



Session 9

The United States, China, and Taiwan: Strategic Ambiguity or Incoherence?

Since a 1972 joint communique with the People's Republic of China that acknowledged "that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China", the United States has followed a one-China principle. In the intervening years, the US has maintained a position of 'strategic ambiguity' vis-à-vis the Taiwan question. However, the long-standing policy appears to be shifting, with US President Biden's remarks that the US would defend Taiwan in the event of an attack and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei being the most recent manifestations of this shift. While the US one China policy has been remarkably stable over the years, as tensions continue to build over Taiwan and 'strategic ambiguity' increasingly appears to be being set aside, the risk of direct conflict between the US and China is increasing. This session will discuss the factors behind the US Taiwan policy and the implications for the future of U.S.-China relations.

Discussion Themes

- **Does Biden's Taiwan policy differ from that of his predecessors? Has the US strategic position vis-à-vis Taiwan and China actually become clearer?**
- **What drives China's aggressive approach to Taiwan? What factors could lead to a change in China's strategic outlook?**
- **What are the prospects for US-China relations under the Biden administration? How might regional actors, particularly Taiwan, be affected?**
- **Why does the United States care about Taiwan? What lies ahead for China and the US after Pelosi's Visit?**