China anger as US amends wording on Taiwan independence

The US State Department has dropped a statement from its website which stated that Washington does not support Taiwan's independence - a move which has sparked anger in China.

China said the revision "sends a wrong... signal to separatist forces advocating for Taiwan independence", and asked the US to "correct its mistakes".The department's fact sheet on Taiwan-US relations earlier included the phrase "we do not support Taiwan independence" - this was removed last week as part of what it said was a "routine" update. A US spokesperson was quoted,

China sees self-governed Taiwan as a breakaway province that will eventually be part of the country, and has not ruled out the use of force to achieve this.But many Taiwanese consider themselves to be part of a separate nation, although most are in favour of maintaining the status quo where Taiwan neither declares independence from China nor unites with it

Commenting on the changes, a spokesperson at the American Institute in Taiwan - the US' de facto embassy on the island - told local media that the fact sheet had been "updated to inform the general public about [the US'] unofficial relationship with Taiwan".We have long stated that we oppose any unilateral changes to the status quo from either side."

On Sunday, Taiwan's Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung thanked the US for what he called "positive, Taiwan-friendly wordings This sends a wrong and serious signal to separatist forces advocating for Taiwan independence and is another example of the U.S. stubbornly persisting with its wrong policy of using Taiwan to contain China," said Chinese spokesperson Guo Jiakun.

"We urge the US to immediately correct its mistakes [and] earnestly adhere to the One China principle."