

U.S., China open telephone hotline

by UPI

BEIJING -- U.S. and Chinese defense ministers held talks for the first time Thursday on their new telephone hotline. The telephone chat between Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie and U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates marked an important step in the two countries' strategic and long-term interests, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported, quoting the Chinese defense ministry. The Pentagon was quoted as saying the communication link was "a reflection that the overall U.S.-China defense relationship continues to improve." Referring to Taiwan, the Xinhua report said Liang expressed hope the United States would abide by its commitments to adhere to the one-China policy, and urged an end to U.S. arms sales and military links with Taiwan. Gates was quoted as telling Liang the United States will adhere to the one-China policy. He also was quoted as offering his congratulations to Liang on his appointment as defense minister last month. The decision to set up a telephone link between the two countries was taken last September.

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