Asian foreign policy

U.S. shows 'lack of sensitivity,' professor says

By Richard Pelham
Gamecock Staff Writer

The style of U.S. Asian foreign policy "shows a lack of sensitivity to the problem of face, style, manners and decorum which are valued very highly in that part of the world," according to Dr. Richard L. Walker of USC's Institute of International Studies. Walker, holder of the James F. Byrnes Chair in International Relations, recently attended the Seventh Annual Sino-American Conference on Mainland China held in Taipei, Taiwan.

"Normalization" of relations with China particularly concerns America's Asian allies and represents a very real security danger to Japan and Taiwan, Walker said.

THE U.S. should improve relations with mainland China, including ambassadorial relations, Walker said, but not at the expense of breaking relations with Taiwan. "The real problem in talking about normalization is the security of the 17 million people in Taiwan," he added.

"The Chinese have stated in public that once relations are normalized, how they treat Taiwan is their own business," Walker said. "If they want to use force, that is their own business — it would just be a police action."

The island of Taiwan is threatened not only by a military specter, but also by an economic one. Walker said he believes if Taiwan is dropped by the U.S., "Peking could draw an economic noose around the island of Taiwan, strangling it economically and bringing it to its knees without ever firing a shot."

WALKER SAID the conference delegates, which included representatives from several East Asian nations including Japan and Taiwan, discussed several salient points. One of these was the new awareness in the western Pacific of the interdependence that has been developed during the last 25 years, particularly in Japan. "They (Asians) are very sensitive about any insecurities or threats to security that might destabilize the economic miracles that have taken place in Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan," Walker emphasized.

Walker said the Japanese delegates were especially perplexed at the "give-away" direction of U.S. policy in meeting Chinese conditions. They (Japanese) feel that any abandonment of our security agreements with Taiwan would undercut U.S. credibility and the security arrangement that the U.S. has with Japan, he added.

A consensus was reached at the conference, reflected in criticism of the American tendency to meet "Peking conditions" for normalization. Walker said he believes the U.S. is preparing to steer a new policy toward China, pointing to the dropping of diplomatic bonds with Taiwan.

"MY MAJOR concern," Walker said, "is that a fair number of people in the State Department are not going to ask any price. You have to get a 'quid pro quo' when you give something away."

U.S. press coverage of our new ties with Peking was also roundly criticized by Dr. Walker as well. "We very seldom hear about Peking meeting our conditions for the extension of diplomatic recognition," Walker said. "What about greater press freedom for U.S. reporters in China and greater mobility for all foreign visitors in China?"

Dr. Walker is a specialist in the history, politics and military strategy of East Asia.

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