

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write to you today to express our serious concern about the Chinese government's recent refusal to allow port calls at Hong Kong by U.S. Navy vessels and the damaging implications of the incident on our currently flawed policy towards China.

Denying foreign vessels, including naval ships, safe haven in inclement weather is a gross transgression of international maritime practice, and this instance raises serious questions about China's commitment to international norms. Now we find that Beijing has publicly faulted the U.S. for these incidents, declaring that these actions were taken to exact retribution against the United States for our security commitment to Taiwan and our decision to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Dalai Lama last month.

As strong supporters of democracy, we applaud your administration for its efforts to assist Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defense capability against the Chinese military buildup. The United States is required by the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to provide Taiwan with defense articles to fulfill our commitment to Taiwan's security and to the stability in the region. The TRA has been a cornerstone of U.S. policy in the Western Pacific for nearly thirty years, as have the U.S. arms sales to Taiwan as required by law. Beijing is certainly within its rights to deny U.S. Navy non-emergency port calls in Hong Kong, but Beijing's recent efforts to attempt to pressure us to abandon this long-standing security commitment to Taiwan in return for routine port calls for Navy vessels is not consistent with the actions of a friendly partner or a responsible stakeholder.

This recent spat highlights the vulnerability of another aspect of our policy towards China. The very name of our "One China Policy", which originates from the long-gone Cold War, still implies that Taiwan is a part of China. This implication seriously undermines the legitimacy of our provision to sell Taiwan defensive weapons. It also ignores the fact that Taiwan has made an impressive transformation from authoritarianism to democracy over the past twenty years.

President George W. Bush
February 20, 2008
Page two

The pursuit of an ambiguous and rudderless "One China Policy" has created major opportunities for the Chinese government to move towards its objective of control over Taiwan and the vital shipping lanes in the region. For example, despite our vehement objection, Beijing unilaterally changed the status quo in the Taiwan Strait by passing the Anti Secession Law that authorizes war against Taiwan. China has also successfully silenced Taiwan's and our government's efforts of bringing Taiwan more international visibility in the World Health Organization and other international organizations.

As long as we acknowledge the People's Republic of China's (PRC) claim that Taiwan is part of China, the Beijing government will continue to question the legitimacy of our policy of providing Taiwan with defensive weapons and our commitment to protecting Taiwan's democracy – just as they are doing now.

We do not need to elaborate here on the warnings of many governmental studies regarding China's 900 ballistic missiles targeted at Taiwan, China's large scale cyber warfare against us, its anti-satellite capability, submarines with cruise and ballistic missiles that project not only to the Taiwan Strait but to our allies in the region and even to the U.S. continent. This alarming military buildup, combined with China's public threat of attack against Taiwan and us clinging to the notion that Taiwan is part of China, makes us susceptible to continuous bullying and pressure by China. A vulnerable policy will only precipitate war, not deter it.

Finally, it is clear that it is not the "One China Policy" that has kept the peace in the western Pacific. Rather, it has been our commitment to Taiwan's security under the Taiwan Relations Act (and the U.S.-Taiwan Mutual Defense Treaty in place prior to passage of the TRA). The TRA has safeguarded Taiwan and the region by deterring a Chinese attack. Taiwan's democratic transformation also contributed to regional stability.

Unless our outdated policy vis-à-vis the PRC and Taiwan is modernized, the United States should expect tensions in the region to continue rising. Perhaps the primary reason for this is because the so-called "One China Policy" and the Taiwan Relations Act – the two fundamental pillars governing U.S. relations with China and Taiwan, in fact work against each other. This inconsistency in U.S. policy will continue to send mixed messages to both China and Taiwan – and we are concerned that these conflicting messages will one day inevitably result in a serious miscalculation that could have disastrous consequences for our long-term strategic interests and for our allies in the region. It simply makes no sense for the United States to continue adhering to a 1970's-era, Cold War China policy in such a dramatically transformed 21st century world.

When we call for China to act as a responsible stakeholder, we ourselves need to set a good example and hold firm in our beliefs, values and principles. As the global champion of freedom and liberty, our support for democracy in Taiwan should not be contingent

President George W. Bush
February 20, 2008
Page three

upon any quid pro quo with China.

We applaud the speech you made in Kyoto two years ago when you urged China to emulate Taiwan. After all, the best solution for cross-Strait peace is China's ultimate embrace of democracy. Only by giving democratic Taiwan unwavering support will we be an effective advocate for democratic change in China.

Sincerely,



Gus Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Thomas Tancredo
Member of Congress



Thaddeus McCotter
Member of Congress



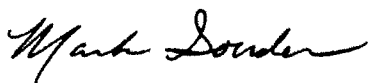
Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



Scott Garrett
Member of Congress



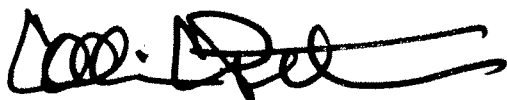
Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress



Mark Souder
Member of Congress



John Culberson
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson
Member of Congress