

IS AMERICA'S SUPPORT FOR TAIWAN WANING?

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Executive Summary

1. Over the course of the last two years, there has been noticeably much less public discourse in the United States about Taiwan. The main reason for this was the watershed election in Taiwan in early 2008 that ended the pro-independence Chen Shui-bian presidency that had provoked China and caused grief for the U.S.
2. Chen's successor, President Ma Ying-jeou, has reduced tension in the Taiwan Strait through improving relations with China, resulting in the Taiwan Strait no longer being the serious flashpoint it was.
3. But there are also much less frequent words of praise or support for Taiwan in the U.S.
4. There are even voices that say that the United States should not protect Taiwan. Some opine that the U.S. should abandon Taiwan because it has no real value to the U.S. Some contend that resolving the "Taiwan issue" will eliminate the most grievous point of friction with China.
5. Support for Taiwan in the U.S. government, the media and academe has palpably declined.
6. Looking at the formal basis of U.S. Taiwan policy there is evidence of diminishing U.S. concern for Taiwan's sovereignty.
7. The rise of China and the need for the U.S. to maintain good relations with Beijing, especially economic ties, in large part explains the downgrading of relations with Taiwan.
8. The U.S. need to cut its military spending is also a factor. U.S. support for Taiwan ultimately means defending Taiwan against an attack by China. Many

in the U.S., especially in the Obama administration, see this policy as undesirable and protecting Taiwan as a policy that should be ended.

9. The United States' recent decision not to sell Taiwan F-16 C/D fighter aircraft underscores the decline of U.S. support for Taiwan.
10. If the United States forsakes Taiwan, the island is likely to forthwith cease to exist in its present form. China claims Taiwan as its territory and will obviously implement measures to realize reunification. Taiwan cannot adequately defend itself.