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“28 February 1947”

Taiwan’s Holocaust Remembered

The date “February 28” is etched into the hearts and minds of the Taiwanese people like the word “Holocaust” in the history of the Jewish people. On that day, 50 years ago in 1947, an incident took place in Taipei, which led to the massive slaughter of thousands of Taiwanese at the hands of Chiang Kai-shek’s Chinese troops.

After the end of World War II, the Allied Forces left the occupation of Taiwan to Chiang, who was still holding on to large parts of China with his Nationalist forces. The Taiwanese, who had been under Japanese rule from 1895 through 1945, initially welcomed the Chinese Nationalist forces. But their joy soon changed into sorrow and anger, when the new authorities turned out to be repressive and corrupt.

The 28 February 1947 arrest of a woman selling cigarettes without a license was the spark which led to large-scale public protests against repression and corruption. For some ten days, Chiang — still on the mainland — and his governor Chen



Yi kept up the pretense of negotiations with leaders of the protest movement, but at the same time they sent troops from the mainland.

As soon as the troops arrived, they started rounding up and executing people, in particular scholars, lawyers, doctors, students and local leaders of the protest movement. In total between 18,000 and 28,000 people were murdered. Thousands of others were arrested and imprisoned in the "White Terror" campaign which took place in the following decade. Many of these remained imprisoned until the early 1980s.

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, the Formosans, despite the Cairo Declaration, hoped for a guaranteed neutrality under American or international trusteeship. Instead, they were delivered over to another and more oppressive occupation.

Their prosperous society was invaded by a horde of mainland Chinese, often brutal, ignorant, and greedy -- the dregs of the Nationalist army. The new governor, under orders, bled the island dry, ruthlessly and with dispatch.

Yet still the Formosans hoped. American propaganda, promising freedom to all oppressed peoples, and citing the glorious Revolution of 1776, continued to pour in upon them. In February 1947 unarmed Formosans rose en masse to demand reforms in the administration at Taipei. Chiang Kai-shek's answer was a brutal massacre. Thousands died -- first among them were the leaders who had asked for American help. Washington turned a deaf ear, while the Chinese communists rejoiced.

After Chiang's military collapse and retreat to Formosa the situation became even worse. As American emotional commitment to Chiang became more fervent, Formosan hope for American or United Nations intervention or understanding faded and died.

George H. Kerr, "Formosa Betrayed."

History of Repression

Until a few years ago, the events of 1947 were a taboo subject on the island. The Kuomintang authorities did not want to be reminded of their dark past, and the people did not dare to speak out for fear of retribution by the KMT's secret police.

It was the courageous work of an American diplomat, who helped document the event: Mr. George H. Kerr worked at the US Consulate in Taipei at the time of the massacre, and observed many atrocities in person. He later on set out to write down his observations and research, which was published in 1965 as "Formosa Betrayed", published by Houghton Mifflin, and republished in 1992 by the Taiwan Publishing Co., Irvine CA, fax (714) 863-3141.

Other important sources of information on the incident and the massacre are the writings of **New York Times** journalists Henry R. Lieberman and Tillman Durdin and his wife Peggy Durdin. Tillman Durdin's most extensive article on the tragic events, "Formosa killings are put at 10,000, foreigners say the Chinese slaughtered demonstrators

Police on trucks roamed Taipeh shooting into unarmed crowds. Troops knocked on doors of houses and shot the first person who appeared. They looted left and right. Thousands of Formosans were arrested and jailed. It was evidently a common practice to bind prisoners with thin wire. The dead bodies of bound men were found every morning on the streets, some beheaded or castrated.

Newsweek, 7 April 1947

without provocation," was published in the New York Times on 29 March 1947. Peggy Durdin wrote two haunting essays in **The Nation**: "Terror in Taiwan" on 24 May 1947 and "Taiwan: China's unhappy colony" on 7 June 1947.

When the harsh martial law was lifted in 1987, the newly-formed Taiwanese democratic opposition and the courageous Presbyterian Church started to push the Kuomintang authorities to stop covering up the facts, and to come to a full airing of the matter. It wasn't until 1990 that the Kuomintang finally decided — albeit reluctantly — to open the records. In 1992 President Lee asked for reconciliation and decided that a monument would be built in Taipei (other memorials had been built earlier by DPP County Magistrates, the main ones in Chiayi and Pingtung).

An inscription for the 2-28 monument

A “2-28 Monument” was unveiled in Taipei in February 1995, which was designed by Mr. Cheng Tze-tsai, a former political prisoner. However, the event was marred by a controversy over the inscription for the monument: families of the victims found the inscription prepared by the Executive Yuan unacceptable because it tried to whitewash the incident and attempted to rationalize the policies of the KMT on the bloody 1947 crackdown. Thus, the plaque was left blank on the day of 1995 dedication.

However, recently a committee consisting of scholars from National Taiwan University and the Academia Sinica started to draft a new memorial text, which does hold the Kuomintang government responsible for the massacre. On 22 January 1997, the **Liberty Times** in Taipei reported that the new text for the memorial had been completed and approved by the board of the 228 Memorial Foundation. It will be inscribed on the 228 monument to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the incident.

The committee which was responsible for drafting the text met more than 20 times to carefully weigh the meaning of each word. The most sensitive issue was whether Chiang Kai-shek’s name should be mentioned as bearing responsibility for the massacre. Finally the majority of the committee members voted in favor of including Chiang’s name. The following is a translation of the text describing the massacre:

“Governor Chen Yi asked for the dispatch of troops from Nanking. The chairman of the Nationalist government Chiang Kai-shek, without conducting a thorough investigation, responded by sending troops to Taiwan to crack down on (the protesters).

On March 8, the 21st Division of the army under the command of general Liu Yu-ching landed (in Keelung) and as the troops moved down to southern part of Taiwan, they began to shoot indiscriminately. On March 10, martial law was declared. The chief of staff of the Garrison Command, general Ke Yuan-fen, the commander of the fort of Keelung, general Shih Hung-hsi, the commander of the fort of Kaohsiung, general Peng Meng-chi, and the chief of the commander of the military police Chang Mu-tao were responsible for the death of many innocent people during the subsequent crackdown and purges.

Within a few months, the number of deaths, injured and missing persons amounted to tens of thousands. Keelung, Taipei, Chiayi and Kaohsiung suffered the highest number of casualties. It was called the February 28 Incident.”

The military cover-up continues

However, on the side of the military, the cover-up still continues. The democratic opposition has urged the government to identify those responsible for the massacre and to prosecute those who are still alive. According to historical records the then-Governor Chen Yi was a key figure. He was subsequently promoted to be governor of Fukien, but was later ordered to be executed by Chiang Kai-shek. Many military men involved in the massacre later rose to high positions in the Kuomintang hierarchy. Most of these are now in retirement, some in the United States.

According to a report in the **Far Eastern Economic Review** (*"Past Time"*, 23 March 1995), a former body guard of Governor Chen Yi, Mr. Shu Tao, also implicated Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek himself: Mr. Shu recently told a press conference in Taipei that he was present when the then Governor received a telegram from Chiang ordering him to suppress any opposition. According to Shu, the message was chillingly concise: "Kill them all, keep it secret."

Mr. Shu was then ordered to pass the telegram on to general Ke Yuan-fen, then chief of the Command of State Security, the forerunner of the infamous Taiwan Garrison Command. Mr. Ke is considered one of the people primarily responsible for the atrocities during and after the 1947 Incident. Historians in Taiwan believe the document could be among the personal papers of general Ke, who lived in retirement in Monterey Park in Southern California, and passed away recently.

Another person responsible for the tragedy, General Peng Meng-chi, is living in retirement in Taiwan. He conducted a reign of terror in the southern city of Kaohsiung, and was often referred to as the "Butcher of Kaohsiung." Up until now the Kuomintang authorities have failed to charge him for the crimes he committed.

Scholars who want to conduct research about the February 28 incident complain that they cannot get access to a number of government archives. Although the Executive Yuan's Ad Hoc Committee on 2-28 Incident has so far issued two volumes of findings from the archives, the Department of Defense continues to refuse to make public records in its archives covering the period from 1945 to 1950.

Taiwan becoming Taiwan

National Development Conference: changing course

From 23th through 28th December 1996, the Taiwan authorities organized a multi-party conference in Taipei aimed at gaining a broader consensus on the island on Taiwan's future. Some 170 delegates from the KMT, DPP, and New Party met for five days of discussions, and decided to:

1. continue an active foreign diplomacy, striving for international recognition as a separate entity,
2. streamline the governmental system by starting to dismantle the Provincial Government and National Assembly, and
3. realign the responsibilities of the President and the Legislative Yuan.

In particular points 2) and 3) will still need to be formalized by the National Assembly in an upcoming session in the first half of 1997.

The reforms are significant, because they start to revamp the anachronistic Kuomintang government system left over from the 1940s, and move towards a new system that reflects Taiwan's present-day political reality.

Continuing international diplomacy

In the first significant development, the Democratic Progressive Party delegates joined the Kuomintang delegates in support of President Lee Teng-hui's policy of seeking to enhance Taiwan's separate diplomatic standing by winning international recognition. The pro-unification New Party, which broke away from the Kuomintang in 1993, walked out of the conference in protest.

According to an AP-Dow Jones News Service report on December 27th, this shows how the old doctrine of China-Taiwan reunification is giving way to a new feeling of Taiwan-for-the-Taiwanese, and to a further marginalization of the pro-unification camp in Taiwanese society.

A joint statement by the Kuomintang and Democratic Progressive Party stated that "...only by pursuing a progressive foreign policy shall we be able to develop relations with the mainland without losing our dignity."

The conference also rejected proposals to end a 47-year-old ban on shipping and airlines with China, insisting that China must first cease its hostility towards Taiwan. The Conference decided that the relationship between Taiwan and China should be "...based on a framework that guarantees the safety and prosperity of Taiwan."

Discarding the Provincial Government ...

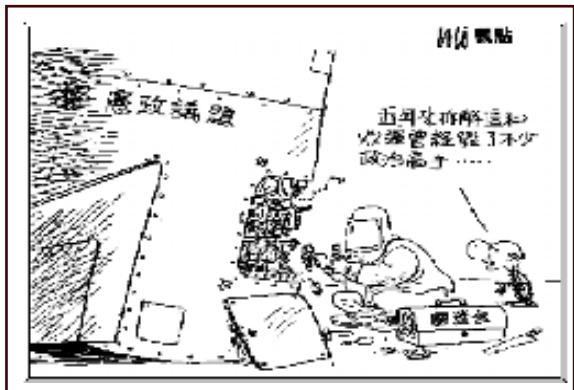
In another significant development, the Conference agreed to start dismantling the Provincial government, by suspending the elections for the Provincial Government and Assembly, which are generally considered to be redundant.

The Provincial government is an outdated anachronism from the late 1940s, when the Kuomintang authorities fled China and occupied Taiwan, which had been under Japanese rule until 1945. The KMT then declared Taiwan a province of China, and instituted a provincial government and assembly.

The democratic opposition parties of the DPP and Taiwan Independence Party (TAIP) have repeatedly urged the KMT to discard these hold-overs from its shady "Republic of China" past, and progress towards a new status as a fully free and independent Taiwan.

This reform is thus long overdue. For 50 years, the KMT government maintained two layers of government, a central government and a provincial government that virtually duplicates many functions of the central government.

Economically, it also makes sense to scrap the provincial government. It has a vast and inefficient bureaucracy of more than 30,000 persons on an annual budget of US\$13 billion, which is mostly financed by the central government. Business leaders have long complained about the inefficiency of the bureaucracy that is the major obstacle to Taiwan's international competitiveness. Eliminating the provincial government will greatly cut waste and inefficiency.



National Development Conference: "Trying to repair the Kuomintang's outdated mechanisms."

Governor James Soong, a mainlander who until now supported President Lee's reforms, angrily offered his resignation in protest. Soong's resignation reflects his own frustration that this move suggests he has been sidelined in the struggle for presidential succession. However, after some soothing words by President Lee and Premier Lien Chan, Mr. Soong flip-flopped and returned to work on January 21.

... and the National Assembly

Another redundant governmental institution on its way out is the 334-member National Assembly, the largely ceremonial body which until the direct popular elections of March 1996 was responsible for the "election" of the President, a tightly KMT-controlled procedure which over the past 40 years always resulted in the "election" of the KMT candidate.

From the 1940s through the 1980s the Assembly overwhelmingly consisted of old KMT stalwarts elected on the mainland in 1947. It wasn't until the early 1990s that the KMT allowed elections for all seats of the National Assembly.

The only remaining function of the National Assembly is approval of amendments of the Constitution, and in the next few months it will be called upon to decide on its own gradual dismantling. The December 1996 National Development Conference decided that elections for the Assembly will be suspended and that the number of seats will be reduced. In the future the members of the Assembly will be appointed by the parties, pro-rata the percentage won by the parties in the elections for the Legislative Yuan, thus avoiding fractious elections, which over the past years have led to much corruption in Taiwan.

The President and the Legislative Yuan

The Conference also agreed to a realignment of powers between the President and the increasingly influential Legislative Yuan. The membership of the Legislative Yuan will be increased from the present 164 to 200 or more, and the term of office will be four years instead of the present three years.

The President will in the future have the power to appoint a Premier, and not have to go through a legislative approval procedure. At present the Legislative Yuan is holding up the approval of President Lee's appointment of vice president Lien Chan as prime minister, a dual position which many in the legislature consider unconstitutional.

The president will also have the power to dissolve the Legislative Yuan, necessitating new elections, but in return the Legislative Yuan will have the power to dismiss the Premier and the Cabinet through a no-confidence vote. The Legislative Yuan gained the power of impeachment, which is currently being held by the largely ineffective Control Yuan.

Furthermore, the Legislative Yuan will be able to audit and investigate government agencies, and will adopt a committee-type hearing system.

The U.S. and China

Mr. Clinton acknowledges “constructive engagement” fails to enhance human rights

On Tuesday, 28 January 1997, at his first news conference in his second term of office, President Clinton acknowledged that his policy of “constructive engagement” had failed to spur the Chinese Communist authorities towards respect for human rights in China.

However, Mr. Clinton still defended the policy, and stated that he believed that “...the impulse of society and the nature of economic change will work together, along with the availability of information from the outside world, to increase the spirit of liberty over time.” He added: I don’t think that there’s any way that anyone who disagrees with that in China can hold that back.it’s inevitable, just as inevitable the Berlin Wall fell.”

In an editorial a couple of days later, the New York Times cautioned that it would be a mistake to adopt a passive American policy based on that optimistic prospect, as Mr. Clinton seems to be doing (“*The Berlin Wall and China*”, **New York Times**, 30 January 1997). The New York Times editorial termed Mr. Clinton’s faith in the power of trade and information to liberate China “...stirring but unrealistic and his analogy to the Berlin Wall oversimplified.”

The New York Times referred to the repression of political dissidents in China, to the Chinese intentions to restrict civil liberties in Hong Kong, and concluded there is little likelihood of political liberalization anytime soon.

The **Washington Post**, in its editorial on this issue (“*China’s human rights violations*”, 31 January 1997) equally concluded that Mr. Clinton was too optimistic, and emphasized that it would be a mistake to conclude that pressure on China on the issue of human rights could be reduced. The Post emphasized “...Americans must be true to themselves. That does not mean neglecting every other consideration but it does mean speaking out on things that matter.”

When will the Great Wall fall ?

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *The question is thus, will the Great Wall fall, and if so, when ? Mr. Clinton’s parallel of the Berlin Wall and the Great Wall in China in itself is a good one: both walls were designed to prevent the free flow of people and information.*

However, we agree with both the New York Times and Washington Post that a much firmer policy towards China is required, not only from the United States, but also from Europe, which has done its share of cuddling up to the dictators in Beijing, before the Chinese rulers will relent and show some improvement of human rights and respect for democratic principles.

The US and Europe should beware of new Chinese attempts to drive a wedge between the two sides of the Atlantic by playing them out against each other, whether on the issue of trade or human rights. In particular the sudden Chinese offer to reopen the long-stagnant dialogue with the European Union on human rights — planned for 14 February 1997 in Singapore — must be seen as an attempt to forestall a joint US-European sponsorship of the annual resolution condemning China at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

The John Huang - China connection

Another issue which continues to mar US-China relations is the John Huang / Lippo case. In our previous issue we referred to a 10 November 1996 report by the **London Times** that the John Huang connection and the Indonesian/Chinese Lippo Group may have been part of a Chinese spy operation designed to gain insight information on matters like the United States negotiating position on Most Favored Nation status (**Taiwan Communiqué** no. 73, p. 9).

Subsequently, two other major publications — the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal — published reports presenting indications that this may have been the case.

On 3 January 1997, the New York Times printed an article by columnist William Safire (published as “*Has Chinese intelligence penetrated the White House*” in the **International Herald Tribune**, 4 January 1997), in which the author points to a number of pieces of evidence which indicate that the Chinese were able to get a significant amount of confidential information.

A second investigative article was written by Mr. Peter Schweizer and published in the **Wall Street Journal** (“*Lippo’s Chinese Connections*”, 15 January 1997). Mr. Schweizer states that “Questions swirling around former Deputy Assistant Commerce Secretary John Huang, the Lippo group of Indonesia and the fund-raising activities of Charles Yan Lin Trie may well be linked by the shadow efforts of the Chinese military to influence U.S. foreign and military policy.”



China to the U.S.: "I want to select my own goodies."

Mr. Schweizer presents detailed information on the links between John Huang / Lippo and the Chinese military establishment, in particular COSTIND, the Chinese Commission on Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense.

The article refers to the meeting arranged with Mr. Clinton at the White House by another operative in the affair, Arkansas restaurant owner Charlie Trie, for Mr. Wang Jun, a Chinese arms dealer, who is chairman of Poly Technologies, a front for COSTIND. Mr. Wang also happens to be the son of one of China's most vengeful hardliners, Wang Zhen. During the Tienanmen Incident, the older Wang was one of the most relentless advocates of crushing the pro-democracy movement.

Mr. Schweizer describes how COSTIND and its front organizations such as Poly Technologies manage arms sales to countries such as Iraq, North Korea and Pakistan, how they acquire advanced dual use technologies to assist in the modernization of the PLA, and, thirdly, serve as conduits for intelligence operations.

Mr. Schweizer argues that in gaining access to the upper levels of the Commerce Department, the Chinese were probably most interested in gaining access to high technology, in particular dual-use technologies, which have both civilian and military applications.

The article gives several examples when the Commerce Department, which is responsible for licensing exports for dual-use items, overrode objections from U.S. military and intelligence officials, and approved the export of machine tools (the McDonnell Douglas case we described earlier) and of AT&T telecommunication technology to China. The latter case involved Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM) and Digital Synchronous Hierarchy equipment to HuaMei Company. Pentagon officials in 1994 warned Commerce that such equipment would greatly enhance the capability of the Chinese military in their command and control of military operations. At Commerce, the warnings fell on deaf ears.

Hosting the Tienanmen General

Yet another dark blotch on U.S. - China relations was the December 1996 visit to the United States of General Chi Haotien, the PLA general who commanded the Chinese troops which were responsible for the Tienanmen massacre in June 1989. Mr. Chi was given a red-carpet treatment in Washington and visited a myriad of U.S. military installations from Norfolk, Virginia to Honolulu, Hawaii.

At a speech to students at the U.S. National Defense University Mr. Chi had the audacity to reiterate China's intention to use military force against Taiwan.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *While some type of communication between the U.S. and the Chinese military may be necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings, a full reception in Washington capped by a 19-gun salute and a meeting with Mr. Clinton is an insult to those who died at Tienanmen and to those who achieved democracy in Taiwan. It represents a dangerous coddling of the most repressive elements of an already repressive regime.*

China increases weapons purchases

Israel providing China with early-warning radar

In our October 1996 issue we referred briefly to a **Defense News** report that Israel is planning to sell an advanced Phalcom radar system to the Chinese, which would provide 360-degree coverage for fighters at a range of more than 200 nautical miles.

In the beginning of January 1997, Defense News published further details on the plans, indicating that Israel seems to want to push ahead with the plans in spite of American and Russian objections (*"Israel pushes China aircraft deal despite US, Russian objections"*, **Defense News**, January 6-12, 1997).

Oddly, the deal involves an Ilyushin-76 transport plane, which would be reconfigured to accept the radar system and thus serve as an upgraded early-warning aircraft. The Russians are hesitating to release the plane, which is being worked on by the Moscow-based company Brev. The Israeli's intend to discuss the issue at the upcoming Moscow visit of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in March 1997.

British sale of Searchwater radar ?

In the October 1996 issue of *Taiwan Communiqué* we also reported on Defense News reports that Britain's Racal Electronics plc. was considering selling a 40-million British pounds Searchwater naval radar system to the Chinese for installation on Y-8 aircraft operating in the Taiwan Straits and the areas around the Paracels and Spratley's.

A recent Defense News issue reported that the delivery of up to eight over-the-horizon systems are now pending (*"China, Britain seal deal for Searchwater radar"*, **Defense News**, 20-26 January 1997).

Buying two destroyers from Russia

Other reports indicate that the Chinese are also purchasing two Russian-built destroyers, which are armed with the supersonic, long-range SS-N22 (Sunburn) antiship missile.

According to the **Wall Street Journal**, the US\$ 800 million deal for the two Sovremenny-class destroyers was secretly agreed upon during Premier Li Peng's trip

in late December 1996 (“*Beijing quietly agrees to buy two warships from Russia*”, WSJ, 14 January 1997). According to the report, this acquisition advances the technology of China’s fleet by a decade, and moves China much closer to its goal of building a blue-water navy, that would enhance its power in naval conflicts with its neighbors in the Pacific Rim.

The Journal also reported that China is considering purchasing up to 50 Sukhoi S-30 MK top-of-the line fighter aircraft, which could be used in longer-range bombing missions, and thus further enhance China’s offensive capabilities, especially in a potential clash with Taiwan.

China improving accuracy of its missiles

In the summer of 1995, and again in February-March 1996, China caused a major crisis in East Asia by launching missiles into an area just off the coast of Taiwan. The missile firings and the accompanying military exercises were generally considered to be intimidation tactics, designed to scare the Taiwanese away from moving further on the road to a free and independent Taiwan.

While China’s present missile arsenal is seen as less than accurate, there are recent reports indicating that the Chinese are working hard to increase the accuracy of the missiles, and are increasing the capabilities to strike Taiwan. According to an article in the **Wall Street Journal** by Mr. Richard D. Fisher of the Asia Studies Center of the Washington-based Heritage Foundation, China is turning Fukien Province, opposite Taiwan, into a ready launch area for the very mobile DF-15 missile, which has a range of 360 miles (“*China’s Missiles Threat*”, WSJ, 30 December 1996).

The WSJ-article describes how the DF-15 missile can be easily moved from their larger bases in Anhui Province to scores of presurveyed launch areas in Fukien. These preparations enable China to carry out more accurate DF-15 attacks against Taiwan.

The article also describes China’s efforts to enhance the accuracy of the DF-15 with American global positioning satellite technology. The present strike capability of the DF-15 is already quite accurate, with a circular error probability of 300 meters radius. With GPS inputs, the DF-15 would become one of the most accurate battlefield missiles in the world.

The WSJ article furthermore mentions the improvements China is making on the accuracy of the DF-21 intermediate range missile, which has a range of 1125 miles.

Two of these missiles were launched against Taiwan in the summer of 1995. The Chinese are reportedly working on a radar-based terminal guidance system, which would match pictures obtained by the missile's radar to digital map pictures in the missile's computer, resulting in an accuracy of better than 50-meter radius.

A similar assessment as the Wall Street Journal's was made in mid-December 1996 in an article in **Defense News** ("*Chinese Strive to boost range, aim of missiles*", 9-15 December 1996). In the article, Barabara Opall reports on a visit to the Airshow China '96 in the beginning of November 1996, and states: "Engineers and technical researchers interviewed ... revealed a myriad achievements in advanced propulsion, terminal guidance, digital mapping and satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS) technology."

The Defense News article also reveals that the Chinese have developed a short-range air defense missile called LY-60, or Hunting Eagle, and are working to significantly improve the guidance technology of their cruise missiles. The extended range C-301 missile could fly up to 180 kilometers (enough to cross the Taiwan Straits) at twice the speed of sound.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *all the abovementioned developments indicate that China is quickly developing a capability to threaten Taiwan and other neighboring East Asian nations much more than it has in the past. This may lead to major instability in East Asia. It is thus essential that all governments concerned, Israel, Great Britain, Russia and the United States, immediately take steps to stop the proposed sales and strictly limit the transfer of technology to China, which is enabling China to proceed with these developments.*

Israel *should be aware of the fact it is selling weaponry to a belligerent bully which is threatening its much smaller neighbors. Many of the practices of the Chinese are equivalent to those of the Nazis. By supplying this system to the Chinese, Israel is thus becoming a "merchant of death." We thus urge the Israeli authorities to act responsibly and to call off the sale.*

*In the same way, **Great Britain** should take steps to stop the sale of the Searchwater radar. The UK authorities would not appreciate it either if Taiwan would start supplying weapons to the IRA terrorists. We thus urge the London authorities to prevent advanced radar systems from falling in the hands of the Peoples' Liberation Army terrorists in Beijing who repress their own people, and who threaten Taiwan.*

*Finally, we call upon the **US authorities** to be less gullible about its relations with China, and to ensure that China does not obtain US dual-use technologies which could enhance China's military offensive capabilities. The American track record in this area has been flawed at best (see our earlier articles about leakage of e.g. McDonnell technology to China).*

China continues arrogant bullying

Tibetan music scholar sentenced

At the end of December 1996, Mr. Ngawang Choephel, a Tibetan music scholar, was sentenced to 18 years imprisonment by the Chinese authorities for “espionage.” Mr. Choephel was a Fulbright scholar studying and teaching at Middlebury College in Vermont.

Mr. Choephel had gone back to Tibet in 1995 to video-tape traditional songs and dances, which he feared are being eradicated by the Chinese repressive policies. He was arrested in September 1995, and for more than a year the Chinese authorities kept him incarcerated, incommunicado and without trial.



Only after an international campaign by Tibetan organizations, and expressions

Mr. Choephel at work in Kathmandu, in preparation for his trip to Tibet (photo: Cathryn Culley / ICT).

of deep concern by members of the US Congress did the Chinese authorities acknowledge they were holding Mr. Choephel. After the usual mock trial, they then sentenced him to 18 years imprisonment.

Veto on UN-role in Guatemala peace process

In another show of arrogance, on 10 January 1997 the Chinese vetoed a United Nations resolution designed to bring peace to Guatemala. The UN resolution was to approve the deployment of 155 military observers to monitor the implementation of a peace agreement between the Guatemalan authorities and anti-government rebels. The December 29 peace agreement took six years of negotiations, and ended 36 years of fighting, during which some 100,000 people were killed and another 40,000 disappeared.

China was reported piqued at Guatemala's diplomatic ties with Taiwan, and was abusing the occasion to try to push Taiwan into even tighter isolation.

However, after 10 days of negotiations and threats by supporters of the plan to put the plan before the 185-member General Assembly, where it would certainly have been approved overwhelmingly, it was announced in New York on 21 January that China had reversed its veto and was agreeing to the deployment of the UN peace keepers. According to press reports Guatemala, a strong supporter of the annual campaign for Taiwan's membership in the UN, had agreed not to pursue that support during the coming year.

The Washington Post aptly commented: "China's contention that the United States should "delink" various issues in dealing with Beijing — trade and human rights for example — isn't strengthened when China links unrelated issues in this way. And China's desire to win respect as a world power can only suffer from such pettiness" (*"Peace becomes a pawn ..."*, **Washington Post**, 20 January 1997).

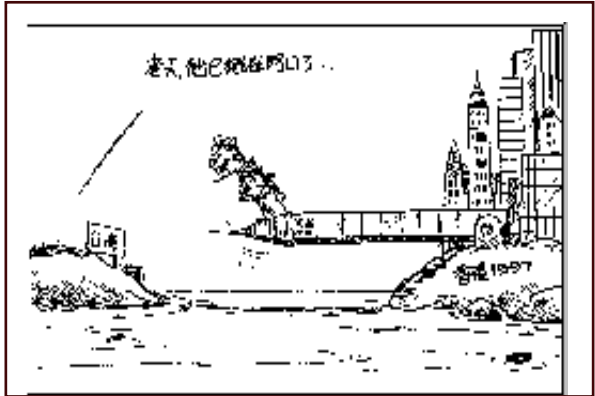
Strangling Freedoms in Hong Kong

The third instance of the complete disregard for democratic values and human rights by the Chinese was the establishment of an "Interim Legislature" in December 1996, which will presumably replace the elected Legislative Council now in place. A few weeks later — on 21 January 1997 — it was also announced that a China-appointed committee was proposing that some 25 laws and measures, including the 1991 Bill of Rights be scrapped.

The proposals to discard the laws and measures guaranteeing some measure of freedoms and rights in Hong Kong were made by a subgroup of Beijing's Preparatory

Committee, which is preparing Hong Kong's transformation into what China calls a "Special Administrative Region." The proposed changes would virtually erase all freedoms guaranteed under the 1991 Bill of Rights, and would increase police powers to ban peaceful protests. It would also strongly curb contacts between Hong Kong groups and societies with overseas organizations.

Oddly enough, the selection of the 60-member "Interim Legislature" didn't even take place in Hong Kong. It was performed by a 400-member Chinese-appointed selection committee which met at the end of December in the city of Shenzhen in Southern China. Many of the members are pro-Beijing politicians who were defeated in the Hong Kong elections for the Legislative Council in 1995.



Taiwanese worried about Hong Kong 1997:
"The Chinese are coming closer !!"

At its first meeting on the weekend of 25-26 January 1997, the "Interim Legislature" met -- also in Shenzhen, far from the democratic influence of the Hong Kong people — and endorsed the dismantling of civil liberties in Hong Kong. On Saturday, 1 February 1997, the 150-member Beijing-appointed Preparatory Committee endorsed the repeal of the civil liberty legislation. Mr. Tung Chee-hwa, the shipping magnate handpicked by Beijing to lead Hong Kong after it reverts to Chinese rule on 1 July 1997, also defended the curtailment of rights.

The establishment of the "Interim Legislature" and the proposals diminishing civil liberties were strongly criticized by the British and American governments, and by Hong Kong's governor Chris Patten, who termed China's logic "legal nonsense." Mr. Patten denounced the "Interim Legislature" as having "no legitimacy, no credibility and no authority." The New York Times reported that Hong Kong's newspapers, magazines and radio programs were swamped with editorials, letters and telephone calls denouncing China's moves ("*Civil Liberty Laws of Hong Kong are repealed*", **New York Times**, 2 February 1997).

The feelings of people in Hong Kong about the developments surrounding their city-state were expressed best by Mrs. Ida F.O. Chung, a writer whose essay “*The Bell tolls for Hong Kong*” was published in the **Washington Post** on 29 December 1996. She describes the chill descending on Hong Kong and wonder why not more people are voicing opposition to the gradual strangling of rights and the corruption creeping in from China.

State Department Human Rights Report: Active dissent wiped out in China

On 30 January 1997, the United States Department of State issued its annual Human Rights Report. This year’s report strongly criticizes China for its increased repression and human rights abuses. A brief summary:

“The Chinese Government in 1996 continued to commit widespread and well-documented human rights abuses, in violation of internationally accepted norms, stemming from the authorities’ intolerance of dissent, fear of unrest, and the continuing absence of laws protecting basic freedoms. All public dissent against party and government was effectively silenced by intimidation, exile, or the imposition of prison terms, administrative detention, or house arrest. No dissidents were known to be active at year’s end — an accomplishment even post-Stalinist Russia could not achieve.

Abuses included torture and mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, and arbitrary and lengthy incommunicado detention. Severe restrictions were also continued on freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, religion, privacy (including coercive family planning), and worker rights. In minority areas such as Tibet and Xinjiang, controls on religion and other fundamental freedoms intensified. During 1996, Hong Kong’s civil liberties and political institutions were threatened by restrictive measures taken by the Chinese Government in anticipation of Hong Kong’s reversion to Chinese sovereignty in July of 1997.”

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *As shown in the developments described here, the Chinese Communist authorities in Beijing continue to have no respect whatsoever for human rights or civil liberties, whether it is their own population or the people of Tibet and Hong Kong. Their promises can thus not be trusted, and any guarantees of “One country, two systems” are utterly worthless.*

We Taiwanese have no desire whatsoever to “unify” with China and consider the antiquated “One China” policies by Western countries to be anachronistic dino-

sours of the past. All who deal with these issues need to wake up to the fact that there is a new reality named “Taiwan”, which has now become a free, democratic and independent nation.

This new Taiwan needs to be clearly distinguished from the old “Republic of China” regime which came over from China and occupied Taiwan. All too often even newsmedia and prominent spokesmen for Western governments blur this distinction. It is time to complete the course towards independence set in by the United Nations after World War II, and fulfill the dreams of a generation of Taiwanese to “Let Taiwan be Taiwan.”

Environmental / Aborigine report

Taiwan to send nuclear waste to North Korea

In mid-January 1997, the state-owned Taiwanese power company **Taipower** signed a contract with North Korea to transport 60,000 barrels of low-level nuclear waste to North Korea over the next two years for storage. Under the contract, Taipower has the option of shipping up to 140,000 additional barrels in subsequent years. According to press reports in Taipei the deal is worth US\$ 70 million.

During the past years, Taipower has stored the low-level waste at Orchid Island, but this has been met by strong opposition from both Taiwan’s increasingly vocal environmental movement and from the Yami tribe which inhabits Orchid Island (see our report “*The Yami of Orchid Island*”, in **Taiwan Communiqué** no. 67, pp. 20-23).

The Orchid island site is virtually filled to its capacity of 100,000 barrels, and Taipower has looked for alternatives to store the waste. Discussions were held with both Russia and the Marshall Islands, and according to **The Economist**, there were some intriguing ideas to use Matsu (“*Dump and be damned*”, 18 January 1997). However, none of the options materialized.

The proposed deal drew a protest from South Korea, which urged Taipower to call off the planned shipments. However, Taiwan officials — still smarting from South Korea’s 1992 shift in diplomatic relations to Beijing — turned a deaf ear, arguing that South Korea’s own nuclear plants produce much more waste.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: While the plan to ship the waste to North Korea spells relief to the Yami people on Orchid Island, it does not present a long-term solution to Taiwan's nuclear waste problems. The best solution would be to gradually close the existing nuclear power plants and stop the plans for the Fourth Nuclear Reactor. Taiwan can provide for its energy needs adequately if it:

1. institutes an aggressive **energy conservation program**. Presently, much energy is wasted through inefficiencies and the lack of energy-conservation awareness among the population. The experience in countries such as The Netherlands shows that energy needs can be reduced by as much as 20 percent.
2. uses **advanced conventional power generating technology**, such as clean coal, advanced turbines, etc. Many of these technologies are available and applied in the US and Western Europe.
3. initiates a program to **utilize alternative energy sources**, solar, wind, fuel-cells and hydro-electric power.

Aborigines angered by “Aboriginal Council” law

Adapted from the *Occasional Bulletin* of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, published in Tainan, December 1996.

The recent passage of an “Aboriginal Council” bill and the subsequent setting up of a puppet “Aboriginal Council” in the Executive Yuan have evoked widespread anger among Taiwan's indigenous tribes. Many claim that the bill took away what little rights they had, and made way for the sell-out of their lands to non-aborigines, most of whom are already occupying the land illegally, without the consent of the aboriginal owners.

In a meeting held soon after the passage of the bill, the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines, the Union of Aboriginal Laborers, and the Aboriginal Christian University Student Center got together to examine the bill and its possible effects on the future of the aboriginal tribes. The three groups found that the bill contained numerous disadvantages for the aborigines, and that it had been drastically changed from the original version.

Reverend Mayau Komod, a Presbyterian Church minister and an aboriginal leader who was imprisoned for eight months for his activities in the aboriginal rights movement (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 69, January 1996) commented: “If we had known the price we had to pay in order to have an aboriginal council, [we probably would not have one], but prefer to keep things the way they are, bad as they are.”

Another aboriginal activist, Iciang Parod, a veteran of one year's jail sentence (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 72, June 1996) sadly commented: "according to the version of the bill passed recently, the Aboriginal Council has so little power over the affairs of aborigines, that it is even less significant than the Council for Cultural Development (famous for its ineffectiveness)." Parod said that the current form of the Aboriginal Council merely allows a few aboriginal politicians to have some titles and easy jobs, at the cost of the aborigines' land and dignity.

Notes

In Memory of Ms. Peng Wan-ru

Mrs. Peng Wan-Ru, a long-time activist in Taiwan's feminist movement and the director of the Women's Division of the Democratic Progressive Party, was raped then killed on 1 December 1996. This killing was not only a despicable crime but also a cruel reminder that violence against women is very much an issue in Taiwan.

Peng's death is a heartbreaking loss; the pain, sorrows, and anger of losing her to such a ruthless crime are widely shared. As fellow believers in gender equality and social justice, we feel compelled not to let her death become a mere addition to Taiwan's crime statistics. She should not die in vain, and the beliefs to which she had committed her life shall live on. Peng was known to be a fighter.



Peng Wan-ru

Ms. Peng had been a most ardent advocate of women's causes in Taiwan. Before she was invited to head the department of women's affairs in the DPP, she had been in the forefront of women's movement. She held many key positions in women's organizations to promote equal rights for women, and the rights of divorced women. She taught a women's studies course at a university in Taichung and translated many English-language books on feminism.

In memory of her untimely death and her efforts in advancing women's right in Taiwan, a group of activists proposed the establishment of the Women's Right Day on the last Sunday of every November. It was on the last Sunday of this past November she was last seen alive, and she spent the whole day making a better future for women in Taiwan.

The Women's Right Day will be a day not only for remembering her and all the female victims of violence, but a day to show solidarity in the fight for social, political, and legal reforms to achieve gender equality in Taiwan.

The memorial service for Peng Wan-Ru was held in late December 1996. She is survived by her husband, Mr. Hung Wan-sheng, a mathematics professor of National Normal University and a teenage son.

Dalai Lama to visit Taiwan

According to recent press reports in Taiwan, the Dalai Lama has been invited by a Buddhist organization in Taiwan to visit the island in March 1997. However, it is unsure, under what conditions he might visit: as a religious leader or as a leader of the Tibetans in exile. According to initial reports he would limit his activities to visiting temples, but a January 21st AFP report from New Delhi stated that the Dalai Lama's office had stated that he will not visit Taiwan unless the KMT authorities stop regarding Tibet as a part of China. "Unless this problem is resolved, a visit will not be possible," bureau spokesman Jampel Chasang told AFP.

The Kuomintang authorities still cling to the outdated position that Tibet is part of their so-called "Republic of China" and maintain an anachronistic "Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs Commission" which spends millions of dollars annually in trying to buy the support of Tibetans and Mongolians for the KMT's lost cause. Dalai Lama spokesman Chasang said there has been no change in the Dalai Lama's perception of Taiwan. "If Taiwan gives in writing that they will change their opinion (about the status of Tibet), then the Dalai Lama may visit," Chasang said.

The Chinese in Beijing reacted in their usual paranoid fashion to the reports of the Dalai Lama's possible visit. Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang stated that: "...the Dalai Lama is not simply a religious person, but a separatist who carries his separatist message on the international scene under the guise of religion."

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *A visit of the Dalai Lama to Taiwan would be a welcome development. It would improve the contacts between the Taiwanese and the Tibetans, and would enhance the understanding for each other's cause. However, he should be free to visit temples and political organizations, and meet with religious and political leaders alike. Anything short of that would amount to giving in to China's bullying.*