



*Check Against Delivery*

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR CRISPIN GREY-JOHNSON  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GAMBIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT**

**THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE  
DURING THE 60<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON**

**A PROACTIVE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN  
MAINTAINING PEACE IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT**

**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK  
13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005**

**Mr. Chairman,**

I have the honour to refer to a letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 2005, addressed to the Secretary General, requesting that a supplementary item entitled “A proactive role of the United Nations in Maintaining Peace in the Taiwan Strait”, be inscribed in the agenda of the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly. This request is made in accordance with Rule 14 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, and is supported by the following member states:

Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Guatemala, Malawi, The Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

Annexed to our letter are an explanatory memorandum, and a draft resolution for your consideration and appropriate action.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Our request is a very simple one, and one that we feel compelled to make at this time, when the whole world is focused on ways of improving the international system in order to render it more attuned to present-day imperatives for peace, security and development. Those imperatives call for more, not less cooperation among all nations of the world. They call for more, not less inclusion of all sovereign entities in the global system of governance. They call for reconciliation and the promotion of good neighbourliness. It is in this light that we view the present alarming situation in the Taiwan Strait. We say “alarming”, because of the astronomical military expansion by the People’s Republic of China, and a dangerous legislative back-up in the enactment of the “anti-secession law” which provides the legal justification for an invasion of an independent, sovereign state, Taiwan. This is a serious development especially as it involves a permanent member of the Security Council, the custodian of global peace and security.

**Mr. Chairman,**

According to the US Department of Defence, China’s military budget has increased at double-digit yearly rates in the last ten years. It has deployed more than 700 missiles of improved range and accuracy, targeting Taiwan. It conducts regular military exercises simulating the invasion of Taiwan, and has openly stated that it is prepared to settle the Taiwan question militarily. The anti-secession law that was passed in March last year, provides for a settlement of the dispute between the two countries through “non-peaceful means and other necessary measures”, in other words, through war. This is a clear violation of the charter, and what is more, it is a violation by none other than a permanent member of the Security Council. In addition, it is certain that an invasion of Taiwan will

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trigger a response from other members of the UN family, which response will most definitely lead to very serious consequences for peace in the entire Asia-Pacific region and indeed, globally.

The escalation of tension is reverberating beyond the Asia-Pacific region. The United States of America has been threatened with nuclear attack should it ever “interfere” over the Taiwan question. Japan has also been the subject of similar threats. Last year, the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore warned that “a conflict across the Taiwan Strait will have dire consequences not just for the involved parties, but the entire region, and for many years”.

Many analysts of the situation across the Taiwan Strait have predicted a huge conflagration if the issue is not resolved through peaceful means. Just this month, a Professor of Political Science at MIT said that “the Taiwan Strait is one of the world’s most dangerous spots, because policy misjudgment or a mere accident could result in war with China”.

Another professor of Political Science and International Business at the University of Michigan, this year, chipped in the following:

“One of the greatest dangers to international security today is the possibility of a military confrontation between China and Taiwan that leads to a war between China and the United States. Such a war would be not only tragic, but also unnecessary, since it would result from a failure of diplomacy – fought because a place that has long declared itself independent was attacked for doing so again. In the case of the Taiwan Strait, the dangers of such a conflict are so clear and the potential consequences so dire, that all three major players should summon the courage to think creatively about how to prevent it.”

James F. Hoge, Editor of Foreign Affairs Journal has also warned that:

“the flashpoints for hostilities – Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula and divided Kashmir – have defied peaceful resolution. Any of them could explode into large-scale warfare that would make the current Middle East confrontations seem like police operations. In short, the stakes in Asia are huge...”

Another set of writers observed recently, that

“... the Taiwan Strait remains the locus of one of the most dangerous military confrontations in the world.”

The Economist also wrote:

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“China...has positioned large numbers of truck-mounted, short-range ballistics missiles that could target American bases in Japan or Guam, about 1,500 miles from Taiwan. And it is working to develop land-attack cruise missiles, which could be fired across the 100-mile strait and penetrate even the most sophisticated anti-missile defence that Taiwan is acquiring...”.

Another writer describes the Taiwan Strait as “the most dangerous place on earth”.

Equally, many member states have expressed concern over the growing tensions across the Taiwan Strait. In March this year, the US House of Representatives adopted a resolution in which it expressed the House’s grave concern over the escalation of tension following the adoption of the anti-secession law. At about the same time, the EU also passed a resolution, condemning the anti-secession law. It described the law as a violation of international law, and an act that will certainly not lead to China’s declared objective of “peaceful national reconciliation”.

***Mr. Chairman,***

But for the constraint of time, I could go on and on with evidence to show that the problem of the Taiwan Strait is one that is very serious, and which calls for urgent attention by the international community. The UN should not wait until it is too late before embarking on measures to redress the situation. Let us not repeat Rwanda and Bosnia.

We therefore call on the General Assembly to take up its responsibility and act in accordance with its mandate, to formally address this glaring threat to international peace and security.

We also call for speedy action to engage the two parties in a process that will ensure that the dispute is ultimately resolved peacefully, and to the satisfaction of all. Our initiative is consistent with the present concerns of the United Nations, as it is with those expressed in the Secretary-General’s report, entitled, “In larger freedoms: toward development, security and human rights for all”.

We are convinced that if this issue were taken up by the general membership of the UN, a way would be found of putting an effective peace process in motion that will remove this threat to the peace of the world, once and for all. That is why we request that you inscribe in the agenda of the 60<sup>th</sup> session, a new agenda item entitled, “A Proactive Role of the United Nations in Maintaining Peace in the Taiwan Strait”.

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Let me conclude by assuring you, Mr. Chairman, that we are not acting against the interests of any member state. Rather we are acting in the interest of peace across the Taiwan Strait, throughout the Asia-Pacific region, and, indeed in the whole world. It is in that spirit that we come to you with this request. We look forward to your sympathetic and favourable reaction to it.

I thank you for your attention.

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