country because de facto, Taiwan, can already be categorized as a country. However, the reaction from Taiwan did not necessarily make China have to cancel the policy that had been made. China instead makes strict rules for the countries that want to establish political relations with China. That it is forbidden to develop relationships with Taiwan if other countries want to establish diplomatic relations with

China, or in other words, states that want to cooperate with China must comply with the One China Policy.

The effort was initially approved by the US, which is a Chinese cooperation partner. The US agreed to end its cooperation with Taiwan to respect the policies adopted by the Chinese government. The President of the United States at that time, Jimmy Carter, had agreed to the Chinese policy with the signing of the joint communiqué in 1979. But apparently, the US did not adequately fulfill the agreement that had been made. One month after the signing of the joint communiqué, the US instead joined the Taiwan Relations Act, which then triggered a big question mark for China. Besides, the US has disappointed the Chinese government, which has made the US and China relations less stable.

7. The United States and Taiwan Joint Defense Agreement

"It (Taiwan) may appear to carry a little weight on the grand chessboard of great powers. But it is a beacon for a future democratic China, and it is also a critical piece in the security structure of the Asia Pacific Region. Despite its relatively small size, Taiwan is worthy of protection and must be defended." - Dr. Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang

Cooperation agreements in the defense sector between the United States and Taiwan have been carried out since the Second World War to the present. From time to time, the United States-Taiwan agreement has undergone several reforms (changes) and has been strengthened until now. Starting from the Second World War, the United States provided some military assistance to Taiwan, including, The American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers), which is US assistance to Taiwan to support the Chinese nationalist government against Japan in the Sino-Japanese War 2, this force led by General Claire Chennouli. The United States then sent the US Naval Group China (Sino - American Cooperative Organization) led by Admiral Milton Miles. This operation was a mutual intelligence operation between the US and Taiwan. In the early 1950s, it also conducted Cooperation in Land Operations between Chinese, British, and American Forces in South Asia against Japanese in the China - Burma - India Theater.

The strategic importance of the United States to Taiwan, according to Huang (2010), is to carry out a policy of containing communist expansion in the Asia Pacific during the Cold War. The Government of Taiwan states that the political, security and economic interests of the United States are very much in line with peace and security stability in the Western Pacific so that cooperating with Taiwan can fulfill that goal. To strengthen US-Taiwan cooperation after the second world war, the 1954 US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty was signed which was active until January 1, 1980, and the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG)

8. Taiwan Relations Act and Six Assurances

After the US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty of the United States and Taiwan re-established diplomatic relations after the United States Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, which regulates US-Taiwan relations after the termination of the US-ROC

Mutual Defense Treaty agreement after 1979. "The US would consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to peace and security of the Western Pacific area and grave concern to the United States;... the United States will make it available to Taiwan such as defense articles and defense service in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability".

This agreement also includes an arms sales agreement from the United States to Taiwan as a form of Taiwan's self-defense assistance. Regarding the US-Taiwan defense cooperation and arms trade between the two countries, the People's Republic of China sees this as an obstacle to the PRC's relations with the United States (Huang, 2010). The PRC demanded the United States government to resolve this which then led to the August 17, 1982 Communiqué which contained the United States response that "the US does not seek to carry out a long term policy of arms sales to Taiwan, either in qualitative or in quantitative terms, the level of those supplied in recent years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the US and China and that it intends to reduce its sales of arms gradually to Taiwan leading over a period of time to final resolution.³ "According to Huang, a month before the signing of the communiqué, the. Equipping Taiwan with Six Assurances, namely the United States guarantee against the Republic of China, the six guarantees are:

- a. That the United States agreed not to give the Republic of China (Taiwan) date of cessation of arms sales,
- b. The United States will not hold prior consultations with the Republic of China related to arms sales, and the United States will not play the role of mediator between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China,
- c. The United States will not revise the Taiwan Relations Act,
- d. The United States will not change its position regarding Taiwan's sovereignty, and
- e. The United States will not force Taiwan to enter into negotiations with the People's Republic of China.

So with this, Taiwan and the United States continue their cooperation in the field of security, both military and arms sales. With the approval of the Six Assurances, the United States guarantees not to become a mediator or pressure the Republic of China to negotiate with the PRC. According to Harvey Feldman, Director James Lilley stated six assurances orally to the President of the Republic of China Chiang Ching-Kuo.

9. Sino-US Relationship Regarding One China Policy in the era of George H.W Bush and Barrack Obama (One China Policy in the Bush Administration)

During the administration of President George W. Bush, US policy towards China and Taiwan regarding One China Policy favored Taiwan. Bush considers China, not as a strategic partner, but instead displays the impression of China as "America's enemy" 5. Bush increased arms sales to Taiwan, reaffirmed his commitment to Taiwan's de-

fense, and changed the direction of the United States defense strategy from Europe to focus on the Asia Pacific as a counter to China's military strength. China continues to increase arms purchases from Russia so that the US sees this as a threat, not only to Taiwan but also a threat to security stability in the Asian region.⁶ America also expressed objections to the European Union's plan to lift an arms sales embargo on China, because the US was worried this further enhances Chinese weaponry. If China has potent military weapons, China will quickly attack Taiwan. The United States deterrence to China so that China does not attack Taiwan directly.

Although concerned about the increase in Chinese weaponry, the Bush administration also does not merely support Taiwan's independence efforts. Bush refused to support the efforts of the Taiwanese government to change the status quo. What's more, Taiwan took provocative actions that made China strengthen its weapons. This is a form of implementing the concept of a strategic ambiguity policy, where the US maintains support for China through the One China Policy while continuing to suppress Chinese weapons, and rejects Taiwan's independence efforts while still protecting Taiwan's defense. Bush felt there was no need to be a mediator to mediate between China and Taiwan or take steps to find a peaceful solution for both parties.

10. One China Policy in Obama Administration

During the presidential election campaign, Obama said the United States had no obligation to defend Taiwan. Obama feels that China is a more important trade partner. Obama also said he was ready to host talks between the Chinese and Taiwanese military. This is quite surprising, considering that so far, the United States was never concerned about encouraging Taiwan to negotiate with China.⁷ At the beginning of his administration, Obama stressed that the United States did not support Taiwan's independence from China. Obama managed to ease tensions between China and Taiwan. However, Obama seemed inclined to help China, as evidenced by Obama appointing pro-China policy advisers. One of the national security advisers, Zbigniew Brzezinski, stated that Taiwan is an endangered species, which is an obstacle for the United States in establishing relations with China.

President Obama's policy changed in the second period of his administration. Obama again stressed the importance of relations with Taiwan. Obama signed a system supporting Taiwan to participate in the International Civil Aviation Organization. Obama also focused on severe discussions on bilateral relations regarding the US-Taiwan Free Trade Agreement. This relationship continues with US support for Taiwan's membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. Ties with Taiwan in the military field continued when President Obama signed the sale of missiles to Taiwan. This sparked loud Chinese protests against the United States. Obama's policy change is due to the focus of the United States, which emphasizes Asia Pacific doctrine. That is, Obama focused on developing US influence in the Asia Pacific. At present, the power of China in Asia is already immense. The US is concerned, if this is left unchecked, the in-

fluence of China in the Asia Pacific could overtake US influence. To counter Chinese influence, the US needs to seek alliances, such as Japan, India, South Korea, ASEAN, and one of them, including Taiwan. With the coalition, the US hopes its influence in the Asia Pacific will be stronger than the power of China. The US, specifically on the Obama administration, prioritizes the Trans-Pacific Partnership by inviting Taiwan but not inviting China as a member.

D. CONCLUSION

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the relationship between Sino-US originating from the re-approachment policy carried out by Nixon can run well because of active trading partners, especially in exports and imports. But the conflict arises between the two because of Taiwan. Taiwan, in conflict with China, resulted in China issuing the One China Policy. However, the US proximity to Taiwan cannot be released, as evidenced by the signing of the Taiwan Relations Act.

President Obama's policy changed in the second period of his administration. Obama again stressed the importance of relations with Taiwan. Obama signed a system that supports Taiwan to participate in this Agreement also includes an arms sales agreement from the United States to Taiwan as a form of Taiwan's self-defense assistance. Regarding the US-Taiwan defense cooperation and arms trade between the two countries, the People's Republic of China sees this as an obstacle to the PRC's relations with the United States.

During the administration of President George W. Bush, US policy towards China and Taiwan regarding One China Policy favored Taiwan. Bush considers China, not as a strategic partner. Still, preferably displays the impression of China as "America's enemy." Bush increased arms sales to Taiwan, reaffirmed his commitment to Taiwan's defense, and changed the direction of the United States defense strategy from Europe to focus on the Asia Pacific as a counter to China's military strength. At the beginning of his administration, Obama stressed that the United States did not support Taiwan's independence from China. Obama managed to ease tensions between China and Taiwan. However, Obama seems inclined to help China, as evidenced by Obama appointing pro-China policy advisers. Obama also focused on severe discussions for bilateral relations regarding the US-Taiwan Free Trade Agreement. This relationship continues with US support for Taiwan's membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement. Ties with Taiwan in the military field continued when President Obama signed the sale of missiles to Taiwan. This sparked loud Chinese protests against the United States.

REFERENCES

1. Benson, B. V. (2001). *Comprehending Strategic Ambiguity: US Security Commitment to Taiwan*, Duke University
2. McDougall, D. (2007). *The Asia Pacific in World Politics*. USA: Lynne Rienner.
3. Huang, A. C. (2010). *The United States and Taiwan's Defense Transformation*.
4. US Department of Defense, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, 2004
5. *Taiwan Relations Act: Public Law 96-9, 96th Congress*, "January 1, 1979, full text can be viewed at The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) http://www.ait.org.tw/eb/about_it/tra/.