

Taiwan and the USA: from love to "no position," the vagary of vagaries

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.
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This continues the post of December 5th (scroll back to see it) when AIT Chairman Raymond Burghardt spoke to the American Chamber of Commerce in Taiwan. Burghardt praised Taiwan as the 9th largest trading partner of the USA with a 2-way volume of 46 billion US\$. Unsaid was how the USA has helped Taiwan (the Republic of China) militarily in a wide variety of ways for over a half a century. And yet by the end of his speech, after stating proudly that Taiwan should have confidence in its role in the world, Burghardt said that the official position of the USA on Taiwan was "no position." Say what???

Burghardt seemed to forget that Taiwan was a founding country in the establishment of the United Nations. Burghardt seemed to forget that the USA counted on Taiwan's vote in the UN General Assembly untold times before Taiwan was booted out of the UN due to the stubbornness of Chiang Kai-shek. And now Taiwan was supposed to be confident because the USA officially took no position vis-a-vis its 9th largest trading partner, its oft past comrade in arms.

One could say that this "no position" is better than a poke in the eye with a rusty nail. Or its better than the USA after having in the past been recorded as stating the vagary of "we believe in One China" but not saying what constitutes or belongs to that China. But really, with 65 years having past since the end of WWII, isn't it time for the USA to admit that the manipulations of "strategic ambiguity" it is time to face the facts.

As they say, if it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, and looks like a duck, it's a duck. So too when a country has been your past comrade in arms, when it is still your 9th largest trading partner among some 200 plus countries in the world, when you recognize its passports and when you freely support its army with "defensive" weapons, isn't it time to call a country a country?

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