

24th February 2017.

To the Public Consultations Team  
White Paper Task Force  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
RG Casey Building  
John McEwan Crescent  
Barton ACT 0221  
Australia

**Submission on the Australian Foreign Policy White Paper**

I would like to request that my identity remains confidential and my personal details, including my name and address are not publically available. I am writing in the capacity as a private citizen and wish my personal details and signature to remain private and confidential.

Firstly, thank you for accepting public submissions regarding the Foreign Policy White Paper. In order to maintain stable diplomatic relations and peace in the Asia Pacific, it is my concern that Australia has not been proactive in its support for friendly and democratic nations in our region, specifically Taiwan.

**Historical Background**

The Commonwealth of Australia previously recognised and maintained formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China 中華民國 (commonly known internationally as Taiwan 臺灣 or the R.O.C.) between 1941 and 1972. In 1972, following the decline of hostilities in the Chinese Civil War, Australia established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China 中華人民共和國 and withdrew its Ambassador from Taipei. Since then Australia has maintained non-official relations with the Republic of China and not recognised its continued sovereignty over the 23 million citizens on Taiwan and the other territories of the R.O.C. still controlled by the central government in Taipei.

Since 1972 the Government of the Republic of China has transitioned from the period of martial law and temporary provisions effective during the period of communist rebellion, and has become a vibrant multi party democracy and an exemplary model of economic modernisation, liberalization and democratization in Asia.

**Problems created for Australian Interests**

This situation is not only a denial of political reality, (as areas currently governed by the Republic of China (Taiwan) have never been under the legal jurisdiction or control of the People's Republic of China) but also an unfair situation that disadvantages the free democratic people of Taiwan island and its outlying islands including Kinmen, Matsu, and Penghu. Non recognition of the independent nature of Taiwan also jeopardises peace in the Far East, by refusal to recognise a founding member of the United Nations, our former wartime ally, and Australia's 9th largest trading partner, which is currently in a defence pact with Australia's defence partner, the United States of America.

Australia's involvement in promotion of effective freedom of navigation through the disputed South China Sea is also impaired by the lack of recognition of Taiwan, which controls the largest land mass, Taiping Island 太平島 (aka Itu Āba) as well as several other reefs. By Australia's non recognition of Taiwan as a party to this dispute, Australia compromises its ability to assist in dispute resolution and erodes its effectiveness in asserting any rights to navigation on behalf of the international community.

#### Strategic solutions

The People's Republic of China and the Republic of China (Taiwan) maintain mutually exclusive control over different territories. Australian policy should be modified gradually over time to reflect this reality without the outside influence of other nations. Australia should take initiative in the non denial of the de facto independence of Taiwan, and the fostering of greater economic, civil, and cultural ties.

In the long term Australian foreign policy should consider the eventual re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, reflecting the past 68 years of separation between mainland China and Taiwanese territory and 106 years since the establishment of the R.O.C.

This only seems reasonable given Taiwan is one of Australia's largest trading partners, and shares the mutual values of democracy, human rights, protection of intellectual property, and rule of law.

In the short term the Commonwealth of Australia should at least strengthen non formal ties with Taiwan, and broadening economic ties and support for expanded recognition. This could include support for increased representation in UN organizations including Interpol, the World Health Organisation, the International Civilian Aviation Organization, and promotion of participation in international sporting events under the name Taiwan. Expanded economic and cultural ties could include support for a free trade agreement with Taiwan and promotion of investment and technology exchanges and cooperation between our two countries.

These views should be taken into consideration for Australia's White Paper on foreign policy, as enhanced ties and support for Taiwan will only serve to demonstrate Australia's commitment to the values of democracy, free enterprise, and peace, within the international community.

I hope that my comments on foreign relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan) are beneficial to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in informing the development of Australia's international engagement agenda.

Yours Sincerely,

