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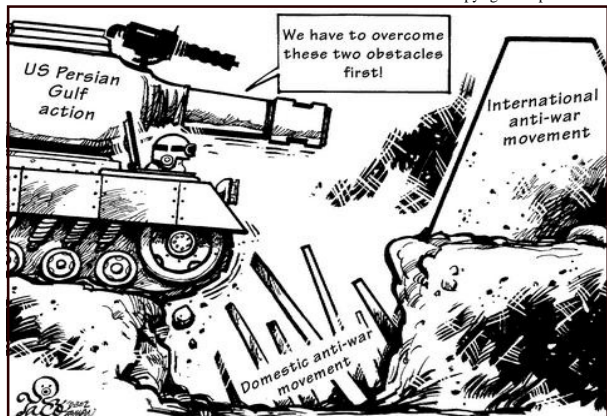
The Iraq war *Implications for Taiwan*

As the storm clouds for the Iraq war are gathering, people around the world wonder what its consequences might be. While most people would welcome the removal of Saddam Hussein and his dictatorial regime, there are also many who oppose a war, and believe that alternative ways could be found.

In Taiwan, the primary concern is the effect on the precarious balance across the Taiwan Strait: will China take advantage of the confusion caused by two major crises around the world — Iraq and North Korea — and make a move against Taiwan? Or will the United States — in its eagerness to get Chinese support for its position on Iraq — trade away part of its security guarantees for Taiwan? Vigilance is warranted on both points.

At the same time, Taiwan must work hard to reduce its vulnerabilities in case a war breaks out. It is dependent on the Middle East for 70 percent of its crude oil. This needs to be reduced through supply diversification and energy conservation.

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US tank advancing towards Gulf action: "We have to overcome these two obstacles first!"

The Bush doctrine and China policy

By Li Thian-Hok, a prominent member of the Taiwanese-American community

This article first appeared in the Taipei Times of 15 January 2003

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The “National Security Strategy of the United States of America” was published by the Bush administration in September 2002. While commentaries on the report have dwelled on the contentious strategy of pre-emptive strikes against terrorists or rogue states, the intent to remain the world’s unchallenged superpower and the right to act unilaterally when US interests require it, the 33-page document actually represents a new, comprehensive strategic vision designed to meet the challenges of the post Sept. 11 world. The US seeks a “balance of power that favors human freedom,” will fight terrorists and tyrants and “will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers.”

During the presidential campaign, Bush regarded China as a strategic competitor. Now China is to be treated as a partner in the global war against terrorism and in promoting peace in the Asia-Pacific region. This shift in America’s stance is based on the hope that *“In time, China will find that social and political freedom is the only source of ... greatness. The power of market principles and the WTO’s requirements for transparency and accountability will advance openness and the rule of law in China.”* But what if these assumptions turn out to be mere wishful thinking?

To be sure, Beijing has presented a more friendly face to Washington since Sept. 11. To become an economically prosperous and militarily powerful nation, China needs access to the lucrative US market and American technology and capital. But once China evolves into a dominant hegemon of Asia and develops a credible nuclear strike capability to threaten the US homeland, what can the US do if Beijing then deviates from the path of democracy and peace? China is not threatened by terrorists and rogue states as the US is.

China does not share America’s values of liberty. In fact, the fourth generation leaders of the CCP are determined to monopolize power by strengthening the state’s tools of repression and by co-opting the rising entrepreneurial class. China’s entry into the WTO may enhance the country’s understanding of rule by law but will not necessarily convince the country’s rulers to implement the rule of law, because the latter would impede the privilege of China’s princelings and the rampant corruption which permeates the CCP cadres. The rule of law will also be incompatible with the party’s authoritarian rule.

The US should not underestimate the extent of China's proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to rogue states. China's transfer of nuclear weapons and missile technologies to Pakistan is largely responsible for today's dangerous nuclear standoff between Pakistan and India. US intelligence officials report that China shipped 20 tons of tributyl phosphate (TBP) to North Korea in early December. TBP can be used in extracting material for nuclear bombs from spent nuclear-reactor fuel (Bill Gertz, "China ships North Korea ingredients for nuclear arms," **Washington Times** National Weekly Edition, Dec. 23 to Dec. 29, 2002). The chemical can also be used to prepare uranium for the weapons process. China's transfer of the TBP to North Korea is particularly ominous in view of a series of related, subsequent events.

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In October, Pyongyang announced that it was secretly developing uranium enrichment capability to make fuel for nuclear weapons and it planned to restart three reactors at the Nyongbyong complex, 80km north of Pyongyang. Then on Dec. 22, North Korea began removing UN seals and surveillance cameras from nuclear facilities and unsealed a spent fuel storage chamber which holds 8,000 irradiated fuel rods at Nyongbyong.



**US military dividing its attention over two wars
on two fronts?**

The CIA believes North Korea may have already produced one or two nuclear weapons. Experts say North Korea could quickly extract enough plutonium from the spent fuel rods to make five or six nuclear weapons within months. Tension has risen further since a defiant North Korea expelled UN inspectors (from the International Atomic Energy Agency) in late December and fired up a nuclear reactor that had been mothballed since 1994. In mid-January 2003, Pyongyang withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The Chinese sale of TBP to North Korea could well mean that, despite its public statements that China favored a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, Beijing is unwilling to help Washington resolve the North Korean nuclear problem without a quid pro quo.

While it is hard to fathom Beijing's intent, China may actually be exacerbating the crisis to enhance its influence over North Korea and to gain diplomatic leverage against the US. Even while preoccupied with its homeland security and the impending war on Iraq, Washington cannot afford to take its eyes off Beijing's miscreant conduct.

The Bush doctrine proclaims that "freedom is the nonnegotiable demand of human dignity; the birthright of every person — in every civilization." The US promises to "stand beside any nation determined to build a better future by seeking the rewards of liberty for its people." Yet the Bush administration has of late been muted in its criticism of China's often inhumane treatment of dissidents and religious practitioners. China continues to threaten and intimidate Taiwan by building up its military capability in a bid to force Taiwan to surrender its sovereignty and democracy.

The PRC applies political, economic and diplomatic pressure to force Taiwan to accede to unification on China's terms. Beijing even has a strategy of working with America to subdue Taiwan. While the "National Security Strategy" commends Taiwan for its democratization and affirms US commitment to the self-defense of the nation under the Taiwan Relations Act, the Bush administration has recently opposed Congressional efforts to legislate closer cooperation between the militaries of the US and Taiwan, including consultation regarding Taiwan's national defense and exchange of flag officers.

The goals of counter-terrorism and freedom may contradict each other. The "National Security Strategy" provides no coherent guide on how to resolve the conflict. If Americans are perceived as willing to trade the freedom of others to secure their own safety, the US will have a difficult time gathering any significant "coalition of the willing."

The "National Security Strategy" does not address the long-range threats to US national security posed by the rise of China. It simply states "We welcome the emergence of a strong, peaceful and prosperous China." The US needs to pay greater attention to China's deeply ingrained sense of aggrieved nationalism. Every schoolchild in China is indoctrinated in the country's 150 years of humiliation at the hands of the Western barbarians and the need to seek retribution and restore the Middle Kingdom to its rightful place as a respected global power. The US should be vigilant about the large gap between the sanguine rhetoric of the Bush doctrine and the cold reality of China's compulsive expansionism.

Presidential elections coming up in 2004 “Green camp” versus “Blue camp”

In January and February 2003, the two opposing political camps in Taiwan made their first moves in preparation for the March 2004 presidential elections in Taiwan. In January, President Chen shifted some of his key aides, ensuring that he would have a good “fighting machine” for the upcoming elections, hoping for a re-election. A key move was the appointment of Mr. Lee Ying-yuan as deputy secretary-general of the DPP. Although Mr. Lee lost the mayoral race against KMT Taipei mayor Ma Ying-jeou, he is considered one of the DPP’s strongest campaigners.

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Another move was that of current National Security Council (NSC) Secretary-General Chiou I-jen to the position of Presidential Office secretary-general. Mr. Chiou is regarded as the DPP’s top strategist and a seasoned politician with experience in important posts in government and the party.



Lien Chan - James Soong cooperation: "The Lunar New Year is over guys. Stop fighting for the lead role."

In mid-February, the “blue camp” (the KMT and PFP opposition parties) made its major move, when the PFP’s

James Soong agreed to play second fiddle to the KMT’s Lien Chan and serve as Mr. Lien’s vice-presidential candidate. Mr. Soong is generally considered a much stronger candidate than Mr. Lien: he won 36.8% of the vote in the 2000 presidential elections, against a mere 23.1% for Mr. Lien. The general expectation is thus that this coalition will be fraught with internal bickering and will not last. On the following pages is a commentary from the Taipei Times.

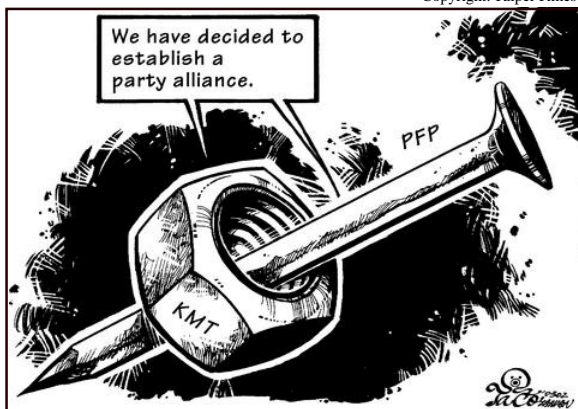
Thanks for the nuts, but ... the bolts?

This editorial first appeared in the Taipei Times on 16 February 2003

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The on-again-off-again relationship between KMT Chairman Lien Chan and PFP Chairman James Soong hit a new milestone when they declared the establishment of a KMT-PFP alliance on Valentine's Day. This is a festive event for the KMT, because the pan-blue has successfully integrated and the two chairmen are at the altar. A victory in 2004 seems so close. The odd couple are now veritable love birds. Will they live happily ever after?

It is too early for the pan-blue alliance to toast champagne. Things are not as simple as a date on Valentine's Day. First, the Public Officials Election and Recall Law does not provide a legal basis for cross-party nomination. So, unless the two parties actually merge, the Central Election Committee can not allow either party to nominate Lien and Soong. While the Ministry of the Interior may have plans to allow cross-party nomination, the Legislative Yuan has not completed enactment of the relevant law. Therefore, Lien and Soong can cohabit, but they can not run with a dual-party ticket.



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KMT-PFP: "We have decided to establish a party alliance."

Even if they want to officially tie the knot, they will first have to jump over a big hurdle. Cohabitation is enough to bring problems. Soong garnered a substantial number of votes in the 2000 presidential election. Together with the votes Lien received, their number of votes exceeded those of President Chen Shui-bian by about 2 million votes. But, politics is not a matter of one plus one equals two. The attitude and popular will of the voters at any given time and in response to any given mix of candidates are what count.

In these past few years, the political charisma of Soong has nose-dived. Suspicions about his political and moral virtues brought on by the Chung-hsing financial bill

scandal remain. Soong's kneeling act before last year's mayoral election and the implication of several PFP Kaohsiung city councilmen in a vote-buying scandal have besmirched Soong's reputation. The KMT may be happy now, but it will soon discover Soong to be a shrewd who relishes political struggle and power grabbing. Lien will be marginalized in the election. The painful battle between the two parties is just beginning.

Soong gave a long speech on the eve of the announcement of the alliance, supposedly giving his views about the current state of affairs in Taiwan. He had no answers to give, only problems to pose. Soong's speech may have spoken the mind of some, but people do not necessarily vote based on sentiment. They need answers. "Thanks for the nuts, but where are the bolts?" they ask.

There is no denying that Chen's performance during the past three years of his presidency has been less than praiseworthy. But, the current problems are mostly remnants of the KMT era. The voters handed power to the DPP because they were dissatisfied with the slow pace of reform by the KMT. Can all these problems be solved with another change of ruling party? The KMT-PFP alliance must pitch more substantial proposals to the public and demonstrate greater determination to reform in order to convince the voters to cast their votes for them. Paying lip service to anti-government sentiment won't win them any votes.

The merging and split of parties and the rise and fall of political figures are all superficial aspects of politics. The essence of politics is to safeguard the welfare of the public. Taiwan's politicians and media waste too much energy on these superficial aspects. They are both out of focus and in dereliction of their duties. Let it be known to all interested in running for the presidency — reforms and the economy are what matter to the voters.

Whither Taiwan?

During the past years, Taiwan has been considered a model for democratization in Asia: in spite of the continuing threat by China, it was able to make the transition from an authoritarian one-party regime under the Kuomintang from the 1940s through the early 1990s, to a fully blossoming democracy today. The election of President Chen Shui-bian of the DPP in March 2000 is generally viewed as the culmination of this transition.

However, since March 2000 it has also become abundantly clear that Taiwan is not there yet. The main issue is the confusing and often vitriolic debate about Taiwan's status. The debate is made even more confusing by the sometimes wishy-washy statements of President Chen himself. In some cases he is firm, for example in rejecting the "One China" dictum of the PRC and in emphasizing that Taiwan is a sovereign nation, but at other times he seems to contradict himself, e.g. by discussing "political integration" with China. In the first article below, Mr. Li Thian-hok takes Mr. Chen to task on this issue.

The second issue, is the fact that democratic practices are not deeply ingrained yet in the political system on the island. The primary example is the refusal of the old Kuomintang and PFP-leadership to accept the newly-elected DPP leadership as the legitimate, democratically-elected government. The past three years have seen an inordinate amount of obstruction by these two parties against the DPP government. They were helped to no small extent by the fact that much of the bureaucracy maintained its loyalty to the former rulers. In the second article below, Mr. Nat Bellocci, former head of the American Institute in Taiwan, discusses the possibility that Taiwan's democracy might still fail.

Taiwan's status according to Chen Shui-bian

By Li Thian-Hok, a prominent member of the Taiwanese-American community

This article first appeared in the Taipei Times of 11 February 2003

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On 22 January 2003, the Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI) of Philadelphia published a memorandum detailing "A conversation with Chen Shui-bian" by Harvey Sicherman, President of FPRI.

In the Q&A, President Chen asserts that "*The Republic of China (ROC) is a sovereign state.... The ROC effectively exercises jurisdiction over the islands of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu — a fact no one can deny.*" "*Taiwan is not a part of, a local government of, or a province of any country.*" "*We want to emphasize to the international community that, as a sovereign state, the ROC cannot be downgraded, treated as a local government, or marginalized by anyone.*"

In these statements, Chen is emphasizing Taiwan's current political status, that it is the government of Taiwan, not the People's Republic of China (PRC), which effectively governs Taiwan, Penghu and the offshore islands of Kinmen and Matsu. Chen is

countering the PRC claim that Taiwan is part of China, or a renegade province of China, since the PRC does not at present exercise, nor has at any time ever exercised, control over Taiwan or the Penghu islands. What Beijing means is that Taiwan should be a part of China.

On August 3 of last year, President Chen declared to overseas Taiwanese attending the World Federation of Taiwanese Associations conference in Tokyo that each side of the Taiwan Strait was a sovereign state, causing alarm in some quarters of Washington. Actually Chen was merely describing the current political status of Taiwan, the fact that Taiwan is a de facto independent country, not subject to the effective control of the People's Republic.

None of these statements by Chen Shui-bian is in conflict with his other statements in regards to Taiwan's future status. Former President Lee Teng-hui has criticized President Chen for his lack of vision for Taiwan's future. In fact, President Chen has clearly enunciated his vision for Taiwan in his December 31, 2000 address: "Bridging the New Century." *Because "the people of Taiwan and China share the same blood, culture and historical back-*

ground...," Chen has appealed to the leaders in China to *"take cross-strait economic, trade, and cultural integration as a starting point for gradually building mutual trust..."* and *"then jointly seek a new framework for permanent peace and political integration between the two sides."*

Although Chen has not publicly explained what is meant by "political integration," it is clear Chen aims to give up Taiwan's de facto independent status in exchange for peace and a high degree of autonomy, perhaps an improved variant of the "One Country, Two Systems" model. Beijing has already promised that after unification Taiwan can keep its armed forces and that no PRC officials will be sent to Taiwan. So despite the sad experience of Hong Kong, where the promise of fifty years of democracy

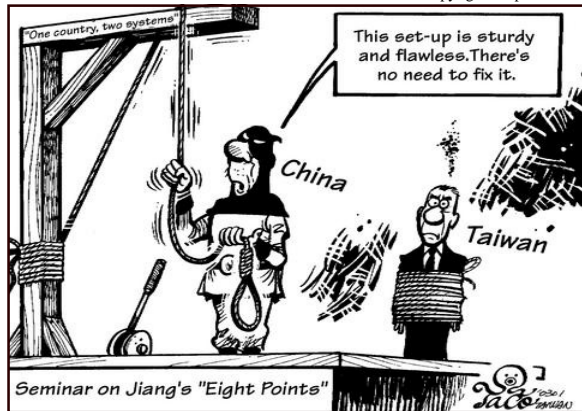
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China cook Jiang Zemin: "We can talk about three things: the garnishes, how well cooked you like the dish and how I should serve it up."

is already in shambles, Chen Shui-bian's DPP government shares with Beijing a common vision of a prosperous future "One China."

Chen Shui-bian betrays his ignorance of Taiwan's unique history when he says Taiwan and China share the same ethnicity and historical background. Due to his Sino-centric education, Chen does not fully appreciate the rich and diverse culture of Taiwan, which encompasses the culture and values not only of China but also of the aborigines, Japan, America and Europe. Chen's world view is narrowly focused on China. This is why Chen is anxious to "normalize relations with China," and to pursue direct trade, transportation and communication links with China, even though such links would further damage Taiwan's economy and jeopardize Taiwan's national security.



"One China" gallows: "This set-up is sturdy and flawless. There is no need to fix it."

A Taiwan president who is determined to preserve Taiwan's sovereignty and hard-won democracy would insist as preconditions for negotiation of the direct links, that China must first renounce the use of force against Taiwan under international supervision, cease its military exercises in preparation for military action against Taiwan, and withdraw its short and medium range missiles targeted on Taiwan.

When Chen Shui-bian avers that Taiwan is a sovereign state, he is merely referring to Taiwan's current, effective control of its territory. He does not mean that Taiwan is a fully independent, sovereign nation. In his inaugural speech, Chen promised that during his term in office Taiwan will not declare formal independence, change its state name, codify the two states theory, hold a plebiscite to determine Taiwan's future or alter the National Unification Guidelines. All five actions he waived unilaterally fall within the authority of a sovereign state. By forfeiting these powers, Chen has diminished and marginalized Taiwan's status as a fully independent sovereign state, without consulting the wishes of the Taiwanese people.

It is most unfortunate that in the global contest between the forces of freedom and repression, Chen's DPP government appears inexorably headed toward a political union with the repressive People's Republic. However, Chen Shui-bian has been consistent in his statements on the status of Taiwan. The key to avoiding confusion is to distinguish between his description of Taiwan's present political status and his vision of a future "One China."

What if Taiwan's democracy fails?

By Nat Bellocchi, former chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan

This article first appeared in the Taipei Times on 2 January 2003

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Much of the world has become aware that Taiwan is a democracy. The collateral benefit, aside from the freedom of Taiwan's 23 million people, has been the potential for that democracy to set an example that would spread to its giant neighbor — the PRC. For me, it was a privilege to have been involved in a small way while this virtual revolution blossomed and transformed the country's political system. It was like a breath of fresh air as freedom flourished and the future looked so bright for Taiwan.

But in only a decade, while the nation's democratic traditions are still maturing, changes across the Strait are bringing a challenge that have the potential to reverse that revolution. If democracy were allowed to fail in Taiwan, the damage would be devastating, not only to Taiwan, but to all of East Asia. Where the present changes in cross-strait relations are leading remains unclear to everyone. The best of economists and political scientists project their views of the future in terms of their own specialty, but separately. When it comes to analyzing the cross-strait situation, the question of how the changing economic relationship will affect political relations, or vice-versa, brings the wisest in both fields of study to demur on stating an opinion.

In Taiwan, it is not only unclear where future developments will go, but it is unclear where Taiwan wants them to go. The challenges Taiwan faces are awesome. To meet them will take an unusual demonstration of strength in leadership, a patriotism among the people that is still developing and a political will to bring consensus on the critical subject of sovereignty that has not been evident in this new democracy.

Taiwan today faces an economy that must make a fundamental restructuring within a very short period of time or be marginalized; a Chinese economy that is growing rapidly and offers many opportunities, while at the same time representing a threat to Taiwan's existence as an independent entity; a China that is able to influence much of the rest

of the world to support its objective on Taiwan's sovereignty; a domestic political atmosphere that is losing the trust of the voters and damaging credibility in the political system; and ineffective communication between government and the people.

That may be a harsh assessment, but it is in no way partisan as both the ruling and opposition parties are responsible. I recently asked a friend who follows events in the Koreas and other Asian countries how he saw the difference between presidential elections in South Korea and the Taipei and Kaohsiung mayoral and city council races.

He thought South Korean election campaigns were very tough, but in Taiwan they were "down and dirty." I interpret that to mean more than money politics. It was also the difference in the degree to which the people and the politicians they elected place patriotism and national sovereignty above the "quick buck" and partisan advantage.

Given the internal political priorities that seem to dominate the national agenda and

the slow pace in addressing the internal and external challenges that Taiwan faces, it is not unreasonable to ponder the question: What if democracy fails in Taiwan?

Domestically, with an eye to their own personal economic problems, some of the people of Taiwan may come to believe that being under a special administrative region of China may be no worse than experiencing economic hardship under the status quo. It could look like trading one uncertainty for another. They could develop a perception that their freedom is not at stake — that democracy could be maintained. But is democracy sustainable under the sovereignty of a nation that opposes it? Not likely.

But what if a majority expresses at least an acceptance of some type of unification, dressed up with a more desirable-sounding nomenclature and the promises of special privileges? It may be that there would be considerable opposition to such a decision, but, given the relative absence of a sense of patriotism, the differences over Taiwan's



KMT and PFP: Direct links with China at the expense of Taiwan's sovereignty.

national status, the temptations represented by China's growing economy and the continuous political standoff, which hinders progress, any opposition that would stand against it may prove not to be very effective.

Then there is the likely external impact on such a decision. This factor does not seem to get much public attention in Taiwan. When it does, it usually is in terms of the US, with its security interests throughout all of East Asia in jeopardy, coming to help to prevent an unwanted unification with China. But democracy in Taiwan has brought a different dimension to this scenario. While there has been a clear strengthening of US-Taiwan security relations, so has there been a greater emphasis on the people's democratic right to decide Taiwan's relationship with China.

In terms of US interests, the potential problem of security in East Asia is the most important, but, at least for the medium term, American military strength will continue to prevail. But a Taiwan that voluntarily decided to become a part of China would not likely be prevented from doing so, and in addition to the problem of security in the region, another, perhaps just as significant problem would be the backward step of democracy.

For China's leadership, gaining Taiwan would, without question, bolster their political strength domestically. But more important, it would strengthen, perhaps irretrievably, the PRC leadership's insistence that democracy is not appropriate to Asia. The impact of that in Taiwan, and in other countries in the region that have moved toward democracy, would be disastrous. Freedom would have taken a major step backward. Despite its small size and its undefined status in the international community, what Taiwan does matters in a much larger, international arena.

How much better it would be if politicians businessmen and people throughout the island would come to accept the responsibility of making democracy work in Taiwan.

Support for independence increasing

The results of a public opinion poll released in early December 2002 showed that more than 50 percent of the people in Taiwan prefer independence to unification or prefer to stick with the status quo. The poll was conducted by the Cabinet's Research, Development and Evaluation Commission.

According to the survey, about 32 percent of the people polled said that Taiwan independence is better for the nation's interest than unification with China. Nearly 20 percent said they preferred the status quo, which is by many in Taiwan seen as de facto independence. Approximately 21 percent said that unification with China would be better for the nation's interest than independence, a drop from 28 percent in a similar poll last year. This leaves some 27 percent undecided.

A separate opinion poll conducted in December by the Mainland Affairs Council showed a similar shift in favor of independence and away from unification. Chin Heng-wei, a political observer and editor-in-chief of *Contemporary Monthly* magazine, said that the surveys send a clear message. "There are more and more people who prefer Taiwan independence to unification with China nowadays," Chin said. "The 2004 presidential election will become a referendum for Taiwan's future if the issue of independence or unification becomes the main theme of the campaign."

Chin, who regarded those preferring the status quo as "mild supporters of independence," said that the commission's latest poll actually showed that 52 percent of the people support the idea of independence, while only some 21 percent prefer unification. Below is a commentary from the *Taipei Times* on the issue:

Saying no to the status quo

This editorial first appeared in the Taipei Times on 5 December 2002

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The latest opinion poll by the Research, Development and Evaluation Commission shows more people are heading toward supporting independence. According to the opinion poll, there are more people who support independence (32.3 percent) than those who support unification (21.8 percent) or the status quo (19.7 percent).

Never before have so many people supported independence. Moreover, its percentage of support has grown from the 29.6 percent in the commission's survey in 2000, while the percentages of support for status quo and unification have declined — from 21.5 percent and 26.6 percent, respectively.

It must be pointed out that the percentage of supporters for unification has undergone a significant decline — more than 5 percent — since 2000. This figure cannot be brushed aside, since it has exceeded the usual 3 percent margin of error. The question then becomes what is prompting this gradual shift.

One reason may be that, while Taiwan's democracy may be suffering from some troubling growing pains over the past years, democracy is nevertheless becoming increasingly indispensable to the people — now that they have come to know the feeling of being one's own master.

It is becoming more and more unthinkable for them that, until democratization, they lived a life in which they remained silent under one-party autocracy, despite the fact that the nation had a robust economy at the time. For all the apparent opportunities to strike rich in the lucrative Chinese market these days, it is even more unimaginable that they would have to return to that kind of life under Chinese rule in the event of unification.

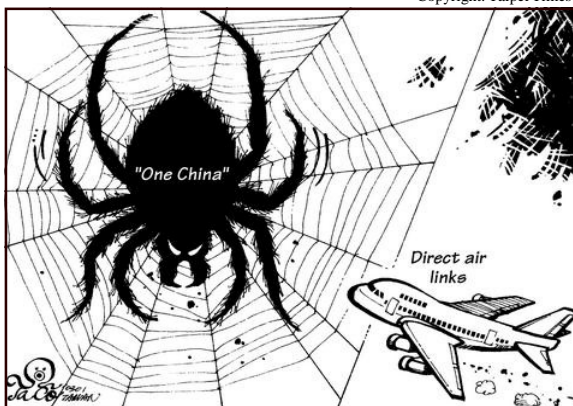
A no less important reason for this shift is perhaps China's high-handed tactics in dealing with Taiwan over the years. On Tuesday, China's ambassador to the US, Yang Jiechi, shamelessly claimed that Chinese missile deployment targeting Taiwan is an issue of "national security" that deserves US understanding and support.

What kind of national security concern can Taiwan possibly pose to China when Taipei is "allowed" only to purchase defensive arms and when it has its hands full trying to stay alive under Chinese threats? Yang was quoted as saying "It is [Taiwan's] actions that are actually causing instability."

On Nov. 26, an official from China's Taiwan Affairs Office, Zhou Mingwei, had the audacity to say "logically speaking we can teach them [the Taiwanese] a lesson, but we haven't done so." These are just two examples of the kind of abusive and demeaning language from China that people in Taiwan must put up with on a regular basis. How can they not feel resentful?

Also playing a role is perhaps the unprecedented friendliness of the US government toward Taiwan and international condemnation against Chinese missile threats.

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The "One China" spider trap

Finally, perhaps more people are finally realizing that reality is closing in on them, and that it is simply naive to think that the status quo can be maintained indefinitely.

With China growing stronger everyday in terms of economic, military and political prowess, today's status quo is already different from that of a few years ago. Under the circumstances, people must take a stance over the question of independence versus unification.

If the people are indeed opting for independence over unification, can the world and China respect the people's right to self-determination?

The UN and self-determination

During the 40-years long struggle for democracy and human rights in Taiwan, those who advocated a free and democratic Taiwan invoked the right to self-determination as enshrined in the UN Charter, and appealed to the international community to respect the right of the people on the island to determine their own future.

From the side of the then-ruling Kuomintang, the counter-argument was that self-determination did not apply to Taiwan, since it was not a colonial or occupied territory. This debate broke into the open again in Taiwan in early January 2003. Below is the contribution by Prof. Chen Lung-chu, one of the foremost scholars on the legal status of Taiwan: in the late 1960s and early 1970s he already published several major works on the issue.

Protecting the right to determine our future

By Prof. Chen Lung-chu, chairman of the Taiwan New Century Foundation

This article first appeared in the Taipei Times on 7 February 2003

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On 31 December 2002 last year, the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights passed the third reading in the Taiwan legislature. This is a step on the way to turning these international covenants into domestic law, and as such it should be encouraged.

However, when ratifying these covenants, the Legislative Yuan attached the following

statement: “The United Nations, in practice, only recognizes the right of national self-determination for occupied territories, trust territories and non-self-governing territories.

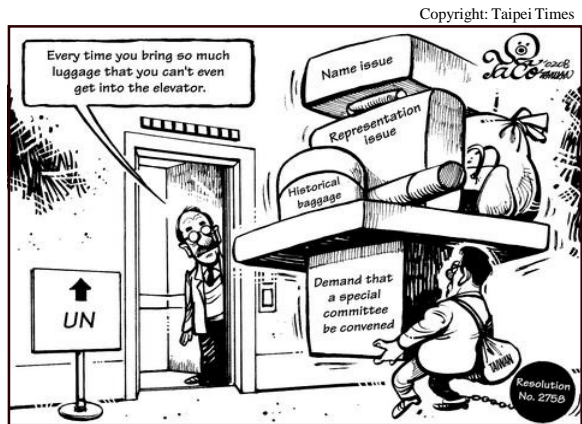
“The exercise of the right of national self-determination first requires the recognition and support of the United Nations’ General Assembly ... The Republic of China has long been a sovereign and independent state, and does not need to exercise the right of national self-determination.”

Foreseeing that this attached statement would be harmful to the nation, the DPP’s legislative caucus had to put the brakes on the legislation and request a reconsideration.

Clearly the contents of the attached statement are incorrect and unnecessary and will harm Taiwan both internationally and domestically. The principle of national self-determination is not only clearly stated in the UN Charter, but it is also stipulated in the same clear and forceful wording in the first article of each of the two above-mentioned international covenants.

The first clause of that article states, “All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.” The second clause deals with a nation’s wealth and resources, the “right of economic self-determination.” According to the third clause, each party to the covenant “shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right.”

The application of the right of national self-determination is not limited to peoples in colonial territories, and prior recognition by the UN General Assembly or its related organizations is not required.



UN doorman to Taiwan: "Every time you bring so much luggage that you can't even get into the elevator!"

National self-determination is a collective human right, the right of a people within a territory to build their state, maintain the independence and sovereignty of that state, prevent external pressure and intervention, strive for economic, social and cultural development, and decide their common political future.

Colonial rule, independence and sovereignty are all part of the continuum of national self-determination. A subjected nation relies on the principle of self-determination to obtain independence and sovereignty. Already independent states rely on the same principle to prevent invasion, pressure and intervention by external forces, to protect the completeness of their independence, and to decide their future.

Taiwan is a sovereign and independent state. It's future should be decided by the 23 million Taiwanese. This is an inalienable right and we should maintain and protect our people's right to self-determination.

Chiang Ching-kuo

A controversial legacy

In mid-January 2003 a series of commemorative events were held in Taipei on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the death of Chiang Ching-kuo. Mr. Chiang inherited the reins of power following the death of his father, Chiang Kai-shek, in 1975 and ruled until his own death in 1988.

While Mr. Chiang is credited for making the first moves towards political reform and democratization on the island, he is mainly remembered as the executor of the reign of terror of his father from the 1940s through the 1970s, for whom he served as head of the dreaded secret police for many years.

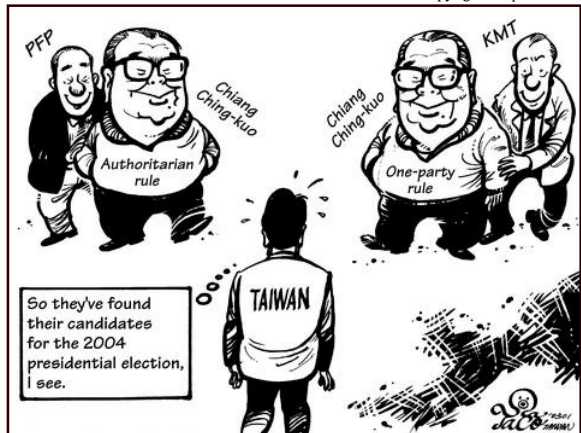
The opposition Kuomintang and PFP parties attempted to use the occasion of the commemoration to stir up feelings of nostalgia for “the good old days.” The KMT even staged two commemorative concerts, titled “CCK, Taiwan misses you” and “Those good old days when people were full of hope.” This prompted the following excellent editorial in the Taipei Times:

The Great Dictator CCK?

*This editorial first appeared in the Taipei Times of 10 January 2003
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Fifteen years after his death, late-president Chiang Ching-kuo is all-of-a-sudden a very popular person. A series of events arranged by the KMT — including talks and papers presented by KMT Chairman Lien Chan and Taipei Mayor Ma Ying-jeou — and a commemorative concert entitled “CCK, Taiwan Misses You” suggest that the KMT is going all-out to deify Chiang.

There are at least two political ends served by the KMT’s move. First, by exalting Chiang and asking the PFP and the New Party to join the chorus, the KMT strengthens the internal cohesion of the pan-blue camp and at the same time solidifies its leadership role within that camp. This, of course, puts the PFP in a rather awkward spot. It is a well-known fact that PFP Chairman James Soong can’t complete a sentence without referring to “Mr. Ching-kuo,” so he has no good excuse for staying out of the “commemorative events.”



Both KMT and PFP using Chiang Ching-kuo in their 2004 election campaign.

Second, by declaring that Chiang is its spiritual leader and icon in this way, the KMT is deliberately severing its ties with the 12-year reign of Lee Teng-hui. According to the KMT, Chiang deserves all the credit for Taiwan’s economic miracle and democratic achievements — leaving “black gold” as the only noteworthy legacy of Lee’s era. This, of course, is completely absurd.

It cannot be denied that Chiang made significant contributions to Taiwan, especially in terms of economic development. Moreover, during the last few years of his rule, Chiang did plant the seeds for the democratization and development of Taiwan after

his death. Lee, who succeeded Chiang as president, was the person who gave these seeds the water and nutrients they needed to blossom.

But it is also very important to point out that Chiang's efforts began relatively late in life. He was so sick that he knew his days were numbered. He also knew perfectly well that he had no suitable heir-apparent.

Furthermore, it cannot be denied that Chiang's reign was an era of military dictatorship and White Terror. In fact, even when Chiang Kai-shek was still president, Chiang Ching-kuo was already the executor of the senior Chiang's reign of terror.

If there was one thing that distinguished the younger Chiang from his father, it was probably the pragmatism of Chiang Ching-kuo. Perhaps as a former communist and atheist, Chiang Ching-kuo was by nature more practical than his fascist father.

At the very least, Chiang Ching-kuo apparently came to realize the impossibility of retaking the Chinese mainland and therefore was willing to make an effort to develop Taiwan and make it his home.

While Chiang Ching-kuo was perhaps an improvement on his father, this in no way means he deserves the worship he has received from the KMT recently. By deifying such a controversial figure, the KMT gains something and loses something. In the short run, idolizing Chiang may help the KMT to obtain pan-blue cohesion and leadership. In the long run, the damage may outweigh the good.

After all, in the minds of many people, the name of Chiang Ching-kuo is synonymous with "alien regime" and "White Terror." Many of those people still remember a time when they had to worship the Chiangs — father and son. Stirring up those kind of memories can only cause resentment.

A new Tibetan policy

Taiwan establishes new Tibetan liaison

On 20 January 2003, the Taiwan government made a long-overdue decision to abolish the Cabinet-level Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, and to replace it by a newly-formed Taiwan-Tibet Exchange Foundation.

The old Commission was a left-over from the Kuomintang-period, when the regime in Taipei still maintained it was the legitimate government of China, and claimed sovereignty over Tibet and Mongolia. The new Foundation is primarily designed to maintain ties with the Tibetan government-in-exile in Dharamsala, India. The foundation will consist of government think-tank members, DPP members and private entrepreneurs familiar with Tibetan affairs.

A long overdue awakening

This editorial appeared in the Taipei Times on 20 January 2003.

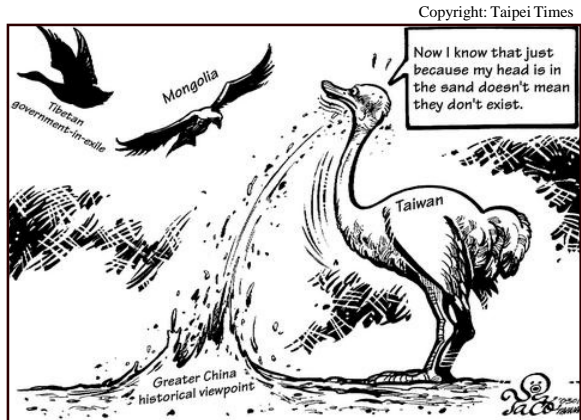
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The news that the government is to create a Taiwan-Tibet cultural exchange foundation, in a bid to replace the existing Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission, marks a step more serious than many people might realize.

Most of our readers will understand it as the ROC's catching up, in part at least, with the reality from which it has woefully averted its eyes for decades. The ROC government has long cherished the fantasy that Mongolia is a part of its sovereign territory despite the fact this vast country has been independent for 80 years or more.

But then the ROC government has until recently thought of itself as the government of China and as such it has indirectly supported Beijing's brutal colonialist repression of the Tibetans by upholding China's claim — and it doesn't matter here which China — to be the lawful sovereign of that sad land.

This is something that has worked to Taiwan's detriment in a number of ways. First, the old KMT government's nefarious politicking among the various Tibetan exile



Taiwan ostrich, pulling its head out of the "Greater China" sand: "Just because my head was in the sand, doesn't mean they don't exist."

groups managed to win it the ill will of almost everyone concerned. Taiwan's interest in fomenting unrest among the Tibetans worked directly against the best interests of both the exiles — who sooner or later have to reach an accommodation with Beijing, if Beijing is ever enlightened enough to let them do so — and the Tibetans still living in Tibet, the justice of whose cause it compromises.

Secondly, if there is one thing that Taiwan must be a steadfast champion of on the international stage, one policy with which it must become clearly identified, it is the right of a people to self-determination, be it Tibetans, Timorese, Kurds or Palestinians. It is absurd to claim to support the cause of the Tibetans while at the same time working to undermine those Tibetans who want self-determination rather than a more enlightened colonial status — which had been the previous government's confused policy. And some readers might remember the slap in the face delivered to the Dalai Lama during the arrangements for his visits to Taiwan when it was suggested that it should be the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission that should issue him with an entry permit.

Taiwan's policy on Tibet and Mongolia has ranged from the merely stupid to the genuinely reprehensible. What must now be made clear is that there is a huge difference between what is in the best interests of the de facto sovereign republic that Taiwan now is and the best interests of the "juridical person" of the ROC. What constitutes catching up with reality for Taiwan might seem like a form of defeat for the ROC with its bizarre Constitution containing Article 119 about the nature of the Mongolian banner system and Article 120: "The self government system of Tibet shall be protected."

Sooner or later the obsolescence of the Constitution will become so manifest that Taiwanese might actually work up the courage to sit down and write a new one, as former president Lee Teng-hui has called for. We can only hope that that day is not too long delayed.

For the moment, this small victory for pragmatism can only be a good thing. Taiwan's dissolution of the agencies that uphold the pretensions of the ROC has been painfully slow but it is welcome not simply because it is about time that Taiwan's official policy was more in accord with international realities, making the nation less of a laughing stock, but because, as the dead skin of the ROC is sloughed off, we hope there will emerge the core of a new Taiwanese consciousness. The proposed move is, therefore, not primarily for Mongolians or Tibetans, it is primarily for the people of Taiwan.

Report from Washington

US Congressmen express support for Taiwan

In the third week of January, a group of US Congressmen visited Taiwan expressed support for the island, saying that Taiwan's future should be determined by the Taiwanese — not by China or the US. The US lawmakers vowed to continue supporting Taiwan saying all democratic countries in the Asia-Pacific region including Taiwan constituted an instrumental alliance for the US.

“The future of Taiwan is an issue to be determined by the people of Taiwan, not by any outside forces or through any sort of hostility or aggressive action,” said Representative Steve Chabot, honorary co-chair of the US Congressional Taiwan Caucus. The Caucus is a pro-Taiwan US congressional group formed by 85 members of the House of Representatives and the Senate on 9 April 2002.

Dana Rohrabacher, who also serves as honorary co-chair of the caucus, said any democratic states in the Asia-Pacific region, including Taiwan, were important allies for the US. He added that Taiwan's future “is not up to a group of powerful figures on the mainland, and it's not up to the United States government as well.”

“Why would people who live in a democracy want to surrender themselves up to a dictatorial system run by some power-hungry individuals who don't care about human rights?” he said.

Representative Robert Wexler, a third honorary co-chair of the caucus, lauded Taiwan's move to host the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Asia-Pacific Security, saying the exchange of ideas during the seminar would help democracy take root in the region.

Around 65 lawmakers from the US, Canada, France, Japan, Australia, Russia, Thailand, Indonesia, Belarus, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Portugal, New Zealand, South Korea, Malaysia and India attended the conference at the Grand Hotel. The conference included group discussions on trilateral relations between Taiwan, Japan and the US, free passage through the Taiwan Strait, anti-terrorism, democracy and human rights, and economy and trade.

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