



REAGAN MEMO ON TAIWAN ARMS

U.S. arms sales to Taiwan remain one of the most contentious issues in U.S.-Chinese relations, with each side having differing understandings about the weapons transfers to the island state, which Beijing considers a rogue province. China for decades has insisted that U.S. arms sales to Taiwan must diminish and eventually end and claims that the commitment is implicit in the U.S.-Chinese joint communiques.

But the White House recently made public a once-secret memorandum from **President Reagan** making clear that the 1982 joint communique did not end arms sales to Taiwan.

State Department officials at the time sought to codify U.S. policy. **John J. Tkacik**, a former State Department official involved in the 1982 communique talks, said the department's China desk at the time attempted to insert language that would have stated it is not long-term U.S. policy to sell arms to Taiwan and that the sales would "gradually diminish and ultimately cease."

A major bureaucratic policy fight ensued, and after the attempt to insert the language was reported in *The Washington Times*, Reagan called then-Secretary of State **Alexander Haig** to explain it.

Eleven days after the June 14, 1982, story ran, Haig was forced to resign over what he said later were policy differences with the president, including in regard to China and Russia. Reagan, in his diary, later wrote: "Actually, the only disagreement was over whether I made policy or the Sec. of State did."

The story that exposed the effort was written by columnist **Ralph de Toledano** and triggered pressure on the administration from Congress. That ultimately led Reagan to write the Aug. 17, 1982 memo to Secretary of **George Shultz** and Defense Secretary **Caspar Weinberger**, a memo that was declassified last month by recently departed National Security Adviser **John Bolton**.

In the memo, Reagan stated that talks on the communique were premised on a clear understanding that any reduction in arms sales to Taiwan depended on "peace in the Taiwan Straits" and on China's declared policy of seeking a peaceful resolution of its differences with Taipei, where Nationalist forces fled in 1948.

"In short, the U.S. willingness to reduce its arms sales to Taiwan is conditioned absolutely upon the continued commitment of China to a peaceful resolution of the Taiwan-PRC difference," Reagan stated. "It should be clearly understood that the linkage between these two matters

is a permanent imperative of U.S. foreign policy."

The first sale of F-16 jets to Taiwan took place shortly after that, and the administration announced in August that it will sell \$8 billion worth of new F-16s to Taiwan.

CHINA DECOUPLING NOT POLICY

Chad Sbraglia, a senior Pentagon official, announced in China this week that the United States is not seeking to "decouple" from its engagement with all things Chinese, according to a defense official.

Chad Sbraglia, deputy assistant defense

secretary for China, made the remarks at a military forum in Beijing on Monday.

Mr. Sbraglia said references to U.S. economic and other disengagement from China at the forum were not accurate.

China has regarded **President Trump's** tough policy on trade and other issues as a sign that the United States is sharply shifting its policies toward Beijing.

"I'll tell you from personal experience that's not only not official U.S. policy, that's not even a policy discussion that I hear in my day-to-day business," Mr. Sbraglia said. "That's not even how we think about that."

The defense official said that if "decoupling" were the goal, "what you would see on a day-to-day basis would be fundamentally different than what you see."

Mr. Sbraglia said the United States is seeking to rebalance the relationship and noted that both Washington and Beijing say they want to improve stability and avoid crises.

"It's just the opposite of decoupling. It's not to pull apart. It's actually to in some ways deepen those relationships," he said.

Mr. Sbraglia's remarks were first reported by Reuters and confirmed by the defense official.

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