



Taiwan Communiqué

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Senkaku tensions rise again

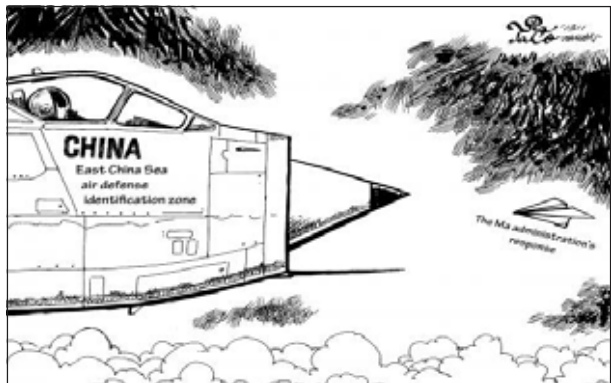
China declares Air Defense Identification Zone

In previous issues of *Taiwan Communiqué* (no's 138, 139 and 140), we reported on the increasing tensions surrounding the Senkaku Islands (referred to as Diaoyutai in Taiwan) caused by China's provocative moves and partially also by irresponsible steps by the Ma government, which allowed "fishing boats" to sail to the islands, under the "protection" of Taiwan's Coast Guard in November 2012 and January 2013. This led to water-cannon fights with the Japanese Coast Guard.

Since then, the PRC has continued to ratchet up the pressure by sending military and Coast Guard ships, aircraft and even drones into the region with increasing frequency.

Copyright: Taipei Times

This caused Japan to be increasingly on edge, and prompted it to scramble fighter aircraft defending the region on an almost daily basis.



On Saturday, 23 November 2013, the PRC upped the ante even further by unilaterally declaring a "Air Defense Identification Zone" (ADIZ) covering a wide section of the East China

Weak "paper airplane" response by the Ma administration to China's Air Defense Identification Zone

Sea including the Senkaku Islands. According to the PRC announcement, any aircraft flying through the zone would be required to submit flight plans and other identifying information to the PRC authorities.

The move appears aimed at strengthening Beijing's claim over the disputed islands, and follows China's September 2012 submission to the United Nations of baselines to demarcate a territorial sea around the islands.

In Washington, the Chinese declaration was met with an immediate rebuttal by both the State Department and Defense Department. In a statement issued on the same day, US Secretary of State John Kerry said that the United States "*is deeply concerned*" about the announcement, and stated that "*this unilateral action constitutes an attempt to change the status quo in the East China Sea. Escalatory action will only increase tensions in the region and create risks of an incident.*"

Secretary Kerry added that "*...freedom of overflight and other internationally lawful uses of sea and airspace are essential to prosperity, stability, and security in the Pacific.*" He emphasized that the US doesn't support "*...efforts by any State to apply its ADIZ procedures to foreign aircraft not intending to enter its national airspace*" and urged China not to implement its threat to take action against aircraft that do not identify themselves or obey orders from Beijing.

In his statement, the US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called the development "*... a destabilizing attempt to alter the status quo in the region.*" He also emphasized that the United States "*...reaffirms its longstanding policy that Article V of the US-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty applies to the Senkaku Islands.*"

Japan also reacted quickly: on Monday, 25 November 2013, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe denounced China's declaration as a dangerous attempt to change the status quo in the East China Sea through coercion, vowed to protect Japan's air and sea space, and demanded that Beijing "*revoke any measures that could infringe upon the freedom of flight in international airspace.*"

On 25 November 2013, in a direct challenge to China's establishment of the expanded air defense zone, a pair of American B-52 bombers flew over the disputed island chain without informing Beijing, and DOD sources indicated that military aircraft crossed into the zone on subsequent days too.

The two B-52s flew out of Guam and entered the new Chinese Air Defense Identification Zone at about 7 p.m. Washington time on 25 November 2013. The flight of the B-52s were reportedly part of a long planned exercise called Coral Lightning. According to US press reports, the bombers were not armed and were not accompanied by escort planes.

Photo: United States Airforce

The initial response from Beijing was that they had “*detected and monitored*” the B-52s as they flew through the area for 2 hours and 22 minutes. A Chinese Ministry of Defense statement on Wednesday, 27 November 2013 said that all aircraft flying through the zone would be monitored and that “... *China has the capability to exercise effective control over the relevant airspace.*”



U.S. B-52 bomber in flight

On 28 and 29 November 2013, Beijing increased tension further by announcing that it had sent several fighter and early-warning aircraft on “defensive” air patrols into the zone to “*strengthen the monitoring of aerial targets.*” US officials have said that this pattern of behavior by China is unsettling to its own neighbors and that the unilateral decision by China “*increases the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculations*” in the region.

Weak response from Taipei

However, in Taipei, the response from the KMT government of President Ma Ying-jeou was rather weak: A Ministry of Defense spokesman only expressed “regret” over China’s move, while the National Security Council issued a statement calling on all parties “... *to show restraint, shelve disputes and work together to develop the resources in the waters around the Diaoyutai Islands through joint efforts.*”

Most illustratively, on Tuesday 26 November 2013, President Ma himself tried to downplay the matter by saying that China’s declaration of an air defense identification zone over the East China Sea *does not involve “air space” or “territorial sovereignty.”*

Taiwan's Civil Aviation Administration also came with a soothing remark that the new ADIZ regulations would not affect cross-Strait flights: they submit their flight plans to the PRC authorities anyway, as they intend to enter Chinese airspace. The problem is of course that the new ADIZ is located just to the North of Taiwan and will affect all flights from Taiwan to Japan. This fact was not mentioned by the CAA.

Photo: Associated Press

The DPP democratic opposition on the other hand, strongly condemned China's move, which, it said "*... runs counter to international norms but also represents an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo.*" It urged the Beijing government to retract the ADIZ announcement immediately, and expressed its disappointment that the Ma government's statements



Japanese patrol near the Senkakus

had been "*rather feeble ... with no statement of opposition or denunciation.*"

Then, on Friday, 29 November 2013, Taiwan's Legislative Yuan passed a bi-partisan resolution supported by both the opposition DPP and the ruling Kuomintang, demanding that the administration of President Ma lodge an official protest with China on the matter.

The resolution stated that China's unilateral demarcation of an ADIZ was seriously affecting regional stability and had escalated tensions. It urged the Taiwan government to take concerted action with the country's democratic allies by refusing to submit flight plans to Beijing as had been requested.

In response, on the same day, the Cabinet in Taipei announced that it was making presentations to China on the matter. The statement complained that China had not consulted with Taiwan before establishing the zone, resulting in an overlap with Taiwan's Flight Information Region (FIR).

The statement added that China's move "*... will not help facilitate positive development of ties across the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, we'll convey our solemn protest through (proper) channels.*"

Taiwan's constitutional crisis

The President against the Legislative Speaker

In early September 2013, a constitutional crisis erupted in Taiwan, when President Ma Ying-jeou attempted to remove Legislative Yuan Speaker Wang Jin-pyng from his position as Speaker by stripping him of his KMT party membership. We summarized the developments until the end of September in the previous issue of *Taiwan Communiqué* (no. 143).

As we described in the previous issue, an important reason for the crisis was that the President wanted to move Speaker Wang out of the way, as – in the view of the Presidential Office — he had not moved fast enough in moving several pieces of controversial legislation through the Legislature, including the approval of the Service Trade Agreement with China (see “Flawed Pact with PRC in Limbo”, on pp. 14-15), and the Nuclear Four referendum.

Photo: Taipei Times

During the previous months, Wang had been trying to achieve a consensus on both issues with the democratic opposition of the DPP and Taiwan Solidarity Union. However, Ma Ying-jeou apparently just wanted to ram the approval of the pact through the Legislative Yuan without much discussion.



**Speaker Wang (L) and President Ma (R):
Not on speaking terms**

The case represented a constitutional crisis because it involved the President attempting to remove the head

of another branch of government, a fundamental breach of the principle of separation of powers, which is enshrined in Taiwan's Constitution.

Legislative Speaker Wang fights back

However, Legislative Speaker Wang fought back and immediately filed an injunction with the Taipei District Court, requesting the Court to stay his expulsion from the KMT Party. On 13 September 2013, the Court ruled in favor of Wang. The Kuomintang Party subsequently filed an appeal to the High Court, but on 30 September 2013, the High Court also ruled in favor of the Legislative Speaker. A few days later, the Kuomintang Party announced it would not appeal the ruling.

In the meantime, Wang had filed a civil lawsuit in the Taipei District Court against the decision of the Kuomintang party to expel him. Press reports in Taiwan indicated that the proceedings in the District Court would start on 4 December 2013.

Copyright: Taipei Times

Interestingly, on 22 November 2013, the Legislative Yuan agreed to put on the legislative agenda a motion demanding that SID Prosecutor-general step down for his “*violations of the Constitution and laws, and disregard of the legislature.*” The motion was carried with a 46 to 38 vote, with 12 abstentions.

Interestingly, three Kuomintang legislators voted in favor of the motion, while the twelve abstentions were also

all Kuomintang legislators. These usually compliant legislators were particularly up in arms about the extensive unauthorized wiretapping operations conducted by the SID, including on the main switchboard telephone line of the Legislative Yuan itself.



President Ma Ying-jeou, attempting to stem the political repercussions of the wiretapping flood

Longer-term implications

Many observers are asking what the longer-term implications of the episode are for Taiwan’s political future and stability. By all accounts it has certainly weakened the position of President Ma Ying-jeou, as even many within the Kuomintang criticized him for his mishandling of the situation and for causing the crisis itself.

At the end of 2014 the so-called “seven-in-one elections” will be held for all directly elected local government positions, while in early 2016 the country will hold its next legislative and presidential elections. While President Ma is limited to two terms and will not be able to run again, he will want to influence the choice of his successor in the KMT and will want to ensure that he wins.

The recent episode has severely reduced Ma’s influence within the KMT Party, and in a sense made him very much of a lame duck. The episode has also severely divided the Kuomintang Party, and has made it more likely that voters will cross over to the DPP, provided of course that the party comes up with a viable candidate.

The past few months have also seen the emergence of a new generation of young leaders who are passionate about good governance, a clean nuclear-free environment, and strongly critical of the government and military’s traditional way of doing things. This movement has given Taiwan’s political scene a whole new dynamic that may have significant consequences for the longer-term.

Protests against Ma’s policies continue *Black and white against blue-red policies*

During September and October 2013 there were several large-scale rallies in Taipei, Taichung and other major cities around the island, protesting the recent developments and urging President Ma Ying-jeou to step down.

On 29 September 2013, tens of thousands of demonstrators dressed in black shirts walked from the Sun Yan-sen Memorial Hall towards the Presidential office. The gathering was organized by the *Alliance of Civil Action Against Ma Ying-jeou*, a new group that wanted to express its anger at the infringement on the Constitution by president Ma and the wiretapping crisis. Several other demonstrations were held at different locations elsewhere in Taipei.

The black-shirt group chose the date because originally the Kuomintang Party had planned to organize its Party Congress at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial venue on that date. However, when it became known that multiple groups were planning to organize protests, the Congress was postponed to 10 November 2013 (see below).

The rally began precisely at 9:29 am to signify the date – September 29th – and included both speeches and “a stroll around the presidential palace” by the crowd. Speakers included Mr. Ge Shu-ren, a former vice president of TVBS (traditionally a very pro KMT government TV station), as well as award-winning writer Neil Peng, and National Taiwan University Hospital physician Ko Wen-je.

Photo: Taipei Times

In the afternoon, several hundred people staged a mock chase of President Ma Ying-jeou, who was being chided for “running away” by cancelling the KMT Party Congress. A group wearing Ma Ying-jeou masks was chased down the street by a much larger crowd throwing shoes at him. The shoe-throwing has become a symbol of opposition against the President after he was besieged by shoe-throwing demonstrators at



Blackshirt crowd protests Ma's policies on 29 September 2013

several occasions during the past few months (see below).

Less than two weeks later, on 10 October 2013 (Taiwan’s National Day), an even larger crowd – generally estimated at some 60,000 people – gathered in several locations in Taipei, again calling for President Ma to step down over the recent political crisis. The main organizer was *Citizen 1985*, the group that had organized the highly successful demonstration on 3 August 2013, protesting the death of army conscript Hung Chung-chiu in military custody.

The “White Shirts” as they are referred to, called for revision of the Referendum Act, the Election and Recall Law and other legislation in an attempt to lower the threshold for referendums. The present Referendum Act stipulates that 50% of registered voters will have to vote on an issue for it to pass, which is sheer impossible to reach even with Taiwan’s high turnout rates in elections.

The White Shirt rally also carried its signature white flag with a “citizen’s eye” as a symbolic gesture that the citizenry is watching the government, a reversal of roles from George Orwell’s “1984” when the government Big Brother was watching the citizens.

Other groups around town did organize rallies on other issues, such as the controversial Nuclear Four Power Plant project. The Ma government is attempting to finish construction of the plant, located at Kungliao, some 26 miles Northeast of Taipei. Earlier this year there were major demonstrations against the project in Taipei, arguing that the Fukushima disaster in Japan could replay itself on a much larger scale in Taiwan, since this new plant is so close to Taipei (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 141 and 142).

Photo: Taipei Times

In response the Ma government proposed a referendum on the issue, but the phrasing of the proposal and the high threshold in the abovementioned Referendum Act would make a cancellation of the project virtually impossible, even if 90% of the respondents expressed their support for cancellation, prompting many to refer to it as a deceptive referendum.

While all protests were going on, the President and his entourage celebrate the “Double-Ten” National Day with a speech by the President in a ceremony in front of the Presidential Office. The area surrounding the Presidential Office Building was closed to the public, with a heavy police force and barricades blocking the roads leading to the site of the celebrations.

The presidential speech raised eyebrows as he stated that “cross-Strait relations are not international relations.” More on that topic below.



White-shirt crowd protests Ma's policies on 10 October 2013

Ma Ying-jeou: “China not a foreign country”

On 10 October 2013, President Ma gave a National Day address titled “*Stay the course and move forward in unity to create a new era for the nation,*” in which he lauded his own policies and accomplishments.

While much of what he said was empty rhetoric, two statements stood out and prompted strong criticism. In spite of widespread protests during the past few months against the Service Trade Agreement with China, he stated that he still wanted to go ahead with pushing the approval of the agreement through the Legislative Yuan. More on that topic in “*Flawed pact with PRC in limbo*” below.

The other statement that raised eyebrows was his pronouncement that “*Cross-Strait relations are not international relations.*” As he has done in the past, he tried to argue that Taiwan and “the mainland” are part of “one China,” and reiterated his adherence to the so-called 1992 Consensus, in which both sides say there is “one China” but have different interpretations of what that means. The PRC has always stated that **it** is the “one China” and has not acknowledged any “*different interpretations.*”

Tellingly, in an opinion poll released by TVBS on 30 October 2013, some 66 percent of the respondents did **not agree** with President Ma’s assertion that cross-Strait relations are not international relations, while only 20 percent of the respondents were supportive of the statement.

Copyright: Taipei Times

Ma reiterated his views in a meeting of the Kuomintang Party’s Central Standing Committee on 11 November 2013: he said that cross-Strait relations are not “*state-to-state*”, and that “*China cannot be considered by Taiwan to be a foreign country.*”



Ma's overreliance on the Chinese market: "rest assured: this ship will never sink"

The DPP, Taiwan Solidarity Union, and civic groups strongly protested the President’s statements, saying that he is further eroding Taiwan’s sovereignty and moving towards an incremental unification of Taiwan into China. “*If cross-strait relations are not international relations, I would like to know what they are,*” DPP Chairman Su Tseng-chang said.

Former DPP chairwoman and presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen commented that Ma had placed his own political interests above that of the public and said that Ma should not risk sacrificing the nation’s interests to shift the focus away from his poor domestic governance.

She added: “*The last thing we want to see is an embattled president making concessions to China or other countries to consolidate his own political status.*” *The most important task for a national leader is to safeguard the nation’s*

sovereignty. With regards to the cross-strait relationship, it should be decided by Taiwan's 23 million people, not by the president."

Dr. Wong Ming-hsien, director of Tamkang University's Graduate Institute of International Affairs and Strategic Studies, also expressed his deep concern about the statement. He said: "*If by including such words in the National Day Address Ma intends to make the cross-Straits issue an internal matter, it would cause serious repercussions in the days to come.*"

Dr. Wong added that if Taiwan maintains that the cross-Straits issue is an "internal" matter rather than an international one, in the event of a military conflict in the Taiwan Strait neither Japan nor the US would have grounds to come to Taiwan's assistance.

Demonstrating against Party Congress in Taichung

The KMT Party Congress that was originally to be held at the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall in Taipei on 29 September 2013, eventually took place on Sunday 10 November 2013. It had been postponed when a number of civic organizations announced they would stage a protest against the meeting (see above). However, it couldn't escape the demonstrators, as thousands converged on Taichung to let their voice be heard.

Photo: Kitty Chen

A coalition of approximately half a dozen groups, including several labor organizations concerned about the loss of jobs, the **Alliance of a Referendum for Taiwan**, and the **908 Taiwan Republic Campaign** organized rallies near the venue of the KMT Congress.



Protesting Ma government policies: "We are voting with our shoes"

However, police had cordoned off a wide area around the Taichung Harbor Sports Stadium with some 500 barbed-wire barricades, while some 1,200 helmeted police with shields ensured that no demonstrators came near the stadium. The move prompted local residents to complain that Taiwan had "*returned to the Martial Law era.*"

A major expression of discontent at the rallies was shoe-throwing (see below), with the organizations bringing in thousands of shoes, to be hurled in the direction of the stadium and at cardboard effigies of President Ma and Vice-President Wu Den-yi by the participants chanting “*We’re voting with our shoes.*”

At the end of the rally, the participants used the remaining shoes to spell the English word “bumbler” on the ground in front of the stadium, a reference to a commentary titled “Ma the Bumbler” in **The Economist** of 17 November 2012.

Shoe-throwing becomes a symbol of discontent

During the past three months, shoe-throwing has become a major expression of protest by individuals and groups expressing their discontent with President Ma Ying-jeou’s policies. On several occasions the President himself had to dodge shoes thrown at him, to the extent that it now has become standard procedure for the President’s security detail to put up large nets to catch the shoes.

Photo: Ketty Chen

The matter has also led to editorials in major newspapers (“*When all else fails, let the shoes fly*” – **Taipei Times**, 22 October 2013) and to a condemnation from the minister of Education admonishing students not to participate in events where shoes fly.

Shoe-throwing as a sign of protest was first seen in Iraq (where journalist Munthandar al-Zaidi threw a shoe at then US President George Bush in 2008), and the UK, where German national Martin Jahnke threw a shoe at then Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in 2009.



The shoe as a central symbol of protest

In Taiwan it began in October 2012, when students threw shoes at Ma during a Human Rights Day ceremony. But the practice really took off during the past three months, and has become so popular that rally organizers have started to collect old shoes to be thrown, and have dubbed their protests “*Let the shoes fly*”, a reference to a 2009 Chinese movie “Let the bullets fly.”

During the month of October 2013 alone there were at least nine such protests. In most cases the organizers put up an effigy of the President and participants and passersby aimed their shoes at the cardboard image. In a number of cases they are also aimed at local officials associated with the policies of the government: last month, Miaoli County Magistrate Liu Cheng-hung was hit by a flying shoe over the controversial land appropriation policy in his county.

Photo: Ketty Chen

On Sunday 17 November 2013, a coalition of labor groups, the **Autumn Struggle**, held its annual protest march in front of the Palace Mansion luxury residential building in Taipei, and engaged in a shoe-throwing protests against President Ma Ying-jeou and his KMT government.



Shoes flying at portrait of President Ma

They brought some 2,000 pairs of footwear to vent their discontent at what they said was “*the incompetent Ma, the nation’s most unpopular leader ever with only 9 percent public support.*”

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *Although the Ma government and its supporters are trying to brand the practice as “uncivilized”, it does represent a level of **justified frustration and anger** among many in Taiwan who perceive the government to be totally unresponsive to concerns expressed on a wide range of issues.*

Over the past years there have been many peaceful protests on issues such as land appropriation in Miaoli and Taipei City, the Fourth Nuclear Power plant, erosion of Taiwan’s economy and democracy due to President Ma’s pro-China policies, but the President has simply plowed ahead, oblivious of the citizens’ concerns.

*The extremely low popularity ratings of Mr. Ma (down to 9.2 percent according to a 15 September 2013 opinion poll by the **ERA Survey Research Center**) show that people are fed up with an unresponsive government that is insensitive to the concerns expressed at the grassroots level.*

The polls and the recent demonstrations also show this is not just a “blue-green” divide between the (blue) ruling Kuomintang and the (green) democratic opposition of the DPP. It is a much broader and pervasive discontent with the overall policies of the KMT government and the mindset of President Ma himself.

One would hope that not many more shoes will have to fly before President Ma comes to the conclusion that he needs to adjust his policies substantially. If he doesn't, then Taiwan's democracy will suffer. But fortunately there are upcoming elections in 2014 and 2016, and the essence of democracy is that the people can change their government.

Flawed pact with PRC in limbo

In our previous issue of *Taiwan Communiqué* (no. 143, pp. 9-11) we reported on the widespread protests against the **Service Trade Agreement** signed by the Ma administration on 21 June 2013. The agreement triggered the Constitutional crisis which erupted in September 2013, with President Ma wanting an early passage in the Legislative Yuan, while Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng preferred to give the legislature an opportunity to do a thorough evaluation of the pact.

KMT government pushes Service Trade Agreement

The standoff continued during the months of September, October and November 2013, with the KMT government repeatedly calling for a rapid completion of the review process, while the democratic opposition emphasizing that the agreement was detrimental to Taiwan's economy, and particularly to small and medium-size enterprises.

To rub salt into the wounds, Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang party and China's Communist party held a two-day economic forum in Nanjing at the end of October 2013, and concluded that they “*agree to facilitate the implementation of the cross-strait Service Trade Agreement as a top priority...*” It was also announced that a **Trade in Goods Agreement** was in the works, further tightening the economic ties between China and Taiwan. Many observers indicate they feel that Taiwan is already too economically dependent on China.

The government and legislature also conducted a series of hearings which were presumably intended to give affected groups and sectors an opportunity to let their voice be heard, but critics said these hearing were *pro forma* affairs, which gave the affected

organizations little chance to have any input. For instance, one series of eight hearings in the Legislative Yuan was rushed through behind closed doors in only three days.

Legislators also criticized the fact that the pact had been signed before any assessment reports had been completed. Taiwan Solidarity Union legislator Hsu Chung-hsin disclosed on 25 November 2013 that only two out of eight assessment reports commissioned by the Ma administration had been completed at the time of the agreement's signing on 21 June 2013.

Copyright: Taipei Times

Legislator Hsu said the government had gone ahead with the signing in spite of the fact that six reports on the assessment of the treaty's economic impact, one each by the Mainland Affairs Council, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, the Financial Supervisory Commission, the Council of Agriculture, and the Council of Labor Affairs had not been completed yet. He said that *"linking a trade agreement with China when there were only two impact assessment reports to refer to was like signing the agreement with our eyes closed."*



Taiwan's economy horse jumping into an abyss:
"There, we overcame yet another obstacle"

Organizations and civic groups protest PRC accord

Many professional organizations, civic groups, labor groups and students also continued to protest the accord. A few highlights from press reports in Taiwan:

- * On 30 September 2013, a group of **students from National Taiwan University** wanted to attend a hearing in the Legislative Yuan, but were barred by police in spite of the fact they had registered beforehand, so they eventually climbed over the fence.
- * At a 7 October 2013 hearing on the impact on the aviation industry, **leaders of several labor organizations** expressed concern about the unfairness and unequal terms of the agreement, and said the agreement would have a detrimental effect on the labor market.

- * On 10 October 2013, **the chairwoman of National Taiwan University’s Economics Department**, Prof. Jang Show-ling, reiterated her opposition to the agreement, saying that it was “based on backroom deals”, and that it violated three basic principles for trade agreements: 1) it has to be symmetrical, 2) it should not put commercial interests ahead of broader national interest, and 3) there must be a commitment to transparency. She said it failed miserably on all three points.
- * On 6 November 2013, **computer engineers** in Taiwan’s computer and telecommunication industry voiced their opposition at a press conference organized by the Taiwan Solidarity Union. The engineers said that thousands of jobs would be lost if the government allowed the influx of cheaper computer engineers from China. They also voiced concern on the issue of security, as many of the Chinese engineers would be able work on government contracts, and spy on behalf of Beijing.
- * On 7 November 2013, the **Taiwanese Association for Human Rights** spoke out, saying that allowing Chinese service, banking, insurance, and online service companies to enter Taiwan’s market would give them access to personal information of Taiwanese citizens, which would threaten the right to privacy.
- * Lastly, on 18 September 2013, the **Taiwan Society**, a civic group with chapters in Taipei and Kaohsiung, published a booklet titled “*Crisis of the Service Trade Agreement – a modern day Trojan Horse,*” containing several academic articles highlighting how the agreement would undermine Taiwan’s economy.

In particular the booklet emphasized that the agreement seems to be part of a hidden agenda of President Ma towards his goal of eventual unification with China. One author, former presidential advisor Huang Tien-ling, wrote that “*Beijing’s strategy of unification by trade is an open secret, which is why discussion of the agreement without a political deliberation would be foolish.*”

Ma’s “Diplomatic truce” takes a hit

The Gambia cuts ties with Taiwan

In a surprise move, the government of the West African country of The Gambia announced on 14 November 2013 that it was severing diplomatic ties with Taiwan. This brought the number of countries that Taiwan has diplomatic relations with down to twenty-two.

Initially, the government in Taipei tried to salvage the situation and sent a delegation to the capital Banjul, but the delegation didn't get to meet Gambian President Yahya Jammeh, and had to return empty-handedly.

It is the first time a country breaks relations with Taiwan since President Ma took office in 2008. It thus puts a dent in Ma's "diplomatic truce", his avowed policy in which China and Taiwan presumably respect each other's diplomatic relations.

Copyright: Taipei Times

Neither the foreign ministry in Taipei nor the embassy in Banjul reportedly saw the move coming. Until the last minute, relations were described as "excellent" and in April 2012 President Ma himself even visited the West African nation. A most memorable image from that visit was Ma and Gambian President Jammeh bantering and competing in doing pushups together.



Ma Ying-jeou on his "diplomatic truce" foreign policy horse: "You bumbling idiot! How did you end up here?"

The Taipei government was quick to emphasize that Beijing

was presumably not behind The Gambia's move. According to press reports, the main driver was Gambian President Jammeh's insistence on more financial aid from Taipei, to the tune of US\$ 10 million in cash, without any strings attached and allegedly also without the need of a receipt.

Taipei justifiably refused the request, but the episode laid bare another unsavory aspect of Taiwan's struggle to retain its diplomatic ties: that the – mainly poor and developing – countries with which Taiwan still has diplomatic relations, see ties with Taiwan as an opportunity for "checkbook diplomacy."

During the past decades, a number of small nations, particularly island nations in the Pacific, switched relations between Taipei and Beijing several times, in search of maximum benefits. Also, African countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Lesotho and Liberia have switched more than once, while Senegal and the Central African Republic have switched five times between Taiwan and China. According to former Gambian Foreign minister Sidi

Sanneh, this was initially driven by ideology, but later by economics and finance (“*Banjul-Taipei diplomatic rupture*”, *Taipei Times*, 19 November 2013).

Also, in an interpellation in the Taiwan legislature on 25 November 2013, a DPP legislator, Mr. Tsai Huang-liang, stated that over the years, countries that had severed relations with Taiwan had accumulated a total of more than US\$ 500 million in unpaid debts. He mentioned in particular Grenada (US\$ 28 mln), Macedonia (US\$ 72 mln), Niger (US\$ 72 mln), Costa Rica (290 mln) and Chad (30 mln).

Beijing is also implementing its checkbook diplomacy by granting lavish loans, particularly in impoverished African nations (which also happen to have rich oil deposits and other natural resources such as copper). This gives the few nations with which Taiwan still retains diplomatic ties the impression that they could be lured to switch ties in exchange for economic aid.

Will it have a domino effect?

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *Whether this will have a domino effect remains to be seen. Beijing has not jumped into the fray and announced ties with The Gambia, but the writing is on the wall for the current policy of hanging on to the few remaining diplomatic ties on the basis of the existing ROC framework.*

The “diplomatic truce” and Ma Ying-jeou’s “viable diplomacy” to incrementally expand Taiwan’s international space are simply fraught with uncertainty as they are totally dependent on Beijing’s goodwill. In other words, Taiwan is not standing on its own legs, but has to rely on a crutch that can be taken away at the whim of the leaders in Beijing.

*President Ma’s policy of relying on Beijing’s mercy to retain its current diplomatic ties, and to expand Taiwan international space **has** significantly undercut Taiwan’s sovereignty. Increasingly, other nations do not see Taiwan as a free and democratic nation in its own right, but more as a fuzzy “One China” extension of the Peoples’ Republic of China.*

This is indeed what the PRC has been pushing: Taiwan’s “meaningful participation” in the World Health Organization as well as its “guest status” in ICAO came at a price: Beijing insisted that Taiwan was referred to as “Taiwan, Province of China” in the WHO while its status in the ICAO meeting was even more fuzzy.

So, if Taiwan wants to retain its freedom, democracy, and independence it needs to move towards a more clear cut policy that emphasizes the values that it shares with the democratic West. Moving towards normalization of relations with the major Western powers is in the interest of Taiwan itself and long-term stability in the Taiwan Strait.

In this context, we need to emphasize that the approach recently proposed by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies is unwise. In a report brought out in early December 2013, CSIS proposed that the US push for changes to membership rules of international organizations, so that Taiwan can join them.

*In our view this approach would violate the principle of universality, which is embedded in the Charter of the United Nations. Under that principle Taiwan has the same right as all other countries to be a full and equal member in the international community, and should be invited to join as a **regular** member.*

Taiwan - Philippines relations thaw

Closing the fisheries conflict episode

In May 2013, relations between Taiwan and the Philippines turned very sour after a Taiwanese fisherman was killed in an encounter with the Philippine Coast Guard near the Philippines' territorial waters. The subsequent hotheaded reactions from the government in Taipei almost led to armed confrontations (see our report titled *The Philippine-Taiwan fisheries crisis* in **Taiwan Communiqué** no. 142, pp. 4-12).

However, after some heavy leaning by the United States on both of its allies, cooler heads prevailed and an agreement was reached. On 7 August 2013, authorities in Manila did release a report on the shooting. The report detailed the sequence of events after the Coast Guard vessel ordered the fishing boat to stop and allow Coast Guard personnel to board for inspection.

The fishing boat attempted to escape, prompting a 75 minute chase during which the Coast Guard fired a total of 108 bullets at the Taiwanese fishing boat, 45 of which hit the ship, with one bullet killing the fisherman who was hiding inside. The report concluded that the Coast Guard personnel violated the rules of engagement when employing the weapons, and that the excessive use of force warranted judicial proceedings against the commander of the PCG vessel, Mr. Arnold Dela Cruz y Enriquez and seven of his crew members.

The Philippines' National Bureau of Investigation subsequently announced that it would bring homicide charges against the eight Philippine Coast Guard officers involved in the shooting. The Manila government reportedly also reached an agreement with the family of the fisherman killed in the incident about a compensation package.

In response to the Philippines' moves, the Taiwan authorities announced on 8 August 2013 that Taiwan was lifting all eleven sanctions it imposed against Manila on 15 May 2013, a week after the shooting took place off an island in the north of the Philippines.

On 12 August 2013 the respective representatives in Manila and Taipei resumed their duties. The two countries also announced that they would start fisheries talks soon.

Taiwan provides disaster relief assistance

The damage and destruction caused by super-typhoon Haiyan / Yolanda provided an opportunity to improve relations further, and indeed Taiwan came through with significant disaster aid.

Photo: AFP/Getty Images

According to press reports in Taipei, as of 18 November 2013, NGOs and the public had donated some 130 ton of relief supplies worth approx. US\$ 2.7 mln., which were flown to the hardest-hit areas in the Philippines in 18 flights by C-130 Hercules transport planes of Taiwan's Air Force.



Destruction due to typhoon Haiyan

Also, on 24 November 2013, a Taiwanese naval vessel departed from Kaohsiung to

Cebu City in the Philippines to deliver some 150 tons of relief supplies destined for the hardest-hit areas. The goods were estimated worth around US\$6.6 million.

The moral and strategic imperatives for a pro-active approach by Taiwan in providing disaster relief were laid out by former Chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan, ambassador Nat Bellocchi, in an article in the **Taipei Times** dated 15 November 2013.

Former President Chen five years in prison

In *Taiwan Communiqué* issue no. 143 (September - October 2013) we reported on recent developments surrounding the imprisoned former President Chen Shui-bian, in particular the call for medical parole for him in a resolution introduced in the US House of Representatives: HCR46 was introduced by Congressman Robert Andrews (D-NJ) on 30 July 30, 2013.

Andrews reiterates support for medical parole

On 20 September 2013, Congressman Andrews (D-NJ) reiterated his appeal for medical parole in a “Dear Colleague” letter to all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives urging them to co-sponsor HCR46 that concludes that: *“Congress urges the Government of Taiwan to grant former President Chen Shui-bian medical parole to ensure that he receives the highest level of medical attention, effective immediately.”*

Photo: Associated Press

The letter was titled: “Granting Former President Chen of Taiwan Medical Parole” and read as follows: *“Mr. Chen has languished in jail since December 2008 on corruption charges that Taiwan observers claim are politically motivated. Because of Mr. Chen’s present poor physical and mental health, it is time that the former President is granted medical parole on humanitarian grounds so he can receive the treatment he needs.”*



Former President Chen

It quotes from the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act: *“The preservation and enhancement of the human rights of all the people of Taiwan are hereby reaffirmed as objectives of the United States”*, and continues: *“The fact that a former head of state is treated in such a deplorable manner is clearly in violation of the values of democracy and human rights that we as a nation hold high. Congress cannot be silent when we believe these standards are not being met.”*

It concludes: *“Mr. Chen should be allowed to pick a care provider of his own choice and the process of granting medical parole needs to start right away. In Taiwan, the judicial system allows for medical parole and it is time for the government to allow Mr. Chen this right.”*

Chen's health condition getting worse

In the meantime, visitors who were able to visit the former President in Pei-teh Prison in Taichung say that his condition is getting worse. They indicate that he stutters at almost every word, that his hands tremble continuously, and he has difficulty balancing, and would fall down if not assisted by an aide. The former president also expressed his deep frustration at the indignity of having video cameras in the toilet and bath.

According to the visitors he also suffers from a series of other illnesses, including sleep apnea, which reportedly requires surgery, incontinence which is believed to be caused by his brain atrophy and other neurological problems. His also suffers from prostate problems, and has frequent headaches.

According to the reports Chen has difficulty sleeping, so during the daytime he is often drowsy and dozes off. One improvement is that in this prison he is allowed turn the lights in the room off as needed: in his previous cell in Taipei Prison, where he was held until September 2012, the light was kept on day and night.

Visitors also debunk reports put out by the Ministry of Justice that Chen is doing gardening: due to his constant tremors and his difficulty in balancing, he is not even able to squat, and his hand tremors are such that he couldn't even hold on to one vegetable for planting.

Finally, reports also indicate that Chen was also deeply disturbed by the fact that all his meeting and discussions with visitors are taped. When a visitor asked him a question about a sensitive topic, Chen pointed at the microphone on the table and stuttered intensely: *"how can I tell you anything truthfully with this thing here!"*

The visitor concluded that it is obvious he is afraid to say anything that might cause the authorities to give him a bad time or even take away his privileges.

* * * * *

In Memoriam David Dean

On 27 October 2013, Mr. David Dean, the first chairman of the board of the American Institute in Taiwan, passed away in Springfield, VA. He was 88 years old.

Mr. Dean served as a US naval aviator in the Western Pacific during and after World War II. He subsequently received his undergraduate degree from Harvard and his Master's degree from Columbia. He entered the US Foreign Service in 1951 and was

posted in Malaya and The Netherlands. In 1957 he went to Taiwan for language training at Taichung.

He subsequently rose through the ranks in the Foreign Service, and in the 1960s served as the political counselor and Charge d'Affaires in at the US Embassy in Taipei, and Deputy Principal Officer at the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong.

In the 1970s he served as deputy chief of mission in Peking from 1976 to mid-1978. He then became Director of the Office of Research and Analysis for East Asia and Pacific in the Department of State.

His most important contribution was made after US de-recognition of the Kuomintang government in Taipei in 1979, when he was appointed Chairman of the Board of the newly-formed American Institute in Taiwan. In that capacity he worked hard to ensure that the US relationship with Taiwan would not wither after the breaking off of relations.

His lifelong interest in Taiwan and China was inspired by his years of service as a Navy pilot in the Western Pacific during World War II. He described his experiences in Asia in his forthcoming book, titled "*Unofficial Diplomacy: the American Institute in Taiwan, a Memoir.*"



David Dean 1925 - 2013

Mr. Dean is also credited with drafting President Reagan's "Six Assurances", a 1982 document presented to then-President Chiang Ching-kuo by then AIT-Taipei Director Jim Lilley, assuring Taiwan, amongst other things, that the US would not set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan, would not agree to prior consultations with Beijing on Taiwan arms sales, and would not play a mediation role between China and Taiwan.

Mr. David Dean subsequently also served as Director of AIT-Taipei during the crucial 1987-1989 period, when Taiwan was going through the initial phases of its momentous transition to democracy.

After his retirement he settled in Springfield, Virginia. He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Mary Alice Dean, his brother Jonathan Dean, and two sons and their families. A memorial service was held on 15 November 2013 in Springfield, Virginia.

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The goals of FAPA are: 1) to promote international support for the right of the people of Taiwan (Formosa) to establish an independent and democratic country, and to join the international community; 2) to advance the rights and interests of Taiwanese communities throughout the world; and 3) to promote peace and security for Taiwan

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