

# What is the one-China policy?

A carefully worded fudge that means very little but accomplishes a lot - March 14, 2017 by J.M., *THE ECONOMIST*

“THERE is only one China in the world, and Taiwan is part of China,” declared China’s foreign minister, Wang Yi, at a news conference in Beijing on March 8th. That is not quite the way that Taiwan sees it. At least, Taiwan does not accept that it is part of the People’s Republic of China, with its capital in Beijing. So why then does America say it upholds a “one-China policy”? And why were Taiwanese officials relieved when Donald Trump, having earlier challenged the “one China” notion, expressed support for it in a phone call with his Chinese counterpart, President Xi Jinping, in February?

It is hard to argue that Taiwan is anything other than a separate country. The island has its own, democratically elected, president. It has its own laws and its own armed forces. But its official name is the Republic of China (ROC). It has a notional claim to the area that is now described as the People’s Republic. That is a legacy of the Chinese civil war, which resulted in the overthrow of the ROC by Mao Zedong in 1949. Its defeated government fled to the Chinese province of Taiwan, where it continued to call itself the government of all China. Since then there have been, in effect, two Chinas, both claiming the same territory (unlike the People’s Republic, the ROC also includes Mongolia within its theoretical borders, but it treats it as a different country).

The government in Beijing, however, abhors the idea of two Chinas. It upholds what it calls a “one-China principle”: that it alone represents China, and Taiwan is part of that (Communist-run) China. This presented a problem in the 1970s, when America wanted to establish diplomatic ties with the People’s Republic and seek its help in the cold war against the Soviet Union. The Communists wanted America to accept its one-China principle, but America did not want to turn its back entirely on capitalist Taiwan, which it had hitherto recognised as the rightful China. So it devised a “one-China policy”, which was simply to acknowledge that both sides of the Taiwan Strait recognised the existence of only one China (their own). The policy did not clarify which side had the right to rule Taiwan. It was a carefully worded fudge, which the Communists accepted. As a result, America and the People’s Republic forged a relationship that eventually allowed China’s economy to boom (and others, including America and Taiwan, to benefit from that, too).

Many people in Taiwan are now sceptical about the one-China idea. They want the island to be separate from the mainland forever. But they are also fearful of provoking the Communists. China’s military power has grown enormously in recent years. If America were to abandon its one-China policy, and acknowledge Taiwan’s independence, there is a considerable risk that Communist China would attack the island and that America, feeling obliged to defend it, would be dragged into a war. Hence no government was sorry when Mr Trump decided to tell Mr Xi that America still believed in one China. Taiwan will only hope that the one China in question is not just the People’s Republic.

# Xi Urges Peaceful Unification Of China And Taiwan, But Won't Rule Out Using Force - ASHLEY WESTERMAN, *THE ECONOMIST*

A Taiwan independent from mainland China is not an option, and no person or party can stop the trend toward "unification," Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a policy speech Wednesday.

While Beijing would seek a peaceful "reunification" with the self-governing island of over 23.5 million people, The Associated Press reports Xi said China wouldn't rule out using force if necessary. "We are willing to create a vast space for peaceful unification, but we will never leave any room for any sort of Taiwan independence separatist activities," he said speaking at Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

Xi went on to say "independence would only bring profound disaster for Taiwan" and ensured the island a bright future under a one-country, two- system framework, according to Reuters.

The Chinese president's urging for the two to come to the table came during a speech marking the 40th anniversary of the "Message of Compatriots in Taiwan" when, on Jan. 1, 1979, China offered to open up communications and stop military action against the island. As NPR's Shanghai Correspondent Rob Schmitz has reported previously, Taiwan split from China in 1949 when the U.S.-supported Chinese nationalist leadership fled after losing a civil war to communist forces.

Then-president of Taiwan Chiang Ching-Kuo turned down Beijing's olive branch in 1979, reports Reuters, and later that year came out with the "Three-Noes Policy": no contact, no compromise and no negotiation with China.

Decades later, China has again been rebuffed.

In response to Xi's speech, current president since 2016, Tsai Ing-wen said Wednesday that Taiwan would not accept Beijing's offered arrangement of "one country, two systems," reports Reuters. In her own speech just the day before, Tsai, who is member of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, urged China to respect Taiwan's democratic values.

More than 70 percent of Taiwanese believe Taiwan is already an independent country, according to an analysis done by *The Washington Post*. Unification with China has also become unpopular, the *Post* reports only one-third of Taiwanese citizens want to be part of China against — a drop from 60 percent who supported is in 2003.

Only about 20 countries across the globe recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation, which means different governments from Latin America to Africa have become drawn into the long-running diplomatic spat over the years. The U.S., which does not recognize Taiwan as independent from China, is no exception. While the State Department says the U.S. enjoys "a robust unofficial relationship" with Taiwan, right after his inauguration President Donald Trump called Xi and promised that Washington would stick to the "One China" doctrine. Then just a little over a year later, the U.S. dedicated a new complex for the American Institute in Taiwan, which has long functioned as the de facto U.S. Embassy in Taiwan, NPR previously reported.

Though he didn't name any country specifically, Xi warned Wednesday against foreign interference in China's "Taiwan issue," saying family matters should be resolved by family members, reports the AP.

# Tibetan Sovereignty Has a Long, Disputed History

April 11, 2008 – The Bryant Park Project, *NPR*

Protesters this week have dogged the Olympic torch on its way to Beijing for the 2008 summer games. Over and over, they shout, "China out of Tibet! China out of Tibet!"

Many Tibetans believe China stole their independence more than 50 years ago, when the communist government staked what it calls a rightful and sacred claim on the tiny mountain nation.

As the protests continue, the Dalai Lama — Tibet's spiritual leader, arrives in Seattle on Friday for a conference on compassion. The Dalai Lama lives in exile in India. He says he does want more autonomy for his homeland but insists he's not seeking full independence from the Chinese government. Chinese officials accuse him of encouraging recent demonstrations against Chinese rule in Tibet — the largest and the most sustained in almost two decades.

The conflict has deep roots, says Robert Barnett, director of the modern Tibetan studies program at Columbia University and author of *Lhasa: Streets with Memories*.

China and Tibet tell the story differently. Chinese leaders used to say their claim on Tibet dates back a thousand years. More recently, reports Barnett, the date it to the 13th century. Tibetans disagree. "Tibetans ... say there were relations between the two, quite close relations, but that Tibet never lost its independence," he says.

## Tibetan Areas Rocked By Protest, Chinese Crackdown

January 26, 2012 Frank Langfitt - *NPR*

Frustrated Tibetans this week staged some of the largest protests against Chinese rule in nearly four years. Chinese security forces responded by opening fire on demonstrators, killing up to four and wounding more than 30, according to Tibetan rights groups.

The demonstrations were inspired — in part — by a disturbing new trend in Tibetan dissent: Tibetan people lighting themselves on fire.

By most accounts, this week's violence began with leaflets that were distributed in a Tibetan region of China's far-western Sichuan province. At least one leaflet urged people to protest Chinese rule by not celebrating Chinese New Year, which began Monday.

The leaflet also contained something certain to stir strong feelings.

"An unknown Tibetan author was saying he or she was preparing to set fire to themselves," says Kate Saunders, who works with the International Campaign for Tibet in London.

Since last March, 16 Tibetans have doused themselves with fuel and set themselves aflame to protest China's restrictive political and religious policies.

A video posted online last year shows a Tibetan teenager lying on a street, his blackened body still smoking. Women scream and one repeats the name of Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama.

In part to mourn the loss of these people, hundreds staged public protests earlier this week. Saunders describes what happened when Tibetans gathered in a public square in Seda County on Tuesday.

"Troops attempted to lock down the area. Troops fired at the Tibetans. It was a scene of terrible panic and fear," Saunders says. "At least one Tibetan was shot dead; others were shot. We heard from Tibetan sources that after this occurred, the square was covered in blood and there were tear gas canisters left on the scene."

### **Tibetans' Growing Desperation**

China's government insists Tibetans started the violence. Xinhua, the government's official news agency, says a Tibetan mob attacked a police station with "gasoline bottles," knives and stones. Xinhua said 14 police were injured.

Confirming the facts is extremely difficult. Chinese security forces have blocked roads and prevented reporters from entering the region for months. NPR made 30 calls to hotels, restaurants and other businesses in the area with no answer — suggesting the government is blocking outside calls as well.

Lobsang Sangay, the prime minister of Tibet's government-in-exile in India, says the self-immolations over the past year mark a distressing turn for the Tibetan freedom movement in China.

"It's really sad. It's really tragic that Tibetans are resorting to such extreme measures," Sangay says. "Given the choice, anyone would like to live. No one wants to die."

Robert Barnett, director of the modern Tibetan studies program at Columbia University, says Tibetans are desperate, particularly inside some monasteries and nunneries.

Since 2000, China has imposed particularly harsh conditions on some Tibetan areas in Sichuan province, according to Barnett.

He says those conditions include "attacks on the Dalai Lama personally, demanding monks denounce the Dalai Lama, so they've lost the support and patience of people in those areas."

### **China Shows No Signs Of Change**

China's government blames the unrest and self-immolations on the Dalai Lama. The Communist Party says he encourages the suicides to foment rebellion — something the Dalai Lama has denied. Earlier this week, U.S. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland criticized China's latest crackdown.

"We have repeatedly urged the Chinese government to address its counterproductive policies in the Tibetan areas, which have created tensions and threatened the unique religious, cultural and linguistic identity of the Tibetan people," Nuland said.

China shows no sign of changing its approach. Tibetan activists say the areas where the protests occurred remain under lockdown. Still, they say they expect more demonstrations in the coming days.

# For Native Americans, Land Is More Than Just the Ground Beneath Their Feet

By Kelli Mosteller, *The Atlantic* on September 17, 2016.

Thousands of Native American protesters are currently fighting against the proposed construction of the Dakota Access pipeline in North Dakota. They are doing more than just trying to protect their land. They are fighting for their culture—and, as the Ojibwe activist Winona LaDuke argues, their future. Advances on Indian lands have always been, and continue to be, attacks on indigenous values. Non-tribal governments and corporations with interests in tribal land have not slowed such attacks in recent years, but members of indigenous communities throughout the United States have rallied new resistance. Some, like the Standing Rock Sioux in North Dakota, are challenging corporate incursions on their treaty lands and water. Others are fighting something slightly more subtle: renewed calls to change the ownership structure of Native lands.

Conflicts over the use and ownership of Native lands are not new. Land has been at the center of virtually every significant interaction between Natives and non-Natives since the earliest days of European contact with the indigenous peoples of North America. By the 19th century, federal Indian land policies divided communal lands among individual tribal members in a proposed attempt to make them into farmers. The result instead was that struggling tribes were further dispossessed of their land. In recent decades, tribes, corporations, and the federal government have fought over control of Native land and resources in contentious protests and legal actions, including the Oak Flat, the San Francisco Peaks Controversy, and the Keystone XL pipeline.

For most Americans, land is money, and land ownership constitutes power. For individuals who are not familiar with tribal cultures and histories, it is easy to assume that the ability to make money off of land by leasing it to extractive industries or selling it off is a natural path to personal success and therefore prosperity for the community at large. Make no mistake: For Native people, a link exists between landownership and success, but it is much more complex and intimate than the personal ability to exploit or sell land for financial gain. Not all communities are facing the same kind of crises, but almost all recognize the importance of land to cultural preservation. Whether in our ancestral homelands, such as those where the Lakota have stopped the construction of the pipeline, or in areas of Oklahoma, where more than two dozen tribes were forcefully placed during the 19th century, protecting our tribal land bases is an intrinsic part of the formula that will lead to greater prosperity and success for individuals and tribes in Indian country.

That is the reason why protests to defend treaty-protected lands, like the current protests over the Dakota Access pipeline, are so important. It is also the reason why thousands of Native people, representing scores of tribes, have made the journey to North Dakota to protest the pipeline that threatens both sites that are sacred to the Sioux people and the drinking water for those living on the nearby reservation. They are there to speak for their ancestors who are buried on those sites. They are there to speak for themselves and their right to preserve their ceremonial sites and drinking water. And they are there to speak for the subsequent generations who will have to live with the results of the pipeline's construction.

Proponents of privatization, be they corporations or well-intentioned free-market reformers, are disregarding Indian culture and values. The author Naomi Schaefer Riley, for instance, recently published an article in *The Atlantic* suggesting that Native American communities suffer from economic devastation and social inequity due to the federal policy of holding Native American lands in trust. Her solution to this policy, which she argues has stymied individual success and contributed to endemic poverty in Native American communities, is the resurrection of a much older, failed solution: the redistribution of lands collectively held by tribes to individuals.

Reform-minded authors like Schaefer Riley begin making their case by citing a number of terrifying statistics about poverty on reservations, violence against Native women, and teen suicide rates, among others. All are largely factual. Schaefer Riley's solution, however, creates a false dichotomy, suggesting that success is limited to either the individual or the tribe. She claims that tribal citizens' inability to privately own, and therefore capitalize on, tribal lands, "prevents American Indians from reaping numerous benefits." This is a narrow interpretation of the resources and policies that would benefit Natives, and it disregards the cultural and spiritual values at the core of Native American tribal societies.

This frame of reference also fails to acknowledge that Native communities face the arduous task of overcoming these social challenges as a direct result of centuries of federal policies that disassembled traditional social structures, moved entire communities, and attempted to dismantle tribal sovereignty. Virtually every one of those policies had an end goal of eliminating tribal rights to land and advanced a non-Native understanding of how to properly “use” land.

While Schaefer Riley is correct that social problems persist on some reservations, she neglects to consider that since the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 and the Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1994, hundreds of tribes have consistently shown improvement when allowed to manage their own affairs. Self-governance means that tribal governments decide where and how to allocate resources for certain programs, such as health care via funding from the Indian Health Service, to meet the needs of their community. Although more needs to be done, the solution proposed by Schaefer Riley would constitute an assault on tribal lands, not a path to prosperity.

On reservation lands, a tribe decides what type of infrastructure its community needs; this can include health clinics, schools, housing for low income families and elders, cultural centers, and a wide range of enterprises. My own tribe, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, is the largest employer in Pottawatomie County, a relatively rural area of central Oklahoma. We provide jobs to more than 2,400 people, Natives and non-Natives, in our government administration offices and more than 20 businesses. This is only possible because we have tribally owned land on which to develop and operate enterprises. Across Indian Country, tribes are often one of the few sources of jobs in areas far from urban centers, and they are increasingly at the forefront of industries like tourism and green energy.

Tribes should also be able to determine what constitutes success for themselves, and have recently done so by pursuing policy initiatives that recognize tribal sovereignty on their land, not by focusing on private property rights that would break it apart. In 2012 Congress passed a critical piece of legislation that provides tribes an avenue to greater sovereignty and will lead to more investment and economic development in Indian country. The Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act gives participating tribes the authority to lease reservation, or trust land, for residential or business purposes without further approval by the federal government. This advancement in self-governance means that tribes are able to determine the housing or commercial projects that are the most needed in their communities and the best way to utilize their land base. It also means they have more direct control of tribal assets, which makes them better able to shape their own future. Unlike land privatization, the HEARTH Act keeps the tribally owned trust or reservation land intact, and therefore does not negate the federal government’s trust responsibilities for those properties.

Beyond such policies, efforts to help Native Americans gain socio-economic success should start by looking at what holds specific tribes back from taking advantage of avenues for more self-governance and economic development. Some tribes face daunting challenges that present a barrier to pursuing economic development projects. Instead, they are combating life-threatening social and emotional upheaval rooted in cultural loss as a result of wars, genocide, forced removals, separation from ancestral homelands, children taken away to boarding schools, and other experiences that negatively impacted tribal communities across generations. Brutal federal policies that focused on assimilation pushed Native people to accept a narrow concept of what it means to be a successful American. Recovering, preserving, and teaching Native cultural traditions gives community members direction, purpose, and a sense of identity. It also instills generational wisdom, encourages respect for elders, and reinforces familial responsibilities. Only when a tribe restores its cultural riches can it turn its attention to financial gains.

There are ways to address economic and social challenges for Native Americans within a tribal system that don’t undermine the fundamental nature of the tribe or destroy the land base necessary to create a strong and thriving community. Native people across the country are steadily making strides toward that goal, and their successes are a testament to the courage and resilience of their communities. We will heal our broken communities from the ground up, not by selling or exploiting the ground beneath our feet.