



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 28, 2018

## China Warns Taiwan: U.S. Can't Save You From Unification

The seven-decades-long rift between the People's Republic of China (China) and the Republic of China (Taiwan) continues to simmer on the back burner of the world crisis stovetop. China's activity in the South China Sea, along with recent rhetoric from Beijing, threatens to bring the situation to a boil. And now a spokesman in China's Foreign Ministry hints that the United States will have nothing to say about it one way or another.



Responding to recent calls from Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen for international aid to respond to China's sabre-rattling in the South China Sea, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said, "It won't work even if they try to bank on foreign forces to build themselves up."

Lu's warning to President Tsai and Taiwan didn't mention the United States specifically, but it was clear enough who he meant by the term "foreign forces." Lu added, "We hope certain people in Taiwan could correctly understand the development trend of China and its national unity as well as the evolvement of international circumstances and stop moving further down the wrong path."

The seeds of the division between Taiwan and mainland China were actually sown in the late 1920s, when the Chinese Civil War began between the forces of communist revolutionary Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government. The two agreed to join forces to fight the Japanese occupation of China during WWII, but hostilities resumed when the war ended. [At the Yalta Conference in 1945](#), U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt sold out Chiang by promising the vast northern Chinese province of Manchuria, which had been controlled by Japan, to Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union. This allowed massive stores of Japanese weaponry and supplies to fall into the hands of the Soviets, who transferred them to Mao's forces to be used against Chiang. On top of that, promised U.S. assistance to Chiang to fight the communists never materialized, and Mao's communist forces defeated the nationalist forces led by Chiang Kai-shek, who fled to Taiwan in 1949. This marked the beginning of the People's Republic of China. Red China has claimed authority over Taiwan ever since then, referring to it as a "breakaway province."

So, the Chinese menace that the U.S. now faces is, at least in part, our own creation.

Taiwan represented China at the United Nations until 1971 when its seat was given to the People's Republic of China in the wake of the so-called Sino-Soviet split. At that time, most of the nations of the world, including the United States, then helmed by Richard Nixon, recognized the People's Republic or Mainland China as the one true China, which left Taiwan in a precarious diplomatic spot.

The heat has been turned up on the Taiwanese issue in the past few years as China's military has begun to project its power in the South China Sea with repeated naval exercises and the building of "[island fortresses](#)" with landing strips, radar stations, and observation towers. The actions concern not only Taiwan but also the Philippines, Brunei, and Malaysia.



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“This is not just Taiwan’s challenge,” President Tsai told the French press agency AFP on Monday. “It is a challenge for the region and the world as a whole, because today it’s Taiwan, but tomorrow it may be any other country that will have to face the expansion of China’s influence.”

Tsai added, “Their democracy, freedom and freedom to do business will one day be affected by China.”

Although Taiwan considers itself an independent, democratic, and self-governing country, it has never formally declared independence from Mainland China. Tsai’s political party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), has traditionally spoken out in favor of declaring Taiwan independent. Chinese president Xi Jinping has made it clear by his actions that China would not allow such a declaration to go unchallenged.

A diplomatic solution to the Taiwan situation seems unlikely at this point, since China has placed a precondition on any meeting with Taiwan. Taiwan must agree that there is “one China,” of which Taiwan is a part, for any negotiation to occur. Tsai has, so far, refused to acquiesce to that condition.

China can use its massive influence in the region and the world at large to isolate Taiwan. Currently, only 18 of the world’s countries even recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation — down from 24 nations a decade ago. The only European state that recognizes Taiwan currently is the Vatican. The number keeps dwindling owing to Chinese pressure on other nations. Although the United States has not formally recognized Taiwan, the island nation considers America its strongest ally. And the United States is unquestionably Taiwan’s largest arms supplier.

And that’s what makes things interesting.

Earlier this month, the Trump administration [opened the American Institute](#) in Taipei, which will reportedly function as a de-facto embassy. The action drew a swift complaint from the People’s Republic that America was “violating the one China principle.” Perhaps so as not to ruffle Beijing’s feathers, Trump has not sent any high-level officials to Taipei, as of yet.

The American Institute opened just as the meeting in Singapore between President Trump and Kim Jong-un of North Korea, which China helped to broker, took place. It’s almost as if Trump is saying to China, “We need you and will work with you. But you will not push us around.”

The People’s Republic of China is a nation of 1.4 billion people with a gigantic and quickly modernizing military — not a nation the United States can afford to ignore. Unfortunately, it is an authoritarian and communist nation with an abysmal human rights record. Taiwan, on the other hand, is tiny by comparison, with only about 24 million people. But it has more common ground economically and politically with America.

Much of this current tension between two nations is the result of unwise American foreign policy. Perhaps this should serve as a lesson to U.S. politicians when they desire to intervene in the affairs of other nations.

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