



# Taiwan Communiqué

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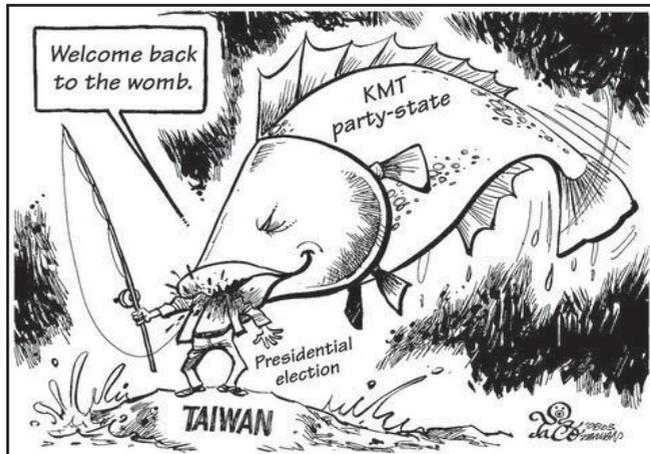
## Ma Ying-jeou wins presidency

On Saturday, 22 March 2008, Taiwan held its fourth presidential election since the transition to democracy in the early 1990s. The KMT's Ma Ying-jeou won with 58.4% against 41.6% for the DPP's Frank Hsieh. The voter turnout rate was approx. 76%. A total of 7.65 mln. votes went to Mr. Ma, while Mr. Hsieh garnered 5.44 mln. votes.

The election process itself went smoothly, with no reports of disturbances or election fraud. This shows that Taiwan now has a mature democracy, although the playing field is still heavily tilted in favor of the Kuomintang due to its huge financial resources (it is still reported to be the richest party in the world), and its control of a major section of the news media

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The election result means that the KMT has regained control of the Executive branch, after eight years of DPP rule. Since the party also gained absolute control of the Legislative branch in the Legislative Yuan elections in January 2008, the Kuomintang now controls both branches of government, which does not bode well for checks



**KMT party-state fish gobbles up voter, saying:  
"Welcome back to the womb."**

and balances in Taiwan's political system. On the other hand, the KMT is now fully responsible and will be held accountable by the electorate.

Below, we will first examine the reasons for the defeat of the DPP, to be followed by a look at the implications for Taiwan itself.

## *The underlying reasons for the DPP defeat*

In the international press the election was primarily portrayed as being about Taiwan's relations with China: a vote for the KMT – so we were told — was a vote for closer relations with China, while a vote for the DPP would lead to a continuation of tension, although Frank Hsieh was portrayed as “more moderate” than President Chen.

However, for many people in Taiwan it was apparently more about a) the economy, b) clean government, and c) prospects for a “better” life. On all these three points, the KMT propaganda machine (fueled by its huge party assets) and the pan-blue controlled press were able to present the image that during the past eight years the Chen Shui-bian government had a) brought the economy to a standstill (more on that below), b) was inefficient and corrupt, and c) and that vote for Hsieh would be a continuation of the confrontations with China.

On a) the economy is actually doing quite well -- 5.7% economic growth -- but this is not being evenly distributed: as the **New York Times** wrote on 22 March 2008, “...*but middle-class and working-class incomes have stagnated as an affluent elite has grown prosperous, often from investments in China.*”

On b) The Chen government tried to take many initiatives for reforms, but was continuously obstructed by the KMT-controlled Legislature, which conducted a “*scorched earth*” policy by opposing almost anything the government was proposing. Still, the Chen Administration was effective in completing a number of major projects, like the High Speed Train and the Kaohsiung Rapid Transit .

On the issue of corruption: there were indeed several high-profile cases, but overall the DPP was much cleaner than the KMT ever was. During the KMT's earlier repressive reign, there was rampant corruption, but the judiciary was not independent, and cases of corruption were swept under the carpet. A case in point is Mr. James Soong, who is reported to have pocketed some US\$ 400 mln. in the purchase of the Lafayette frigates from France, but never brought to trial.

On c) whether the Taiwanese will have a “better life” if the island moves closer to China remains to be seen: it depends very much on China’s own attitudes and actions.

## *Better relations with China? Not if it continues to bully ...*

The win by Mr. Ma is being touted by many in the news media as a prelude to improvement of relations with China. This may not necessarily be the case, and will depend very much on how China itself behaves: if it acts as a “responsible stakeholder”, then better relations are possible.

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However, if it continues to bully its neighbors, perpetuates its crackdown in Tibet and the lack of freedom and democracy in China itself, while continuing to threaten Taiwan militarily, then the prospects for improvement are slim.



**China (beating up on Tibet): "Didn't you see that the Taiwanese chose to stand by me?"**

During the last week of the campaign both parties in Taiwan strongly criticized China for its crackdown in Tibet. Mr. Ma, who campaigned on a platform of closer business links with China, adopted a much more anti-China approach.

He described China’s Prime Minister Wen Jiabao’s offer of peace talks with the Dalai Lama as “*barbarically unreasonable, arrogant, absurd and self-righteous*” and suggested an Olympic boycott if the violence continues in Tibet.

What are the prospects? After an initial honeymoon with Mr. Ma, China will find that he does not have much room for maneuver either. China insists that Taiwan is part of its territory, while Mr. Ma’s KMT takes the position – like the DPP – that Taiwan is a sovereign, democratic nation, albeit under the old “Republic of China” moniker – which will be difficult for China to swallow. During the election campaign, Mr. Ma stated several times: “*Taiwan’s future will be decided by its 23 million people; (we) won’t let China interfere.*” We hope he will stick to these promises.

Mr. Ma has also made better ties with China dependent on the reduction of China's military threat against the island, and has in particular argued for the removal of the 1000+ missiles aimed at the island. Furthermore, he has stated that improvement of relations depends on China's democratization. Judging by recent events like the crackdown in Tibet there is no democratization visible on the horizon yet: if anything, China has become more repressive and adept at using new techniques such as the Internet to suppress democracy and freedom of expression.

On the economic front, it will depend on how China's economy develops. Until now the Chinese economic juggernaut has appeared rather attractive to international business and Taiwanese businessmen alike.

But the present US economic recession is bound to have a major impact on the Chinese economy: less growth, more unemployment, leading to increasing social strife. This will make it less attractive to move closer to China. An example: in the industrial zone of Shenzhen – just North of Hong Kong – there were some 9,000 Taiwanese companies a couple of years ago. Now there are less than 5,000; the rest have either folded or moved away to other countries like Vietnam.

## *Implications for Taiwan itself*

Mr. Ma's election will of course mean a change of government after 20 May 2008, when the inauguration will take place. The fact that the KMT government now has full control of both the Executive and Legislative branch means less strife in the Legislative Yuan. During the past eight years there was continuous deadlock due to the fact that the KMT-controlled legislature blocked many of the reform initiatives of the DPP government.

Now both branches are KMT controlled means that there will be less checks and balances, but also means that it will not be possible anymore to put the blame for mismanagement, economic downturn etc. on President Chen Shui-bian, who – particularly in the last two years of his government – became the scapegoat for many perceived ills, particularly on the economic front.

The fact is also that "Taiwan identity" has become the mainstay of society in Taiwan. During the campaign Mr. Ma actually moved much closer to the DPP position than ever before: he had to expend major efforts to neutralize the fear he would sell Taiwan out. He had to learn to speak Taiwanese, went on a "long stay" in the South to familiarize himself with Taiwanese views, and – like the DPP – considers Taiwan a country in its own right.

## *An eventful campaign*

Aside from the issues mentioned earlier, which apparently affected the voters' views, there were several developments and events which occurred, and which affected the campaign ... but not enough to affect the outcome.

The first development, which had a major impact on the campaign, was China's brutal crackdown in Tibet following the demonstrations by Tibetan monks which started on March 10th. Both Taiwan's DPP government and Frank Hsieh's campaign were quick to react, saying that — if Taiwan would move closer to China, as is being advocated by the KMT's Ma Ying-jeou — *“what happens in Tibet today could happen in Taiwan tomorrow.”*

The second development was the fact that on Sunday March 16th, the DPP was able to mobilize some 1.2 million people in an island-wide “counterclockwise” march, symbolizing the turn-the-tide

theme of the Hsieh headquarters. The large, enthusiastic crowds reinvigorated the campaign and served as a major boost, especially among the younger generation.

The third development was that on March 12th, four KMT legislators led by KMT Caucus whip Alex Fai barged into Hsieh's headquarters: they had taken it upon themselves to “investigate” whether Hsieh was paying rent. The intrusion was a stark reminder of the KMT's arrogance and abuse of power during the days of martial law and dearly cost Ma Ying-jeou — who apologized profusely — several percentage points in the vote.

A fourth issue which made a significant difference in closing the gap was the “One China Common Market” concept, which had been touted by Mr. Ma Ying-jeou and his running mate Vincent Siew. For the past weeks, the DPP hit hard on this issue, and argued that open borders with China would lead to a flood of people and goods. On Wednesday 19 March 2008, a prominent former KMT official, Mr. Benjamin Lu — who headed



**Hu Jintao (on tank): "Tibet today, Taiwan tomorrow."  
Ma Ying-jeou: "I am all set!"**

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Taiwan's office in Brussels in the 1990s, and subsequently served as head of Taiwan's Representative Office in DC — expressed his support for Hsieh's candidacy, and strongly criticized his former KMT colleagues on this issue.

A final nudge in support of Hsieh was given by former President Lee Teng-hui, who declared on March 20th that he would vote for Hsieh. Lee said that in view of the KMT's control of the legislature, a vote for the KMT in the presidential elections would be "ill advised." He said that Taiwan's political system needs adequate checks and balances. Another prominent figure, Nobel Prize winner Prof. Lee Yuan-tse, recently also endorsed the Hsieh candidacy. However, the support came too little, too late.

## *Some suggestions for Ma Ying-jeou*

*By Bruce Jacobs. Professor Jacobs teaches Asian languages and studies and is director of the Taiwan Research Unit at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. This article was first published in the Taipei Times on 24 March 2008. Reprinted with permission.*

Chinese Nationalist Party presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou's landslide victory confirms Taiwan's democracy is thriving. Many citizens who voted for President Chen Shui-bian in 2000 and 2004 blamed Chen and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) for the perceived failures of the past eight years. Thus, they quite rationally decided to vote for Ma. In many ways, this voter dissatisfaction with the DPP government continues the trends shown in the legislative election two months ago.

Ma must realize that his massive victory does not come from his cross-strait policies such as the "cross-strait common market." In fact, the most successful part of DPP candidate Frank Hsieh's campaign was

his dismantling of vice-presidential candidate Vincent Siew's "cross-strait common market" idea, a fact Ma realized as he repeatedly retreated on the common market policy. Tibet also showed the naïvete of Ma's cross-strait policy.

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**Ma Ying-jeou (riding the "One China Common Market" dragon): "Really, it is more comfortable than it looks"**

Rather, Ma's victory was a defeat for the DPP's economic policies and for its perceived corruption. Ma must bear this in mind as he goes forward.

Ma faces some difficult decisions ahead of his inauguration date on May 20. His most difficult heritage is his reputation for making contradictory statements at different times. For example, when running for re-election as mayor of Taipei in 2002, he told me personally and then said in a major press conference that Taiwan's future should be decided by the 23 million people of Taiwan. Recently, he reiterated this stance. Yet, on Feb. 12, 2006, and at other times, he said the future of Taiwan should be decided by the peoples on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Ma has also emphasized the threats posed by China and has even declared that the withdrawal of China's missiles is a precondition for cross-strait talks. Yet, at other times, he has expressed the opinion that if Taiwan is friendly to China, Beijing will in turn demonstrate friendship for Taiwan and give Taiwan more international space.

Clearly, China's repeated repression in Tibet, including the recent crackdown, has made a mockery of its original 1951 Treaty of Amity with Tibet. This clearly has lessons for Taiwan.

The KMT that Ma leads is very divided. On one hand there are the old, China-centric conservatives, many of whom go back to the dictatorial period. On the other hand, there are the more Taiwan-centric reformers. Ma is a bridge between these groups and frequently leaves both unhappy. Thus, the old conservatives refused to accept Ma's suggestion that the KMT publicly accept defeat in 2004 and they criticized him when he sold the old KMT party headquarters and old party-run enterprises.

So far, he has also proved insufficiently reformist for the younger members of the KMT. Bringing People First Party Chairman James Soong back into the KMT is not a reform move. Neither is giving prominence to former vice president and KMT chairman Lien Chan. And putting such recent criminals as KMT Legislator Chiu Yi high on the party ticket for the legislature does not send a reform message either.

I recommend to Ma that he ally with the reformers in the KMT. Thus, for example, he should not appoint KMT Vice Chairman Chiang Pin-kun, a former minister of economic affairs, as premier. Chiang, who is already 75 years old, lacks a reformist spirit. As deputy speaker of the legislature, he had a military honor guard snap to attention every time he or his guests entered his chambers. Such behavior belongs in a dictatorship, not a democracy. In addition, Chiang lacks any notion of reform or of a global world.

Rather, Ma should appoint a younger Taiwan-centric, reformist administrator as premier. One such person would be Taoyuan County Commissioner Chu Li-lun, who has led a large county and implemented a reformist strategy. Chu speaks excellent English, has traveled widely and would present an excellent face for Taiwan to the world. In addition, domestically he would push reform in Taiwan's bureaucratic administrative system. Provided he is healthy, Taichung Mayor Jason Hu might be another possible premier.

In the KMT itself, Ma must also push reform. For example, he must implement separation of the party and government. Thus, the president and Cabinet ministers should not be members of the KMT's Central Standing Committee. Such reforms are essential to reforming the KMT and turning it into a genuine democratic party.

Ma should remember his statement in the second TV debate, when he said he regretted that the KMT in its eight years in opposition had failed to reform. This statement was never followed up in the campaign, but he should also make party reform a matter of priority.

If Ma pushes a Taiwan-centric, reformist agenda, the people of Taiwan will unite behind him. If, on the other hand, he is weak toward China and relies on Beijing's goodwill, the future of Taiwan will be bleak. Only with a genuinely reformist agenda can Ma fulfill his major campaign slogan of "going forward."

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## Taiwan's UN referendum, a retrospective

### *Large majority in favor, but not enough to pass*

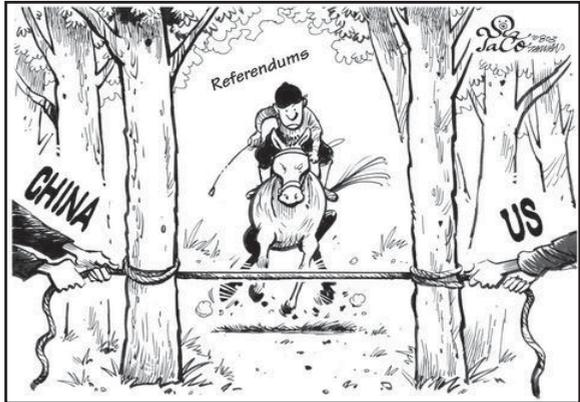
The presidential vote in Taiwan was accompanied by two referendums which were heatedly debated in the lead-up to the election: a DPP referendum asking the voters their view on applying to enter the United Nations "under the name Taiwan", and a second – KMT sponsored – referendum asking voters to support "re-entry" into the United Nations under the name "Republic of China" or "any other practical name."

The DPP referendum was voted on by some 6.2 mln. voters, and received overwhelming support with 94% of the valid votes in favor. However, since the referendum law

in Taiwan sets an extremely high threshold for passage (8.65 mln. votes, i.e. 50% of the *eligible* voters) it formally did not pass. *If the same threshold were to be applied to the US primaries, then no-one would ever be elected, since in most primaries typically only between 10 and 20% of the voters come out to vote.*

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In the lead-up to the elections, China was able to get many other countries to – at best — express concern about the referendum, and – at worst – condemn the effort. Both the US Administration of George Bush and a number of European government leaders let themselves be pressured by the repressive Chinese regime in this way. The consequence of the referendum would be – so they were told – “instability” in the Taiwan Strait.



**China and the US preparing to trip Taiwan's UN-referendum horse**

Critics have argued that the DPP initiated the referendum in order to get more voters to come to the polls. This was a serious misconception: the referendum is necessary for three reasons:

1. To let the world know that the Taiwanese people want their country to be a full and equal member in the international community,
2. To let the international community know that the people on the island have no intention of letting themselves be subdued by an authoritarian regime in Beijing,
3. To counter the PRC's relentless pressure, threatening the island militarily, isolating Taiwan politically, and pushing it into a corner.

**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** *Why is it that otherwise rational and reasonable Western leaders let themselves be goaded to the extent that they brand an effort in the exercise of democracy “provocative”? One answer is simple realpolitik: China is big and Taiwan is small, and at least some segment of international political*

*leaders have forgotten about basic principles like human rights and democracy, or assign to them a role that is subordinate to economic interests and power politics.*

*Still it should be clear — even to the most casual observer — that Taiwan is trying to exercise its newfound democracy, while the real threat to “stability” is China’s military threat against a peaceful country that wants to be left alone by its giant neighbor.*

*Another reason is that due to Taiwan’s political isolation, it is extremely difficult for a democratically-elected leadership of the island to let its voice be heard, and counter the venomous disinformation spread by China: China’s un-elected leaders have sheer unfettered access to Western leaders, while Taiwan’s democratically-elected President can’t even travel to any Western nation, let alone meet eye-to-eye with its leaders.*

## ***Congress urges Administration to be more supportive of Taiwan***

In the run-up to Taiwan’s presidential election and the UN referendum, several groups of members of the US Congress sent letters to President Bush and to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, urging the Bush Administration to take a more supportive stance on this issue, or at least remain silent during the remainder of the Presidential campaign, so as not to take sides.

On 29 February 2008, the two co-chairs of the Senate Taiwan Caucus, Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and James Inhofe (R-OK) sent a letter to President Bush saying *“We believe that Taiwan’s election, as well as the inclusion of this referendum, is an exercise in democracy.”*

The two Senators added: *“We believe that Taiwan’s democratic progress should be applauded rather than discouraged”,* and urged the Administration: *“The US should not be perceived as taking sides in this process. We should let the democratic process in Taiwan run its course unimpeded.”*

In a similar letter to President Bush, dated 5 March 2008, three co-chairs of the House Taiwan Caucus, Shelley Berkley (D-NV), Steve Chabot (R-OH) and Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) stated: *“We are [...] disturbed by the fact that over the last few months of 2007, several senior officials of your Administration made statements in which they expressed opposition to Taiwan’s planned referendum, calling it ‘provocative’ and ‘a mistake’.”*

They said: *“The United States’ repeated high volume opposition to the referendum casts doubt on our willingness to stand up for democracy, and undermines our position as a champion of democracy in East Asia.”* They concluded: *“Only by standing firmly with democratic Taiwan will we uphold our principles in promoting freedom worldwide.”*

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Just before the Taiwan election, on 19 March 2008, four other members of Congress sent a letter to Secretary of State Rice. In the letter Congressman Robert Andrews (D-NJ), Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI), John Linder (R-GA) and Scott Garrett (R-NJ) strongly urged the Administration to support the referendum. They stated:



*“The Taiwanese people have the right, as all people do, to self-determination. However, the ability to exercise*

**International community to the US: *“He finally understands that he can't find shelter here.”***

*that right is severely compromised when a nation’s largest ally turns its back. For too long Taiwan has stood its ground as a bulwark of democracy against the encroaching aspirations of an authoritarian communist regime. We should not condemn or oppose the dreams of those who want only to remain free and take their rightful place in the international community.”*

### ***... But the State Department continues criticism***

However, during the weeks prior to the Taiwan elections, the State Department continued its unhelpful mantra against the referendum. Adding insult to injury, at the end of February 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice expressed her opposition to the referendum while she was visiting Beijing. In a 26 February 2008 joint press conference with Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi, she stated:

*“I also reiterated (to Mr. Yang) what I said in December, that the United States opposes the proposed referendum because we believe that this referendum would*

*not be constructive and would, in fact, serve no useful purpose.”*

In response to a question, she added: *“Well, Taiwan is democratic. It will have to make its own decisions. But I think we’ve been very clear that we think that this referendum is not going to help anyone and, in fact, it shouldn’t be held. I’ve said that before and I will state again.*

*We do believe that the best way forward is when there is the prospect for peaceful resolution of differences across the Taiwan Straits, we have encouraged dialogue between the parties.”*

In a 18 March 2008 testimony before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas Christensen reiterated the Administration’s opposition in the following words:

*“While we have publicly opposed as pointless and destabilizing the current Taiwan administration’s pursuit of its referendum to join the UN under the name Taiwan, we are clear in our support of the continuing vibrant democracy on the island, and will continue to honor our obligation under the Taiwan Relations Act to support Taiwan’s legitimate defense needs. Both sides understand the U.S. expectation that any cross-Strait differences be settled peacefully and in a manner that is acceptable to the people on both sides of the Strait.”*

***Taiwan Communiqué comment:*** *Two points: 1) an essential element is the inequality in the equation: China is very big and Taiwan is small. Therefore any dialogue or attempt at a resolution is a very unequal match to begin with, certainly as long as the US and other Western nations continue to isolate Taiwan and leave it dangling.*

*2) A real solution is only possible if there is more solid support from the West for Taiwan’s democracy, its membership in international organizations – and the expression of the popular will through a referendum. As indicated in the Congressional letters: the US and West European cold shoulder to the referendum have undermined the Western position as a champion of democracy in East Asia.*

## ***Zogby poll: 85% in Taiwan support UN membership***

On 11 March 2008, the US-based polling organization Zogby International issued a poll on opinions in Taiwan regarding issues such as UN membership. The poll concluded that the vast majority of adults in Taiwan - 85% - believe the government of Taiwan

should petition the United Nations for membership and 89% believe Taiwan should be offered membership in the U.N.

The poll results also showed that 89% of respondents believe the United States should support Taiwan in its effort to gain recognition by the U.N. Nearly as many (80%) agree the U.S. should openly oppose China's position against Taiwan's membership in the U.N. and help Taiwan establish U.N. membership.

While 75% rate the relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan as favorable, just 30% say the same about Taiwan's relationship with China, which claims sovereignty over the self-ruled island that sits off the shore of Asia between the East and South China seas.

Zogby International conducted a telephone survey of 1,072 adults in Taiwan from Feb. 19 to Feb. 21, 2008, which carries a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points. Nearly two-thirds (63%) said they view the current status of Taiwan as a sovereign and independent country, while 31% said they view Taiwan's sovereignty as undetermined - just 5% believe China's sovereignty extends over Taiwan. When specifically asked whether they agree that Taiwan is a sovereign and independent nation, 89% agreed.

Most of those surveyed (71%) said they would describe themselves as Taiwanese when speaking with someone from another country, such as an American or European - just 5% said they would say they were Chinese and 21% said they would identify themselves as being both Chinese and Taiwanese.

The full results of the poll can be viewed at Zogby's website at:  
<http://www.zogby.com/news/ReadNews.dbm?ID=1465>.

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## **AEI / Armitage: Agenda for US-Taiwan partnership**

On 22 February 2008, two prominent think-tanks in Washington, Armitage International and the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), published a report on US-Taiwan relations. The report, *Strengthening Freedom in Asia: A Twenty-First-Century Agenda for the US-Taiwan Partnership*, presents a comprehensive study of US-Taiwan relations and a new agenda for a future US Administration.

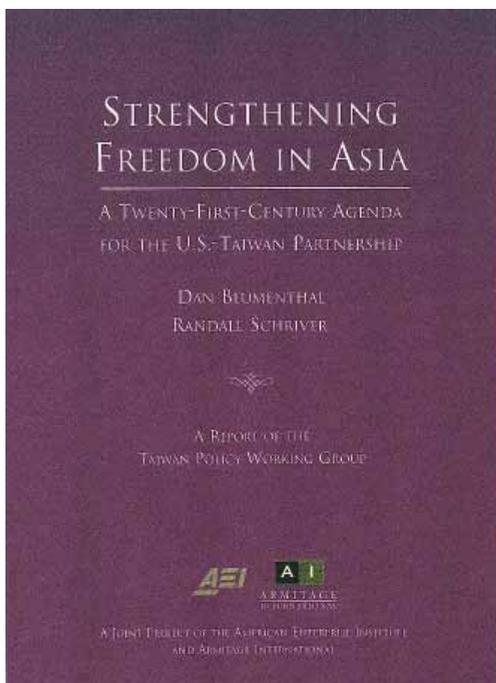
The study is highly critical of the Bush Administration for allowing a dangerous deterioration in recent years. The report states: “*Contemporary US-Taiwan relations suffer from neglect and bitter feelings at the highest level. The United States and Taiwan currently share no common agenda, thus allowing the relationship to lurch from crisis to crisis.*”

The two lead authors of the study, Randall Schriver of Armitage and Dan Blumenthal of AEI, are former senior officials in the Bush Administration: Schriver was deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, while Blumenthal was a senior policy director with the Pentagon’s office of international security. They outline a number of steps to ensure Taiwan’s security and “break the negative cycle” in bilateral relations.

The report cites the Bush Administration’s preoccupation with Iraq, Iran and North Korea, which has increased US reliance on China, giving Beijing an opportunity to drive a wedge between the US and Taiwan and prompting the US to lean on Taipei

not to do anything that Beijing views as provocative. “*Washington’s move backward in its relations with Taiwan are not only unworthy of a democratic friend, they are also dangerous,*” the report states.

The report continues: “*A US-Taiwan common agenda is needed now more than ever ... Beijing is using diplomatic isolation and the threat of military force to pressure Taiwan into an unfavorable settlement, and Taiwan is reacting by forcing intractable disputes to the front of the debate. The United States has been reacting by trying to punish or pressure Taiwan to stand down at the expense of its own long-term interests. This dynamic is not sustainable.*”



The report concludes with a number of recommendations: one set for Taiwan to take unilaterally, another set for the US to take unilaterally – such as relaxation of the restrictions on high-level bilateral visits and communications in the political and military spheres and allow both countries' presidents to speak directly to each other. A third set of recommendations focus on topics for a bilateral agenda, such as improved defense cooperation, joint search-and-rescue, democracy promotion, and inter-parliamentary exchanges between Congress and Taiwan's Legislative Yuan.

The full report can be accessed at:

[http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27559/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.27559/pub_detail.asp)

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## Report from Washington

### *On the passing of Congressman Tom Lantos*

On 11 February 2008, Congressman Tom Lantos passed away at the Bethesda Naval Medical Center. During the past decades, Congressman Lantos was a close friend of the Taiwanese-American community and of Taiwan.

His strong support for human rights and democracy around the world led him to work in support of Taiwan's fight for human rights, democracy and international acceptance. In 1995 he played a key role in the visit of then President Lee Teng-hui to his alma mater, Cornell. When former President Lee — after he stepped down from office — was finally able to visit Washington in October 2005, he made it a point to pay a visit to his old friend Tom Lantos.



**Congressman Tom Lantos**

In the House, Congressman Lantos took many initiatives in support of Taiwan. He initiated resolutions in support of Taiwan's membership in the United Nations and the World Health Organization, and in 2005 spoke out strongly against the EU's lifting of the arms embargo against China. In the summer of 2007 — as Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee — he ensured passage of Resolution HCR-136, urging the

Bush Administration to lift restrictions on the visits to the US by high-level democratically-elected leaders of Taiwan. It passed unanimously.

Until the very end, Congressman Lantos worked energetically to support Taiwan: just before Christmas 2007, he and the ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Ileana Ros Lehtinen (R-FL) introduced HCR-278, expressing support for Taiwan's democracy and security by encouraging international delegations to visit Taiwan to witness the March 2008 presidential elections.

The Taiwanese-American community and the people of Taiwan will dearly miss him. We wish his family, in particular his wife Annette and two daughters, much strength in the difficult time ahead.

## *House members call for an end to outdated "One China" policy*

On 20 February 2008, a group of members of the US House of Representatives led by Rep. Bilirakis (R-FL) sent a letter to President Bush calling for an end to the outdated "One China" Policy. The letter, co-signed by seven members of Congress of President Bush's own party and one Democrat, challenges the Administration's accommodating and often conflicting policy towards China. The members expressed concern about the U.S. insistence in rigidly adhering to this outdated One China Policy which clashes with the U.S. commitment to Taiwan's security and its support for Taiwan's democracy.



**Congressman Gus Bilirakis**

Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Tom Tancredo (R-CO), Chair of the House Republican Policy Committee Thaddeus McCotter (R-MI), Steve Chabot (R-OH), Scott Garrett (R-NJ), Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), John Culberson (R-TX), Mark Souder (R-IN) and Collin Peterson (D-MN) wrote: *"This implication [that Taiwan "is" part of China] seriously undermines the legitimacy of our provision to sell Taiwan defensive weapons. It also ignores the fact that Taiwan has made an impressive transformation from authoritarianism to democracy over the past twenty years."*

They continue, “it is clear that it is not the ‘One China Policy’ that has kept the peace in the western Pacific. Rather, it has been our commitment to Taiwan’s security under the Taiwan Relations Act. The TRA has safeguarded Taiwan and the region by deterring a Chinese attack. Taiwan’s democratic transformation also contributed to regional stability.”

They continue, “Unless our outdated policy vis-à-vis the PRC and Taiwan is revised, the United States should expect tensions in the region to continue rising. Perhaps the primary reason for this is because the so-called ‘One China Policy’ and the Taiwan Relations Act – the two fundamental pillars governing U.S. relations with China and Taiwan, in fact work against each other....It simply makes no sense for the United States to continue adhering to a 1970’s era, Cold War China policy in such a dramatically transformed 21st century world.”

They concluded: “Only by giving democratic Taiwan unwavering support will we be an effective advocate for democratic change in China.”

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## Report from Europe

### *Europarlamentarians support UN membership*

Just prior to Taiwan’s March 22<sup>nd</sup> presidential elections, a total of 100 members of the European Parliament issued a statement supporting Taiwan’s efforts to become a member of the United Nations, and urged other European Union countries and U.N. members to support Taiwan’s UN bid. In the statement, the parliament members strongly criticized U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his unfounded remarks that Taiwan “is” an integral part of the People’s Republic of China.

In the joint statement, which was issued on 17 March 2008, the members of the European Parliament said Taiwan, with its 23 million citizens, is a sovereign state. Taiwan has its own parliamentary and governmental systems, an independent territory and a distinct population, they added.

*“Taiwan has never been under the control of the People’s Republic of China. On the contrary, Taiwan is a full-fledged democracy that realizes the rule of law and universal human rights. Furthermore, Taiwan has diplomatic relations with 23 sovereign states. For all these reasons, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s*

*statement that said Taiwan is an integral part of the People's Republic of China is clearly false and unjustified,"* the statement said.

Members of the parliament said in the statement that the parliament has passed many bills to call for more support for Taiwan's 23 million people's participation in international organizations. Taiwan, as a fully democratic country with high economic development, if offered more participation on the international level, will contribute significantly to the international society, the statement added.

Taiwan is a member of the World Trade Organization, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the Asian Development Bank. The statement concluded by urging all of the 27 EU members and other U.N. member states to seriously consider Taiwan's application to join the international body.

## ***Members of British Parliament urge support for Taiwan***

On two separate occasions, members of the British Parliament urged Prime Minister Gordon Brown to be more supportive of Taiwan and its quest to become a full and equal member in the international community. On 10 January 2008, Lord Faulkner of Worcester made an eloquent statement in the House of Lords. A few quotes:

*"Taiwanese human rights are being threatened in a number of ways. For example, there are around 1,000 missiles on the coast of China aimed directly at the heart of Taiwan."*

*"...There are other equally unsubtle attacks on the human rights of the people of Taiwan. China has campaigned, so far successfully, to ensure Taiwan's exclusion from world bodies such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization."*



**Lord Faulkner**

*"... This might not matter so much if China was the only country to behave like that towards Taiwan, but sadly that is not the case, as we all know. Unfortunately, Her Majesty's Government appears as enthusiastic as any in support of the so-called*

*One China policy.*” Lord Faulkner then gave several quotes from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website and presented language that would provide a much better balance.

Lord Faulkner then discussed the (then) upcoming legislative and presidential elections in Taiwan, and strongly deplored the statements made by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. David Miliband, who in December 2007 had criticized Taiwan’s UN referendum. He contrasted the British government’s negative stance towards Taiwan with the positive support for Kosovo’s independence, and asked two questions: “*First, if we are right to support Kosovo’s independence from Serbia, why do we refuse to support Taiwanese independence from China, based on similar principles? Secondly, what more must Taiwan do to demonstrate its credentials as a democratic state and as a friend of the United Kingdom?*”

Following the interpellation in the House of Lords, Lord Faulkner and Sir Nicolas Winterton, member of the House of Commons, wrote a joint letter to British Prime Minister Gordon Brown urging him to support Taiwan’s membership in the UN and other international bodies. Lord Faulkner and Sir Nicolas serve as co-chairmen of the British-Taiwanese All-Party Parliamentary Group. A key quote from the letter:

*“ We ... believe that Taiwan’s application to join the UN and other international bodies should be supported. Ideally we would like you to make clear to the Chinese that Britain does not support the build-up of missiles on the coast of China, that you deplore the continuing threats made by the mainland against the people of Taiwan, and that you wish to start discussions with other governments about altering the “One China” policy.”*

## ***Protest in Berlin against Steinmeier’s misconceptions***

On 23 February 2008, more than 100 European Taiwanese gathered at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, protesting German Foreign Minister Steinmeier’s recent erroneous statement that he viewed Tibet and Taiwan “as part of China.”

The group stated that Taiwan is a sovereign nation, and that its people have the right to defend their democracy and determine their own future. Hundreds of passers-by took notice of the demonstration, and pamphlets were given to them to further inform them about the threat of China to world peace, and in contrast, the democratic developments on Taiwan, achieved over the last 25 years.

The demonstration was organized by the Taiwan Association in Germany, the Taiwanese Women’s Association in Germany, and the European Federation of Taiwan Health Alliance.

Photo: Stan Lai

Onlookers were treated to a street-theater performance portraying Germany and China cooperating to undermine the liberties and fundamental rights of Taiwanese citizens. It conveyed the message that Taiwan deserves full representation at international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization. Onlookers were also encouraged to write their elected representatives, and demand that they uphold the universal values of freedom, democracy, and human rights.



European Taiwanese protest in Berlin

Many passers-by expressed their best wishes and hopes that Taiwan could be free from the military threats and diplomatic isolation imposed by China. Many Germans – in particular those who suffered under either the East Communist German regime or under Hitler’s rule — expressed their solidarity, and their hopes that the Taiwanese could enjoy their liberties and rights, free from the threat of dictatorial regime.

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## Book Review

### *China: Fragile Superpower, by Susan Shirk*

*Reviewed by June Teufel Dreyer, professor of political science at the University of Miami, Florida*

Shirk’s book begins with a hypothetical Taiwan scenario: a Chinese SU-47 and a Taiwanese F-16 have collided across the Taiwan Strait. She notes that, although the Taiwan Relations Act does not formally obligate the US to come to Taiwan’s defense, any president is likely to feel compelled to “make a strong military gesture of our own in the hopes that his show of resolve will end the crisis.” She quotes some Chinese

scholars' views that the best solution is to get people to pay less attention to Taiwan, but says that it is hard to imagine that China's leaders will feel secure enough to do this.

This is an intelligent and well written book, though one with disturbing implications for U.S. policy toward China and Taiwan. Shirk, an accomplished academic who served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State during the Clinton administration, brings an unusual combination of scholarly training and practical experience to her analyses.

Her thesis is that, although China's growing economic and military power leads others to view it as a threat, the self-image of its leaders is quite different. Bedeviled by a deep sense of domestic insecurity, they see themselves as struggling desperately to stay on top of a society roiled by economic change. Concerned first and foremost with their own political survival, their worst nightmare is a country-wide protest movement of the discontented: unemployed workers, impoverished farmers who have been pushed off their land, and perpetually critical students may, united by patriotic fervor, rise up against them. As happened with the collapse of the Soviet empire, political defeat could cost them and their families their livelihoods, and even their lives.

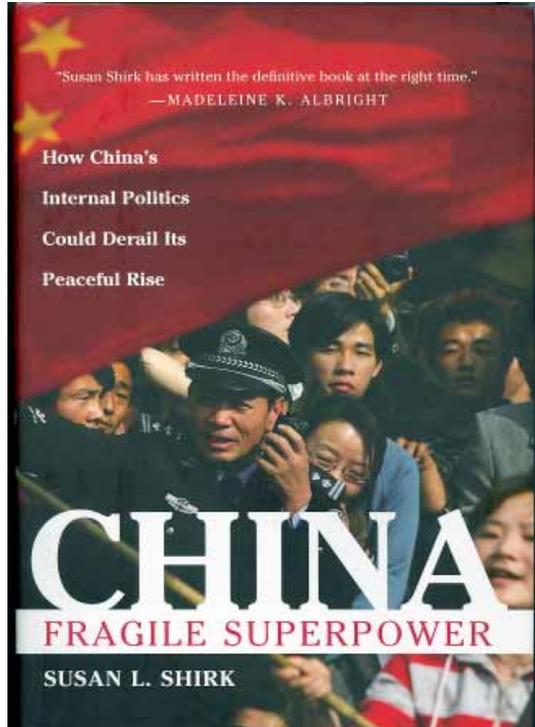
The unanswered question, then, becomes what obligation does the rest of the world bear to help this leadership to compensate for the deep seated feelings of insecurity that their own policies are largely responsible for. Although this is not what the book does, one might posit that if the leadership took more forceful steps to reform and granted the disenfranchised masses more power, they would have less to fear from the masses. Shirk, however, argues that, rather than being reassured by China's massive problems, we should be worried by them: it is China's internal fragility, not its growing strength, that presents the greatest danger to the United States.

If economic growth slows and problems multiply, the country's leaders would "wag the dog"—i.e. mobilize domestic support by creating an international crisis. More likely, she believes, is that when confronted with a crisis, the leaders make threats they find it difficult to back away from, because of their fear of appearing weak to the domestic audience. Only by understanding the dangers of China's domestic fragility and incorporating this understanding into their policies can Chinese and American decisions makers avoid a catastrophic war.

If it is incumbent on American leaders to appreciate the difficult situation the Chinese leadership is in, does this also impose an obligation on American leaders to acquiesce in the often belligerent demands that they make in order to satisfy this domestic constituency they fear being overthrown by?

This reviewer would argue that, to a large extent, the situation is of the leadership's own making: it implanted in the national consciousness the image of a proud nation brought low by a 'century of humiliation'—without mentioning that the internal deficiencies of the Chinese government of the time bore responsibility for the humiliation—and raised the holy grail of irredentism for Taiwan and other possessions of the far-flung Manchu empire. No longer humiliated, China is now a major international player.

One strongly suspects that its leadership's repeated references to the century of humiliation are thinly disguised ways of saying to a foreign constituency that is largely ignorant of historical reality "you owe us." Taiwan is the leadership's current definition of the price it is owed. In the event that Taiwan is absorbed into the PRC, Beijing will be free to concentrate on its numerous other unresolved territorial issues. Perhaps one day those who currently believe that these issues stem from emotionally-based irredentism will realize that they are at base geostrategic.



Shirk concedes that Chinese leaders have boxed themselves into a dangerous corner, and are their own worst enemies. But at the same time, she appears to argue that it is incumbent on the rest of the world to accept this position and accommodate to it. For example, Shirk describes the 2004 Taiwan referendum as creating a "dangerous precedent" for a future vote on independence, without mentioning that the United States has told no other country in the world that it should not hold a referendum.

Similarly, she calls Lee Teng-hui's characterization of China-Taiwan ties as a special state-to-state relationship and Chen Shui-bian's description of one coun-

try on either side of the Taiwan Strait as “major bombshells that could be construed as proclaiming Taiwan’s independence” (p. 183) rather than the accurate descriptions of reality that both are.

Although she speaks of the salami tactics that the government of Taiwan pursues, there is no mention of the similar tactics being pursued by the government on the other side of the Taiwan Strait: luring away Taiwan’s allies, restricting its participation in international organizations, even when exclusion jeopardizes global health care and, most provocative of all, passing the 2005 anti-secession law.

Shirk’s characterization of PRC President Hu Jintao’s policy toward the ROC as ‘tough love’ will surprise the many observers who have yet to see the love. Her presentation of Taiwan politics leans strongly toward the pan-blue side of the spectrum. While seemingly approving of Lien Chan and James Soong’s visits to the mainland, she fails to mention how controversial these were within Taiwan.

Though Shirk does not mention it, Hu’s ‘gestures of friendship’ in the form of promises to import Taiwan’s fruit tariff-free and give it pandas came at a high price: these were to be considered “domestic” transfers. In other words, by accepting the ‘gifts,’ Taiwan would have conceded that it is part of the PRC. Astoundingly, Shih Ming-teh is described as ‘a revered elder’. Shih’s corruption and womanizing caused his fall from grace many years ago.

Shirk concludes with the vision of a partnership in which the US and China share responsibility for regional and global leadership that can be realized only if America has the wisdom to appreciate China’s fragility and the maturity not to try to go it alone.

This, however, is but one half of the equation: it can be achieved only if China’s leaders have the wisdom and maturity to tone down the more aggressive form of nationalism they have themselves created, and to cease making statements—such as on the need for unification with Taiwan— they find it difficult to back away from. So far, this has not happened.

The complete title of the book is: **China: Fragile Superpower: How China’s Internal Politics Could Derail Its Peaceful Rise**, Published by Oxford University Press, New York 2007.

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