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Taiwan : 4Fl., 5 Ching-tao East Rd., TAIPEI, Taiwan

Europe : P.O. Box 91542, 2509 EC THE HAGUE, The Netherlands

Canada : 3636 Steeles Avenue E., Suite 303A, MARKHAM, Ont. L3R 1K9

U.S.A. : P.O. Box 15182, CHEVY CHASE, MD 20825

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Taiwan's election surprise

On 5 December 1998, some 10 million Taiwanese people went to the polls to elect a new Legislative Yuan (parliament) as well as mayors and city councils for Taipei and Kaohsiung. It was a high voter turnout by any standards: on the average some 70 percent, while in Taipei it reached 80 percent. It is a sure sign that democracy is here to stay in Taiwan.

The results showed some interesting surprises: while Taipei DPP mayor Chen Shui-bian was unseated by KMT challenger Ma Ying-jeou, in Kaohsiung just the opposite happened: DPP challenger Hsieh Ch'ang-t'ing unseated longterm Kuomintang incumbent Wu Den-yi.

In the Legislative Yuan, the ruling Kuomintang held on to about 46 percent of the vote — the same as in the December 1995 elections — but the Democratic Progressives lost a few percentage points to the more outspoken Taiwan Independence Party and the newly established New Nation Alliance. Together these three opposition groups garnered about 33 percent of the vote, the same as the DPP had before.

The big loser in the Legislative Yuan election was the pro-unificationist New Party,



Chen and Hsieh: Loss in Taipei, victory in Kaohsiung

which went from 13 percent in 1995 to only 7 percent of the vote in this election. The party dropped from 21 seats to 11 seats. The remainder of the vote (some 13 percent) went to unaffiliated candidates and splinter parties.

Election results

The number of votes and percentages in the Legislative Yuan elections are given below. Due to a complex system of proportional seats and positions reserved for aborigines and overseas Taiwanese, the Kuomintang ended up with 123 seats or 54.7 percent of the total of 225 seats, while the DPP garnered 70 seats or 31.1 percent of the total seats.

	KMT	DPP	New Party	Other small parties & non-affiliated	TOTAL
No. of votes	4,659,679	2,966,835	708,465	1,700,850	10,035,829
% of votes	46.43%	29.56%	7.06%	16.95%	100.00%
Number of seats					
Regular Districts	96	52	7	19	168
Aborigine seats	6	0	0	2	8
Proportional seats	23	15	3	0	41
Overseas Taiwanese	4	3	1	0	8
Total:	123	70	11	21	225
% of seats:	54.7%	31.1%	4.9%	9.3%	

In Taipei, KMT challenger Ma Ying-jeou received 51.1 percent of the 1,498,901 votes cast, while incumbent DPP mayor Chen Shui-bian received 45.9 percent. New Party candidate Wang Chien-shien ran a distant third with 2.97 percent of the vote – one-tenth of what the New Party's mayoral candidate received in 1994.

In the race for Kaohsiung mayor, DPP challenger Hsieh Ch'ang-t'ing received 48.7 percent of the vote, edging out KMT incumbent Wu Den-yi (48.1 percent). The New Party's candidate received 0.8 percent, while an unaffiliated candidate got 2.35 percent.

Towards a new Taiwanese identity

The main conclusion, which must be drawn, is that democracy is now firmly entrenched in Taiwan. The voter turnout was high by any standard: almost twice as much as the recent elections in the United States. This represents a major turnaround for a nation, which twelve years ago was still under the Kuomintang's repressive martial law, and only had its first democratic election in 1992.

While the defeat of Chen Shui-bian slows down his momentum towards the presidency, the statistics of the Taipei election show that Mr. Chen this time actually got more votes and a higher percentage of the vote than in 1994: 45.9 percent now, while in 1994 he received 43.7 percent of the vote. He thus broadened his support, if ever so slightly.

Mr. Ma Ying-jeou's victory was mainly due to the shift in support he received from right-wing New Party followers, who are almost exclusively mainlanders. In fact most followers of the New Party didn't vote for their own candidate, but crossed over to the Kuomintang: Mr. Ma was thus able to draw 51 percent of the vote, while the New Party received only some 3%. Back in 1994 the New Party received a tenfold of that: 30.2 percent of the vote.

The election campaign also showed a strong swing towards a new Taiwanese identity: during the campaign President Lee Teng-hui coined a new phrase "New Taiwanese" — to include mainlanders such as Mr. Ma Ying-jeou — while Mr. Ma's own campaign slogan was "Taiwan first, Taipei first." In spite of this, though, some of the mainlanders still consider themselves "Chinese" and have little affinity with, or affection for, Taiwan.

Mr. Chen did emphasize the Taiwanese identity in his campaign, but at the same time has worked hard to reach out to the mainland community, urging them to consider Taipei their home, instead of harking back to "recovering the mainland" or "unification" with Communist China.

On the surface the campaign itself was devoid of substantive issues. Mr. Ma promised to make Taipei a "world class city" and used a drawing of a jogger as his campaign logo, while Mr. Chen campaign theme was "We have a beautiful dream, let's continue with

it.” The two weeks of frenzied campaigning had a carnival atmosphere, with caravans with loudspeakers roaming the streets, multitudes of banners promoting the candidates all around, even President Lee donning silly costumes, and there were nightly campaign rallies attended by up to 100,000 people.

Below the surface, the important issue of relations with China played a significant role. The Kuomintang portrayed itself as better equipped to deal with China. Under President Lee, the KMT has attempted to carve out “international breathing space” while formally remaining committed to eventual unification with China.



**Mr. Ma Ying-jeou to incoming Chinese tank:
"Taiwan First"**

The DPP, on the other hand, has emphasized Taiwan’s separate identity, and remains committed to formal independence as a free and democratic nation, that lives in peace with all its neighbors, including China.

In the southern city of Tainan, broad support for the DPP position was shown in the results of a referendum, which was held concurrently with the elections. Of the 96,923 voters in the city who expressed their opinion on the matter, 77.9 percent stated that they opposed having Taiwan ruled by China.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *In view of the election outcome, it must be concluded that support for both DPP and KMT positions has remained stable and relatively unchanged, and that the coming presidential election campaign in March 2000 will show whether the KMT can hold on to its position a bit longer, or whether the DPP will make its breakthrough – which will come, sooner or later.*

It is also ironic that the DPP’s platform of independence is now being portrayed as “provocative” to China. It was the Kuomintang which fought its Civil War against the Chinese. The Taiwanese were never a part of that Civil War, but now

their future as an independent nation is being held hostage by the Chinese: they threaten with missiles and make it difficult for Taiwan to be a full and equal member of the international community.

*We thus strongly object to the crisis-mongering in some Western publications, which try to imply that a win for the DPP would lead to a new crisis in East Asia (“Crisis looms over Legislative vote”, **Wall Street Journal**, 3 December 1998), or would “...foil U.S. China peace” (**Los Angeles Times**, 25 November 1998). It would be more responsible of these publications if they emphasized that Taiwan has become a free and democratic nation, deserving international recognition, and that China’s designs for Taiwan are totally outdated and run contrary to any democratic principles.*

Former ambassador Nat Bellocchi: *New American policies for a new Taiwan*

At the Second International Symposium on Taiwan’s National Security, which was held in Taipei on 7 November 1998, ambassador **Nat Bellocchi**, the former Director of the American Institute in Taiwan, gave the following analysis of 20 years of experience with the Taiwan Relations Act. The U.S. Congress passed the Act in 1979 after president Jimmy Carter decided in December 1978 to break diplomatic relations with the Kuomintang regime in Taipei.

Mr. Bellocchi concluded that the Taiwan Relations Act served its purpose very well in that it strengthened the relationship between Taiwan and the United States in spite of the 1978 break in relations between the US and the Kuomintang authorities. However, ***the TRA has not been useful in developing new American policies that can recognize the legitimacy of the democracy that now exists on Taiwan.*** He also makes the point that nowhere in the Act it uses the term “unofficial”, which has become the title of what the US calls the relationship.

Mr. Bellocchi then focuses on areas where problems have arisen, and makes suggestions where the Act can be strengthened.

One area is the section dealing with security. He states that the third Communiqué, signed on August 17th 1982 between the US and China, clearly contradicted the TRA in that it foresaw a gradual reduction in arms sales to Taiwan. The Administration's argument was that China had stated its intention to resolve its issue with Taiwan peacefully.

The renewed threats by the PRC against Taiwan in 1995 and 1996, as well as the continued threats by the Chinese authorities to use of force against Taiwan (made as recently by Chinese President Jiang on 28 November 1998 in Tokyo — Ed.) shows that the Administration was overly optimistic about China's intentions, and that the more critical view of Congress was justified.

Mr. Bellocchi also shows how — even during the Chinese missile firings of 1995-96, which landed as close as 12 miles off the coast of Taiwan — the Clinton Administration did not use the word “threat”, but merely called the Chinese actions “irresponsible.” The reason was that under the Taiwan Relations Act the word “threat” would have called for the initiation of consultations with Congress, as step the Administration apparently wanted to avoid

Mr. Bellocchi then focuses on two other important issues, which receive some attention in the TRA, but with wording that was perhaps appropriate at the time (1979), but did not keep up with the changes that subsequently took place. In order to apply to today's new Taiwan, new American policies should be developed, which recognize the changed circumstances democracy has brought to Taiwan.

The first issue is **human rights**. Section. 2 (c) of the TRA reads: *“Nothing contained in this Act shall contravene the interest of the United States in human rights, especially with respect to the human rights of all the approximately eighteen million inhabitants of Taiwan. The preservation and enhancement of the human rights of all the people on Taiwan are hereby reaffirmed as objectives of the United States.”* Mr. Bellocchi states that this shows at the time of the drafting of the Act, there was concern in the Congress that the people of Taiwan might not be given the right to determine their own future.

The second issue is **membership in international organizations**. Sec. 4. (d) states: *“Nothing in this Act may be construed as a basis for supporting the exclusion or expulsion of Taiwan from continued membership in any international financial institution or any other international organization.”* Mr. Bellocchi argues that in the Taiwan Policy Review of 1994, the Clinton Administration actually took a step

backward by formally stating it would not support Taiwan's membership in international organizations that require statehood, a distinction the TRA did not make at all.

Mr. Bellocchi states that, given the transformation of Taiwan into an entirely different kind of entity, the United States needs to adapt its policies to the new reality in Taiwan. He argues the TRA can serve as a basis for change, but does not advocate changing the TRA itself. Rather, he argues for policies that better accommodate to a democratic Taiwan could be pursued with the support of the Act as written, in particular in the two areas indicated earlier: human rights and membership in international organizations.

He states that with regard to human rights, there was considerable disappointment in Taiwan when President Clinton made his statement on the three no's in Shanghai. In rationalizing the statement, the Administration claims that it represented no change from the past. Mr. Bellocchi argues that clearly in one sense, *it does*: From 1979 to 1995 it was standard policy by all who dealt with the PRC and Taiwan, that the U.S. does not respond to questions of support or non-support of independence. U.S. policy has remained that the two sides were to determine Taiwan's status, peacefully.

Mr. Bellocchi states that now that there has been an explicit statement from the U.S. in this matter, there should also be a clear and explicit statement that any change in Taiwan's status should have the consent of the people on Taiwan. He says that if one reads the hearings and the subsequent comments by drafters of the Act, it shows that such a position was clearly the intent of Sec. 2 (c). Arguments that this requirement is implicit in the U.S. position that there be a peaceful resolution, does not sufficiently cover this commitment.

Likewise with the issue of Taiwan's membership in international organizations. Mr. Bellocchi states that Section 4 (d) of the TRA could be used as a basis for beginning the process of seeking support for participation by Taiwan in the international community.

Mr. Bellocchi argues that in the U.S., it is understood in government and among experts that Taiwan is fully qualified, and even needed, to participate in the international community. This could be accomplished if the U.S. would adopt a different public stance toward this issue in its relationship with the PRC: Instead of moving toward a more closer identification with the PRC position on the Taiwan Strait issue, without changing U.S. policy, it could alert the PRC that the U.S. believes Beijing's policy toward Taiwan is dangerously outdated. That the democratic political system that now

exists on the island is irreversible, and that no viable resolution, whatever it might be, is realistic without the consent of the people on Taiwan. Justifying support for participation by Taiwan in the international community should be seen in this light.

Mr. Bellocchi states that this would require more political will in Washington than the recent past has shown. He acknowledges that Beijing's strong opposition is no small obstacle to overcome, but a more realistic approach by the U.S., and hopefully by the international community, is needed, that recognizes the changed circumstances democracy has brought to Taiwan, but which does not seek to interfere in the ultimate resolution of the differences on the two sides of the Strait.

Mr. Bellocchi concludes by emphasizing that the TRA has not been useful in developing new American policies that can recognize the legitimacy of the democracy that now already exist on Taiwan, and the need to correct its exclusion from the international community of which it is a part. These are the most important commitments Taiwan needs from the international community, including the U.S.

He also emphasizes the need for Taiwan itself to gain a reasonable domestic consensus on the relationship with the PRC. Such a consensus does not necessarily need to be on a final resolution of this issue, but rather on an interim arrangement leaving open the free choice of the people on Taiwan for the future. He states that such a consensus might do much to garner international support for the two issues, human rights and its place in international organizations, mentioned in the TRA.

A Tale of three visits

Much ado about Koo-Wang

From 14 through 19 October 1998, for Mr. Koo Chen-fu, chairman of Taiwan's **Straits Exchange Foundation**, visited China. There he met with his China counterpart Wang Dao-han and with Chinese president Jiang Zemin.

Many people in Taiwan distrust Mr. Koo, not only because of his unificationist leanings, but also because of his family's history: in 1895 his grandfather played a prominent role in selling out the newly-founded Taiwan Republic and in welcoming

the Japanese after the Ch'ing Imperial government had ceded Taiwan in perpetuity to Japan at the Shimonoseki Treaty.

There was much ado about the visit: it was heralded as a “melting of the ice”, and a “reopening” of the dialogue between Taiwan and China. Messrs. Koo and Wang last met in Singapore in 1993. The exchanges were suspended in 1995, when China aggressively launched provocative military exercises and missile firings after Taiwan president Lee’s visit to his alma mater Cornell in June 1995.



Mr. Koo Chen-fu's "kung-fu" negotiating style stems from the ice-age

During months prior to the October meeting, the Chinese had been pressuring Taiwan to open a “political dialogue” designed to force it into negotiations on so-called “reunification”. The Kuomintang authorities in Taiwan, on the other hand, stated that they wanted to restrict the discussions to “technical matters”, such as resolution of fishing disputes, protection of the investment of Taiwanese businessmen in China, and repatriation of hijackers.

During the visit, Mr. Koo told the Chinese that the Kuomintang authorities would contemplate unification when China begins democratizing. And secondly, that his government will discuss unification with China only if China treats Taiwan as an equal.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *Of course Mr. Koo should have told the Chinese that the Taiwanese do not want unification at all. Like his ideas, Mr. Koo is an anachronistic fossil, which should be retired as soon as possible.*

With regard to the talks themselves: like most Taiwanese, we are not against talks per sé, but a prior condition for any talks should be that China renounces the use of force against Taiwan. If this indeed occurs, then “technical discussions” could be held on a range of practical issues, which would function as a confidence-building exercise, and would show whether China would keep its words on those issues.

However, any “political discussions” will have to wait until the people of Taiwan have

been able to express their views on the future of the island in a fully open and democratic process. A welcome beginning was made in during the recent election campaign: a plebiscite question was put on the ballot whether the people of the city of Tainan wanted to be ruled by China. the answer was an overwhelming “No”.

In the present situation, there are still two major reasons why the real views of the Taiwanese have not been fully heard yet:

- 1. the after-effects of Kuomintang’s long history of repression, which has seriously inhibited the Taiwanese from expressing themselves on political issues, and*
- 2. China’s campaign of threats and intimidation, which is equivalent to holding a gun to the head of the Taiwanese people.*

If China is serious in its resolve to end its dispute with Taiwan, it should thus first renounce the use of force, and then acknowledge that the present-day new Taiwan is totally different from the old so-called “Republic of China” of the Chinese Nationalists, with which China fought its Civil War. The next step would be to come to an accommodation with this new Taiwan, accept it as a friendly neighbor, and establish diplomatic relations with this neighbor.

Bill Richardson in Taipei

The second, slightly more significant, visit was the early November 1998 trip of US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson to Taipei, where he attended a US-Taiwan Economic meeting.

The visit was presumably an effort by the Clinton Administration to “make up” to Taiwan following Mr. Clinton’s ill-fated “Three No” remarks during his disastrous visit to China in June / July 1998. While Mr. Clinton’s remarks were subsequently rejected by Congress and repudiated by almost unanimous votes in both House and Senate, his Administration still has to rescind the statements.

Mr. Richardson’s remarks in Taiwan focused mainly on economic and energy-related issues. He made one important remark in that the US supports Taiwan’s entry into the World Trade Organization on its own merits. There has been a lengthy discussion, stoked by China, which wants to enter the WTO before Taiwan does.

Mr. Richardson tried to emphasize the “strong bonds” between the people of Taiwan and the United States, and US commitment to the defense of Taiwan. However, he could not take away the anxiety caused by Mr. Clinton’s irresponsible remarks in Beijing and Shanghai.

Jiang stumbles in Tokyo

In the third week of November 1998, a third visit took place in which Taiwan’s international status played a role: Chinese president Jiang Zemin went to Tokyo in an attempt to shore up China’s fragile relations with Japan.

Prior to the visit, China put a great deal of pressure on Japan to agree to a statement similar to Mr. Clinton’s “Three no’s.” However, the Japanese displayed more backbone than Mr. Clinton and refused to succumb to the Chinese pressure. The Japanese merely stated that it “...continues to maintain its stand on the Taiwan issue which was set forth in the Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People’s Republic of China and reiterates its understanding that there is one China. Japan will continue to maintain its exchanges of private and regional nature with Taiwan.”

The Chinese also put strong pressure on Japan to exclude Taiwan from coverage under the newly established US-Japanese security arrangement, but the Japanese also refused to budge.

Mr. Jiang also shot himself in the foot when he refused to accept Japan’s Premier Obuchi’s statement of “deep remorse and a heartfelt apology” for Japan’s wartime role in China. The disagreement led to hours of diplomatic wrangling and an impasse on the issuing of a joint declaration at the end of the meeting between Mr. Jiang and Mr. Obuchi. In the end the document was just issued without the customary signature by the two leaders.

China's military threat

Laser anti-satellite technology

According to reports in **Aviation Week & Space Technology** (9 November 1998) and in **the Los Angeles Times** (28 November 1998), China is developing directed-energy laser and high-power microwave weapons, which could be used to destroy U.S. satellites, aircraft and missiles. The information was based on Pentagon reports to Congress. According to the Pentagon, China may already have a limited capability to damage optical sensors on satellites.

The report expects that China may have its first high-power microwave weapon in operation by 2015. It is apparently pursuing several types of these weapons. One is a missile warhead that emits a single burst of microwaves to disable the target's electronics. This type of weapon is expected to be effective at a range beyond that of a high-explosive warhead.

Secondly, it is developing a radio-frequency beam system, that would be pointed against aircraft or missiles. It would aim a continuous flow of electro-magnetic energy against the target, disabling it within seconds.

In addition, the Pentagon reports that China is drastically improving its antiquated electronic warfare capability, and will likely add a number of new standoff EW aircraft to its inventory.

The Pentagon report also mentioned advances in missile capability, including a beyond-the-visual range, radio-frequency guided missile similar to the American AIM-120 Amraam, and a submerged-launch version of the C-802 cruise missile, as well as a higher-priority land-attack cruise missile.

Finally, the Pentagon report stated that advances in China's relatively young, manned space program could have military utility and lead to space-based military systems around 2010-20.

China still sells missile data

The **International Herald Tribune** reported on 13 November 1998, that according to American officials, China is continuing to transfer missile technology to Pakistan and Iran. This was occurring in spite of repeated assurances by the Chinese government that such transfers would be stopped.

The issue was raised by US under-secretary of State John Holum in meetings with Chinese officials in the beginning of November 1998 in an attempt to encourage the Chinese to join the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

Chinese blackmail on export restrictions

Defense News of 23-29 November 1998, carried an article highlighting the Chinese reaction to Washington's belated tightening of dual-use and military technology exports to China following the Hughes-Loral affair (see *Taiwan Communiqué*, no. 81, p. 8-9 and no. 82, p. 15).

In no unsubtle terms, Chinese officials warned that if the restrictions are not lifted, China would turn to Europe. A quote from Mr. Wang Li-heng, vice-president of China Aerospace Corp.: "...U.S manufacturers ...will lose out on major business opportunities to their European competition."

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *It is of course essential that the US and Europe don't let themselves be played out against each other in this crude fashion. Through the Hughes-Loral affair, the United States has finally learned that it was being taken for a ride by the Chinese.*

Europe should match the determination in the US Congress not to let advanced technology leak to China, so it can use this technology to upgrade its missiles and terrorize its neighbors.

Submarines pose challenge to the US

The 16-22 November 1998 issue of **Defense News** carried an article by Mr. Greg Cairnes of the Lexington Institute in Arlington, VA focusing on the expansion and modernization of China's submarine fleet. The article states that this expanded and modernized

submarine fleet could at some point become a “formidable challenge” to the US and its interests in the Western Pacific. It states that the Chinese are also “aggressively acquiring advanced undersea-warfare technology for insertion in their conventional and nuclear-powered submarines.”

The article quotes reports that the Chinese are aiming at equaling US naval power, and states that the main problem is the fact that Washington is not sufficiently recognizing the threat of Chinese regional hegemony in the Western Pacific.

US security strategy

In the third week of November 1998, the **US Defense Department** issued its fourth quadrennial “*Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific region.*” In the report, the U.S. presents a general outline of American defense strategy in the region. It is based on “comprehensive U.S. engagement”, in which the forward presence of some 100,000 U.S. military personnel in Asia is a prime element.

The report mentions “Enhancing stability in the Taiwan Strait through peaceful approaches to cross-strait issues and encouraging dialogue between Beijing and Taipei” as one of United States’ key security objectives for the future.

The report discusses Mr. Clinton’s “comprehensive engagement” with China, and also noted that the US strategy of promoting democracy includes efforts to pursue a constructive, goal-oriented approach to achieving progress on human rights and rule of law issues with mainland China.

The report also briefly discusses Taiwan, stating that the United States “...maintains robust but unofficial relations with the people on Taiwan, governed by the Taiwan Relations Act and guided by the Three-U.S.-PRC joint communiqués.” The report adds that “...the Taiwan issue is a matter for the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resolve.”

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *Perhaps someone should inform the US Defense Department that there are no Chinese people on the Taiwan side of the Strait anymore: during the past election campaign, President Lee Teng-hui declared that all people on Taiwan, including the mainlanders, are “New Taiwanese.”*

In any case, it is farfetched to let the future of Taiwan be decided by the Chinese on the

China side of the Strait: this would be a grave violation of the principle of democracy. We don't argue that the future of the U.S. be decided by the British, do we ?

White Paper: *Taiwan and Its Future*

By Kristie Wang. *Kristie is a Communications Specialist in San Francisco. She served as program-director of the Washington-based Center for Taiwan International Relations from 1993 through 1997.*

On December 5, 1998 Taiwan held democratic elections for its legislature and for mayors of its two largest cities. Since this island of 21 million people began its dramatic march toward democracy in 1986, with the formation of its first political opposition party, the people of Taiwan have been building up solid experience with democracy. In 1996 an astounding 76% of eligible voters went to the polls in a highly publicized direct election for president, for the first time in the island's 400-plus-year history.



Taiwan election crowd, anxiously looking towards it future

Today, the Taiwanese people have finally marched out of the shadows of 40 years of

Chinese Nationalist oppression, martial law, and “White Terror” to attain their vibrant multi-party democracy. The question now is whether Taiwan’s achievements will be supported and recognized by the international community, or whether China will be allowed continue its violent threats to impede the island’s further progress.

In spite of the strides Taiwan has made, it has been blocked from participation as a full and equal member of the international community. China has been a big obstacle, and

the Chinese Government continues to hinder Taiwan's membership in international organizations and threatens to attack if the island moves further in the direction of *de jure* independence.

Thus, this democratic island with a population larger than two-thirds of the UN's member countries - which elects its own president, issues its own currency, and conducts its own foreign affairs and trade relations - is not a member of the United Nations and has diplomatic relations with only a handful of countries.

In 1995-1996, Taiwan's preparations for its historical democratic presidential election were perceived by China as one such step toward solidifying its independent status. China responded by launching missiles at Taiwan, which finally prompted the Clinton administration to take action and send two aircraft carriers to the area.

However, in mid-1998, during a visit to China, President Clinton tread significantly beyond the carefully constructed ambiguity of earlier U.S. formulations and pronounced the so-called "Three no's": no support for "Two Chinas" or "One China, One Taiwan," no support for an independent Taiwan, and no support for Taiwan's membership in any organization "for which statehood is a requirement."

These statements were immediately and strongly repudiated by near-unanimous votes in the U.S. House and Senate. Clinton was criticized by many for making gratuitous statements to appease the Chinese during his visit, while putting unnecessary constraints on the settlement of the Taiwan-China dispute.

In recent years, U.S. policy toward Taiwan has shifted back and forth in this hit or miss manner. This pendulum-swinging method is an invitation for miscalculation and is a dangerous way to conduct foreign relations, particularly at this time.

Taiwan is at a crossroads. At this point in its history, as it struggles to solidify its democracy with each election, under a constant cloud of threats from China, Taiwan needs clear and explicit support from the world's leading democracy and the world's leading democratic leader. This support is critical to ensure that the dramatic strides and sacrifices made by the 21 million people of Taiwan will not be turned back and that China will not threaten the peace and stability of the entire region with its military bluster.

Taiwan is an important ally for the United States - as its seventh largest trading partner and as a fledgling democracy. Taiwan is exactly the model of economic and political maturation that the U.S. should support and encourage around the world. Because of

its location, straddling the major sea lanes from Japan and Korea to Southeast Asia, Taiwan also is of great strategic importance to the region.

As China continues to increase its military power of projection, it is ever more critical that the United States send a strong and unequivocal message that the international community will not tolerate a takeover of Taiwan by force, or even a threat or a blockade.

At the end of July 1998, just a few weeks after Clinton made his “Three no’s” statements in Shanghai, China’s State Council issued a “White Paper,” in which it stated that China reserves the right to use force against Taiwan.

Taiwanese people around the world recently responded by issuing their own “White Paper Regarding Taiwan and Its Future” to the international community, based on the fundamental principles of democracy, respect for human rights, and peace and stability. They appeal to nations that profess to adhere to democratic principles to:

1. Affirm that the people of Taiwan have the right to determine their own future under the principle of self-determination as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
2. Urge China to renounce the use of force and accept Taiwan as a friendly neighboring state, instead of perpetuating the hostility and rivalry dating back to the Civil War fought in China five decades ago; and
3. Accept Taiwan as a full and equal member of the international family of nations, including the United Nations.

The United States must take the lead. In taking these steps, the U.S. would affirm our belief in and support for freedom and democracy, while stating unequivocally that we will not tolerate violence as a way to conduct foreign affairs.

Peaceful coexistence between Taiwan and China as two friendly nation-states is the only way through which security and stability in East Asia can be guaranteed.

The full text of the international appeal of the Taiwanese people can be found at:
<http://www.taiwandc.org/white-p1.htm>

More rebukes for Chas Freeman

In our previous issue, we reprinted a rebuke of Chas Freeman by the Defense Department. The November / December 1998 issue of Foreign Affairs carried several more letters to the editor, criticizing Mr. Freeman's dangerous and irresponsible views. Here we reprint two of them:

To the Editor:

Freeman's essay is misleading, condescending, and littered with anachronisms. For starters, the so-called consensus on "one China" has never existed among the Taiwanese people, only between the Chinese and the Nationalist Chinese Kuomintang governments. In a recent poll, nearly 40 percent of Taiwanese said they preferred to see Taiwan declare independence, while only 25 percent supported unification with China. President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States did not collapse any long-standing agreement or trigger new tensions, as Freeman claims. The reactions following that visit simply revealed the strains that already existed.

Contrary to what Freeman believes, Taiwan is not part of China. Claiming a territory is different from possessing one. Taiwan has been under actual Chinese rule for only eight years, from 1887-1895. Freeman also says, incorrectly, that the reunification of Taiwan and China would end the Chinese civil war. That war was fought between the Chinese Communist party and the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party), not between Taiwan and China. The Taiwanese people were the victims of this power struggle and nearly 50 years of a brutal Kuomintang regime. Now that the government in Taiwan has renounced its claim to China, only China insists on continuing the war.

Freeman also misrepresents Taiwan's independence movement, which was sparked by Chinese Nationalist oppression, not by any encouragement from U.S. weapons. Such independence would give Taiwan freedom and self-rule-universal rights and priceless gifts for any country. Freeman should check out an American history book and read about his own country's struggle for independence.

Michelle Lin

Senior Analyst, Formosan Association for Public Affairs
Washington, DC

To the Editor:

Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., has a selective memory (“Preventing War in the Taiwan Strait,” July / August 1998). While he recalls the 1982 Sino-U.S. Communiqué write clearly, he appears to have more trouble with the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which established U.S. arms transfer policy to Taiwan. When Congress was informed about the 1982 communiqué, it denounced it as totally inconsistent with the 1979 act.

Freeman espouses the preposterous notion that terminating arms sales to Taiwan would promote peace, implicitly legitimating a Chinese use of force against Taiwan. Freeman must have been pleased when President Clinton accepted Beijing’s position on Taiwan—that it is a renegade province—in June, contradicting the policy of all previous presidents, who “acknowledged” but did not “accept” China’s position on Taiwan.

Taiwan has not been a part of mainland China since 1895. Of the island’s 21 million people, 84 percent are of pre-1949 Taiwanese ancestry, and only 14 percent are ethnic Chinese. The United States should not rule out independence or any other option these people decide on. Unlike Freeman and Clinton, fortunately, more members of Congress think that national self-determination remains an important American value.

Stephen P. Gibert
Director, National Security Studies Program and Professor of Government
Georgetown University

Lighter Notes

United Nations Resolution 2758

In a recent letter to the editor of the **Washington Times**, the press counselor of the Chinese embassy in Washington repeated a series of the usual Chinese falsehoods and distortions. One, on which we want to focus here, is an assertion about United Nations Assembly Resolution 2758 of October 1971, which decided that the PRC regime in Beijing was the rightful representative of China instead of the Kuomintang regime in Taipei.

According to the Chinese press spokesman this Resolution reconfirmed "... that Taiwan has been part of China since ancient times." We of course doubt that the UN General Assembly, in 1971 or now, could accurately assess the status of Taiwan in "ancient times", but we decided that a closer look at the text of resolution might shed some light in this matter.

Below is the text of the resolution. As we suspected, the resolution doesn't say anything about Taiwan. It merely settled the question which regime was the legitimate representative of China. Taiwan's status is thus unaffected, and needs to be resolved on the basis of the principle of self-determination, as decided at the San Francisco Peace Conference of 1951-52.

Resolution on Restoring the Rights of the PRC, 25 October, 1971

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Considering that the restoration of the lawful rights of the People's Republic of China is essential both for the protection of the Charter of the United Nations and for the cause that the United Nations must serve under the Charter,

Recognizing that the representatives of the Government of the People's Republic of China are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations and that the People's Republic of China is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council,

Decides to restore all its rights to the People's Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations, and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it.

Source: 25 Yearbook of the United Nations, 1971, p. 136.

A comparison with the American Civil War ?

In the above-mentioned letter to the editor, the Chinese press counselor makes a comparison with the American Civil War, and states that similarly, China wants to “...preserve the unity of the state.” Of course any comparison of this type is imperfect, but if one wants to make the comparison between China-Taiwan now and the American Civil War of 1861-1865, then it should go along the following lines:

Suppose that after the American Civil War, the defeated Southern generals and administration evaded arrest, and had been able to escape to the Bahamas (which was under British administration at the time). There they declared martial law, established a corrupt regime, oppressed the local population, and declared that they would “recover the United States.”

After a standoff of a few decades, the local Bahamian people succeeded in pushing through a democratization, the distinction between the Southerners and the Bahamians diminished, and the democratic political entity evolved, striving for a full and equal membership in the international community under the name The Bahamas.

Would this course of history have given the United States the right to claim the Bahamas as United States territory ? Of course not. Under the Charter of the United Nations, the people of The Bahamas — just like the people of Taiwan — have the right to determine their own future. The only difference is that there are only 275,000 people on the Bahamas -- which is recognized as an independent country -- and 21.8 million people in Taiwan -- which is not (not yet, anyway).

PBS: Tug of War, the Story of Taiwan

In December 1998, Public Broadcasting TV Station around the United States started *airing Tug of War: the Story of Taiwan*, an important new documentary about Taiwan and its history. It was produced by Mrs. Judith Vecchione of WGBH Boston, who earlier produced important documentaries about history in Asia.

The following text is based on information provided by WGBH in Boston:

- * 1947: Police attack and beat an elderly woman who is selling illegal cigarettes. A riot breaks out, touching off a widespread revolt. Troops are called in and an estimated 18,000-28,000 people are killed.
- * 1969: A journalist translates a “Popeye” comic from English to Chinese. He is accused of making fun of the nation’s president and serves a ten year sentence for “undermining the affection between the people and the government.”
- * 1980: A democracy advocate is arrested for participating in a human rights demonstration. While he is in jail, his mother and twin seven-year-old daughters are murdered under circumstances pointing to government collusion.

All of these events took place on an island that most Americans know very little about: Taiwan. Until recently, many Taiwanese did not know about these incidents either. For almost forty years after World War II, the Taiwanese lived under martial law, unable to learn their history, afraid to ask. Now, their stories are told in *Tug of War: The Story of Taiwan*, airing on PBS in December 1998.

This new historical documentary draws on remarkable archival footage and on-side interviews to survey a century of tension across the Taiwan Strait. Scenes includes the Japanese colonial era, the tragic 1947 massacre of the Taiwanese by Chiang Kai-shek’s Chinese Nationalists, stories of harsh government repression, and vibrant cultural revival.

Taiwan has had a long history of being tugged, twisted, and manipulated by superpowers. For years, Chinese emperors maintained that the small island ninety miles off its shores was part of China. Yet in 1895, when China lost the Sino-Japanese War, it gave the island away to Japanese victors.

After WWII, Taiwan was occupied by the Chinese Nationalists. But only a few years later, as the Nationalists lost to the Communist, Taiwan and China separated again — and again, their experiences diverged.

Weaving together personal testimonies and rare archival film, *Tug of War* examines these forces that shaped Taiwan’s past and present - and continue to make it vulnerable to major power confrontations in the near future.

Today, Taiwan possesses some of the largest exchange reserves in the world and is one of the most active members of the world’s trading community. It has a democratic political system that is unique in Asia, boasting several vocal political parties.

Still, Taiwan is isolated in the world community — without official recognition from the US and without a seat in the UN — because its neighbor, the People’s Republic of China, still considers Taiwan a “breakaway province” and determinedly blocks international support for the island’s independence.

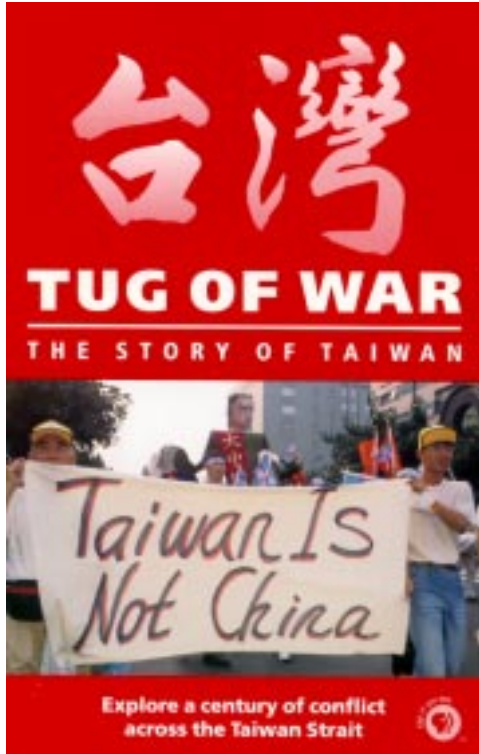
“China is like Jupiter”, says the Director of movie, Judith Vecchione. “Because of its size, China will always have a gravitational pull on Taiwan, but many people on the island also feel they have a story separate from mainland China. They have rediscovered their Taiwanese identity, but at the same time remain ethnically Chinese.”

For the past half-century, Taiwan has been a flash point in the Pacific. Several times it has brought the US and China perilously close to war..... But it was a grim reminder of how closely connected America is with the stories that unfold in Tug of War.

“When and if the next conflict over Taiwan’s independence emerges, have we thought out what America’s position should be?” Vecchione asks. “How far are we willing to go in support of Taiwan’s democratic aspirations — up to the point

of independence? To the point of conflict with China? Are we willing to commit America lives in support of Taiwan? Or do we believe there are limits to democracy?

The answers Vecchione explores in her film are both complex and fascinating, with elements of history, politics, and personality; with generals and presidents maneuvering, and the “weaker” partner often holding the stronger hand; with America, Chinese, and Taiwanese interests coming together and apart in a shifting array of alliances; with issues as seemingly inconsequential as the arrest of a woman selling cigarettes illegally and as global as the threat of nuclear confrontation.



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Taiwan Communiqué supports a free, democratic, and independent Taiwan, and campaigns for full and equal membership of Taiwan in the international community, including a seat in the UN.

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