

Liang-Gates Talks: Chinese, U.S. defense chiefs hold first phone conversation

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□□BEIJING, April 10 (Xinhua) — Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie and U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates held their first phone conversation on Thursday, the Chinese Defense Ministry said in a news release.

□□The establishment of the direct phone link between the two sides marks an important step in the two countries' strategic and long-term interests, Liang told his U.S. counterpart.

□□Liang expressed confidence that the opening of the direct line will improve coordination, mutual trust and relations between the Chinese and U.S. militaries.

□□On the Taiwan issue, he hoped that the United States will abide by its repeated commitments to adhere to the one-China policy and the three Sino-U.S. joint communiques.

□□Liang urged the United States to cease arms sales and military links with Taiwan in a bid to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits and the overall interests of the Sino-U.S. relations.

□□Gates congratulated Liang on his appointment as Defense Minister of China last month. He hailed the opening of the direct line as a good beginning, seeing it as a new opportunity to enhance consultations and cooperation between the two sides.

□□He expressed satisfaction with the development of relations between the U.S. and Chinese militaries, hoping for further exchanges and cooperation.

□□Gates reassured Liang that the United States will adhere to the one-China policy.

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