

# The Taiwan Special Administrative Region (SAR)

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We need to get used to a simple fact: Taiwan is part of China. It is not a separate state and virtually no country or international body in the world recognises it as such. Everyone you ask on the mainland simply assumes that the island Taiwan is part of China. We should do likewise.

The Chinese government has been exceedingly patient on this one, allowing for a long time a type of double-speak. On the one hand, some people speak of 'Taiwan' as though it were a state, and yet governments around the world, as well as the UN, recognise the 'one China' principle. But time is up and the double-speak needs to wind down.

To get a handle on the situation, it is useful to return to some observations by the man-of-few-words, Deng Xiaoping.

The first is from 'An Idea For the Peaceful Reunification of the Chinese Mainland and Taiwan', from 1983. Deng observes:

The most important issue is the reunification of the motherland ... The idea is not that one party should swallow up the other. We hope the two Parties will work together for national reunification and both contribute to the Chinese nation.

We do not approve of "complete autonomy" for Taiwan. There must be limits to autonomy, and where there are limits, nothing can be complete. "Complete autonomy" means two Chinas, not one. Different systems may be practised, but it must be the People's Republic of China alone that represents China internationally. We recognize that the local government of Taiwan may have its own separate set of policies for domestic affairs. And although, as a special administrative region, Taiwan will have a local government, it will differ from local governments of other provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Provided the national interests are not impaired, it will enjoy certain powers of its own that the others do not possess.

A year later, Deng made the following observations during talks in Hong Kong and in preparation for its long overdue return to China. This is from his famous 'One Country, Two Systems' piece:

We are pursuing a policy of "one country, two systems". More specifically, this means that within the People's Republic of China, the mainland with its one billion people will maintain the socialist system, while Hong Kong and Taiwan continue under the capitalist system. In recent years, China has worked hard to overcome "Left" mistakes and has formulated its policies concerning all fields of endeavour in line with the principle of proceeding from reality and seeking truth from facts. After five and a half years things are beginning to pick up. It is against this background that we have proposed to solve the Hong Kong and Taiwan problems by allowing two systems to coexist in one country.

The concept of “one country, two systems” has been formulated according to China’s realities, and it has attracted international attention. China has not only the Hong Kong problem to tackle but also the Taiwan problem. What is the solution to these problems? As for the second, is it for socialism to swallow up Taiwan, or for the “Three People’s Principles” preached by Taiwan to swallow up the mainland? The answer is neither. If the problem cannot be solved by peaceful means, then it must be solved by force. Neither side would benefit from that. Reunification of the motherland is the aspiration of the whole nation. If it cannot be accomplished in 100 years, it will be in 1,000 years. As I see it, the only solution lies in practising two systems in one country. The world faces the choice between peaceful and non-peaceful means of solving disputes. One way or the other, they must be solved. New problems must be solved by new means. The successful settlement of the Hong Kong question may provide useful elements for the solution of international questions. Has any government in the history of the world ever pursued a policy as generous as China’s? Is there anything recorded in the history of capitalism about any Western country doing something similar? When we adopt the policy of “one country, two systems” to resolve the Hong Kong question, we are not acting on impulse or playing tricks but are proceeding from reality and taking into full account the past and present circumstances of Hong Kong.