



William G. Naggaga > Politics

Is Trump endangering Sino-American relations?

President-elect Donald Trump, true to form, has never been shy to speak out loud on issues other people in his position would approach with caution. More than any president-elect in recent history, Trump has made many controversial statements, months before he even takes office. The latest controversy and probably his biggest 'mis-statement' is to question America's continued commitment to a "One China Policy", which has been the cornerstone of Sino-US relations for 40 years.

In February 1972, president Richard Nixon, a man whose commendable legacy was unfortunately tarnished by the Watergate Scandal of June 17 1972, made an official visit to the Peoples Republic of China. It was the first by an American president since the establishment of the communist led Peoples Republic of China in 1949.

This trip was the turning point of Sino-American relations and taking place at the height of the cold war, only a republican president with Nixon's courage could pull it off without a backlash from American conservatives. It was the brain child of men like Dr Henry Kissinger, the Harvard University professor who served as Nixon's national security adviser and later secretary of state. It also needed collaborators at the highest level in China of men like premier Zhou Enlai who were trusted comrades of Chairman Mao Zedong, the supreme ruler of China.

That the negotiations that led to the visit were highly secretive was of no surprise as Dr Kissinger, in his book

in the 1970s entitled '*The White House Years*', explained.

Prior to Nixon's visit, the United States had suffered a major diplomatic setback in 1971, when the UN General Assembly voted to throw out the government of the so called Republic of China (ROC) which had taken refuge in Taiwan in 1949 after being overthrown by Mao Zedong. Between 1949 and 1971 the People's Republic of China was kept out of the United Nations and with the help of the US the ROC government illegally occupied China's seat.

I had the privilege of being a member of the Uganda delegation to the UN when the Peoples Republic of China assumed its rightful place in the United Nations Assembly. The US tried to promote a "Two China policy" but to no avail as Beijing rightly insisted that there was only "One China" and Taiwan was a part of it. The whole world sided with China and the US had no choice but to accept the "One China" policy which it finally did in 1979; though this was expected following Nixon's historic visit of 1972.

If the United States goes back on this policy, it risks destroying the anchor of Sino-American relations. The Chinese government has responded moderately though firmly to Trump's statement but the Chinese press was less forgiving. One accused Trump of being 'ignorant as a child'. Donald Trump should treat China with respect.

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Donald Trump should treat China with respect. Not only is it a nuclear power but the second largest economy in the world. The two countries are in a way 'indispensable enemies'.

pensable enemies'. China sells a lot of goods to the US and also owns a sizeable chunk of the humongous US debt. Tampering with delicately negotiated international agreements is not in the interest of the United States.

A little background to the Taiwan province of China. Taiwan, an island off the coast of mainland China was originally known as Formosa.

It has a history dating back to over 3000 BC when it was settled by Aborigines. Over the last 500 years it was occupied by the Dutch, Japanese and Chinese, back and forth. Before World War II, Imperial Japan occupied it but after Japan's defeat in WWII, it reverted back to China and has since then been an integral part of China.

When Mao Zedong's communists overran mainland China in 1949, the Koumintang government led by Chiang Kai-Shek retreated to Taiwan. The government in Beijing has left it to govern itself and enjoy almost full autonomy as long as it remained an integral part of China.

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