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U.S. Relations With Taiwan

BILATERAL RELATIONS FACT SHEET

BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS / AUGUST 31, 2018

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More information about Taiwan is available on the [Taiwan Page](#) and from other Department of State publications and other sources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

U.S.-TAIWAN RELATIONS

The United States and Taiwan enjoy a robust unofficial relationship. The 1979 U.S.-P.R.C. Joint Communiqué switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing. In the Joint Communiqué, the United States recognized the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, acknowledging the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China. The Joint Communiqué also stated that the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan. The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) is responsible for implementing U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

The United States does not support Taiwan independence. Maintaining strong, unofficial relations with Taiwan is a major U.S. goal, in line with the U.S. desire to further peace and stability in Asia. The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act provides the legal basis for the unofficial relationship between the United States and Taiwan, and enshrines the U.S. commitment to assist Taiwan in maintaining its defensive capability. The United States insists on the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait differences, opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by either side, and encourages both sides to continue their constructive dialogue on the basis of dignity and respect.

U.S. Assistance to Taiwan

U.S. development assistance to Taiwan in the 1950s and 1960s helped Taiwan create a more prosperous economy. Currently, the United States provides no development assistance to Taiwan.

Economic Relations

The United States has maintained and enhanced its commercial ties with Taiwan since 1979. Taiwan is the United States' ninth largest trading partner, and the United States is Taiwan's second largest trading partner. Taiwan enjoys Export-Import Bank financing, Overseas Private Investment Corporation guarantees, normal trade relations status, and ready access to U.S. markets. AIT has been engaged in a series of trade discussions that have focused on protection of intellectual property rights and market access for U.S. goods and services. The United States has a trade and investment framework agreement with Taiwan under the auspices of AIT and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) in the United States. As of 2013, companies from Taiwan employed more than 12,000 workers in the United States with total worker compensation of almost a billion dollars.

People-to-People Ties

People-to-people ties between the United States and Taiwan continue to grow. There are now 148 sister cities between the United States and Taiwan, connecting our two societies on a local level. Travel for business and pleasure from Taiwan to the United States has increased 50 percent since Taiwan became a member of the U.S. Visa Waiver Program in November 2012. Taiwan is the United States' seventh largest source of international students, sending thousands of students to receive a high-quality education each year. The United States also sponsors study abroad opportunities in Taiwan for U.S. students from the high school to post-graduate levels. Outside of the traditional classroom, through the Fulbright Program and the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), young professionals and rising scholars from the United States and Taiwan collaborate on research and exchange best practices on a broad range of topics.

Taiwan's Role in the International Community

The United States supports Taiwan's membership in international organizations that do not require statehood as a condition of membership and encourages Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations where its membership is not possible. Taiwan and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, and the Asian Development Bank. In June 2015, AIT and TECRO established the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, a platform for expanding U.S.-Taiwan cooperation on global and regional issues such as public health, economic development, energy, women's rights, and disaster relief.

Foreign Representation

The United States maintains unofficial relations with the people of Taiwan through the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), a private, nonprofit corporation, which performs citizen and consular services similar to those at diplomatic posts. The Director of AIT is William Brent Christensen. Other principal officials are listed on [AIT's site](#).

Taiwan maintains the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States at 4201 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20016 (tel: 202-895-1800).

More information about Taiwan is available from the Department of State and other sources, some of which are listed here:

- [CIA World Factbook Taiwan Page](#)
- [Office of the U.S. Trade Representative Countries Page](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics](#)
- [Export.gov International Offices Page](#)
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