



# Taiwan Communiqué

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## Taiwan's new political landscape

As we have described in the previous two issues of *Taiwan Communiqué*, the political landscape in Taiwan has changed considerably during the past few months. The policies initiated by the new Ma Ying-jeou administration – and particularly his precipitous slide towards China — are worrying many Taiwanese. This became apparent when more than 150,000 Taiwanese rallied in Taipei on 30 August 2008. Below we present a brief summary of the event. We also present an analysis of the implications for US policy by Julian Baum, a veteran reporter on developments in Taiwan and China.

### *August 30<sup>th</sup> rally in Taipei*

The rally was called on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> day in office of President Ma Ying-jeou, and was coordinated by a group of civic organizations led by the *Taiwan Society*, formed by a group of prominent scholars. The organizers stated that they had called for the event because the economy has deteriorated significantly since Ma's inauguration on May 20<sup>th</sup>, while the new administration has sacrificed Taiwan's sovereignty in favor of closer ties with China.

The rally started at 2:30 PM, when protesters braving the



Crowd at August 30th rally in Taipei

afternoon heat, and started walking from two points – Long-shan Temple and Chunghsiao East Rd – converging on the broad Ketagalan Boulevard in front of the Presidential Office. Foreign observers at the event estimated that some 150,000 people attended the rally.

The high point of the rally was a speech by newly-elected DPP Chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen, who strongly criticized Ma for undermining Taiwan’s sovereignty, and for being responsible for the steep slide in Taiwan’s economy, where the stock index had lost some 30 percent since Mr. Ma took office.

During the election campaign in January-March 2008, Mr. Ma also made his “6-3-3” pledge: after his election he would achieve 6% annual GDP growth, less than 3% unemployment, and a per capita GDP income of US30,000. Only a few weeks after the elections, the new administration in Taipei announced that the annual growth estimate for this year would be less than 5% and the unemployment well over 3%.

During the past weeks it also became apparent that the benefits from Chinese tourism – trumpeted loudly in early July when charter flights were announced – were totally overblown: instead of the 3,000 tourists per day, only less than 300 per day have visited Taiwan since July.

DPP Chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen stated she was pleased that “*today so many people wore smiles on their faces and cherished hope in their hearts ... to declare to the government that we care about Taiwan’s sovereignty, economy and sunshine (clean government).*”

Taiwan Society Secretary-General Prof. Lo Chih-cheng – the main organizer of the event – closed the rally by calling on the Taiwan people to see themselves as “Taiwan citizens” and “take responsibility for protecting Taiwan.”

## ***Implications for US policy***

*By Julian Baum*

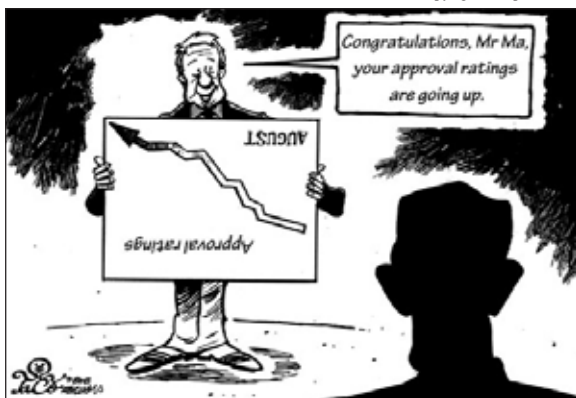
The first 100 days of President Ma Ying-jeou’s administration have brought a radical shift in policies that are courting Beijing into a closer relationship and lowering the barriers to cross-strait integration. Stabilizing ties with Washington, Tokyo and other major trading partners is taking second place to the “total normalization” of economic and financial relations with the People’s Republic of China, as President Ma told the *Wall Street Journal* in June 2008.

But what has most unnerved Taiwan's friends and allies, and even many citizens who supported the KMT ticket in the March election, is the new president's indifferent attitude toward his government's sovereignty. Unlike former president Lee Teng-hui who practiced "pragmatic diplomacy," Ma's "flexible diplomacy" avoids the sovereignty issue so casually that even the dignity of his own presidential office is in doubt, along with his government's readiness to defend and protect the authority of the state.

These sudden policy shifts have deepened concern among Taiwan's supporters and allies over Ma's priorities and ideological orientation. Under a more regressive "one China" ideology than espoused by the KMT under Lee in the 1990s, Ma's government

has tried to turn back the clock to a time when the PRC was called the "Chinese mainland" and Taiwan was regarded as merely one province of China. Even within Taiwan, the government's uncontested profile as the legal equal of Beijing has been lowered. Ma's "one China" clearly implies a shared identity and common nation-hood with the People's Republic of China, although he has dodged explicit discussion of these issues for years.

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**Congratulations Mr. Ma, your approval ratings are going "up"**

Many voters were impressed with Ma's vigorous defense of his commitment to Taiwan and his respect for its democratic institutions during a long election campaign. Ma acknowledged that he was running for president of a sovereign state. Yet the only reference to his government's sovereign status in his inaugural speech on May 20th 2008 took no notice that this status that has been under open siege for more than half a century and profoundly deserved greater respect. Instead, Ma stated that "In resolving cross-strait issues, what matters is not sovereignty but core values and way of life."

In this context, what Ma means by the "total normalization" of cross-strait relations is a troubling question, since it includes obscuring the reality of Taiwan's separate identity in a hugely asymmetrical rivalry with China. The government's new approach is apparent in large as well as small ways. These include the unprecedented decision to

take commercial flights on a state visit to Latin America in the name of saving money while lowering the profile of Taiwan's head of state, and changing the name of the government postal service from Taiwan Post back to Chunghwa Post.

Critics are alarmed at the implications of these actions. The government's downgrading of its own status has brought on an "unprecedented crisis of sovereignty for Taiwan," the *Liberty Times* fumed in July. More than 150,000 people took to the streets of Taipei on August 30th to protest Ma's handling of cross-strait relations, among other grievances.

Besides giving point to the KMT's unpopular "one China" view, the government's new direction is specially aimed at winning over Beijing's goodwill and cooperation. So far, those efforts have not paid off, other than to attach signatures to agreements on direct flights and tourism that were worked out under former president Chen Shui-bian and the Democratic Progressive Party.

In another high-profile lowering of the sovereignty flag, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not apply for full membership in the United Nations this year but asked instead for "meaningful participation" in UN-related agencies under the title of "Taiwan region." Beijing rudely rejected even this modest proposal. In a lengthy letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon dated August 12, China's UN ambassador Wang Guangya again slammed the door in Taiwan's face without a hint of flexibility or concern for Taiwan's legitimate needs. Beijing's continued hard-line suggests that the road ahead may be as difficult for Ma as it has been for his predecessors.

The new government says it is not discouraged. In an interview with *Time* magazine in early August, Ma said he believed that the two sides were gradually developing

mutual trust and that Chinese president Hu Jin-tao had "demonstrated flexibility." He told foreign visitors before the Olympics opened that he saw "goodwill" in Beijing's reluctant return to using the name concocted for Taiwan's Olympic team of "Chinese



Copyright: Taipei Times

**Ma Ying-jeou in transit in the US: "Look ... it's the president without a title from the country with no name"**

Taipei.” That name had been agreed upon two decades earlier, but the Chinese press had slipped into using an even more objectionable title, “*Taipei, China.*”

Where this leaves Washington is a puzzle. In some respects, Ma is the man of their dreams — compliant with their wishes, solicitous of China, and ready to brush off any insults. He has won praise from President George W. Bush for his aggressively laissez-faire policies across the Strait and from the U.S. State Department for his low profile transits during an official visit to Latin America in August.

Yet there are risks for Washington of a weak and compliant Taiwan. Already there are worries, privately expressed, that Ma and his ministers could mislead Beijing and compromise the sovereign territorial status of Taiwan, which according to the official U.S. position remains undetermined.

Despite the contradictions of its own policies, the U.S. has a strong interest in maintaining the island-republic’s democratic institutions and separate political authority. Taiwan’s de facto sovereign status, even unrecognized, is a quiet testament to American credibility with other allies in East Asia, especially Japan.

Taiwan’s ability to deter annexation by China is crucial to Japan’s security and to the credibility of Washington’s security guarantees to Tokyo. More than 800 ships pass through the Taiwan Strait daily, mostly bound for Japanese ports and providing Japan with more than 90% of its energy needs.

Taiwan is also a critical international partner with the US in promoting the rule of law, global telecommunications, maritime surveillance, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and policing the illicit drug trade.

If there are checks on Taiwan’s leaders, the most effective of these come from the republic’s democratic institutions. By any meaningful measure, the Taiwan government is more legitimately sovereign today than it was 21 years ago when martial law was lifted. In this substantial sense, the political authority of the state is more accountable since it rests with the Taiwanese people. So Ma remains tethered by democratic practices and institutions, though these could be severely tested in remaining years of his administration.

# Tsai Ing-wen goes to Washington

## *Reaching out to the US*

From September 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> 2008, the newly-elected DPP Chairperson Dr. Tsai Ing-wen visited Washington. She had meetings with members of the Administration, US Senate and House of Representatives, the East Asia teams of US Presidential candidates Obama and McCain, and gave a speech at the Heritage Foundation.

Photo: Taiwan Communiqué

The visit comes at a crucial moment for both Taiwan and the US: in Taiwan itself one is seeing the new Ma Administration sliding off into China's direction without any indications that China is reciprocating with moves to respect Taiwan's sovereignty or give it more international space. On the US side, the Bush Administration is preoccupied with its legacy on issues such as Iraq and Georgia, while the Congress and media are focused on the upcoming US Presidential elections.



**Dr. Tsai Ing-wen addressing a welcome reception by the Taiwanese-American community in Washington**

Below, we present a summary of the points she relayed at her presentation at the Washington-based Heritage Foundation:

- \* Taiwan is a democracy. The DPP was the prime driver in achieving this democracy through hard work and sacrifice. We want to preserve our hard-won freedom and democracy. We believe it is important to let the world know that we want to be a full and equal member of the international community. We understand that this will not happen tomorrow, but we want the world to understand our aspirations.
- \* We want to live our life free from outside coercion: China is still building up its military and threatening Taiwan, but the outside world seems to accept this as part of the *status quo*. Taiwan is being slapped when it wants to live up to its democracy, but China seems to be getting away with strangling it.
- \* On the island, there is a growing sense of "*Taiwanese-ness*." Regrettably, during elections the ethnic divide is magnified. We believe that the rise of the Taiwanese identity should be seen as a way to unite people: we present an inclusive concept of Taiwanese identity based on the multi-cultural origins of our society.

- \* We want Taiwan to be able to defend its freedom and sovereignty based on the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights. We want to build a constructive relationship with a large and not necessarily-friendly neighbor. China needs to understand that its present policies of isolating Taiwan is not a constructive approach.
- \* We are deeply concerned that the strategic shift of the Ma Administration in the direction of China comes at the expense of Taiwan's sovereignty and of good relations with the United States and Japan. Our basic premise is that the people of Taiwan are free to determine their own future, and that all options are open.
- \* The economic policies of the Ma Administration are dismal: he is presenting the opening to China as the only solution to our economic woes. We believe that Taiwan needs to rely on the vitality and ingenuity of the society by maximizing our own economic strengths, and focus on an innovation- and service-based economy.
- \* We urge the US Administration and Congress (present and future) to be proactive and creative in its support of Taiwan's democracy and of a viable presence in the international family of nations. We are ready to work with you to find a coherent, sustainable and just approach. It is in our interest – and in yours.

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## Are US arms sales to Taiwan “frozen”? *Defense News and Washington Post report*

In the period June-July 2008, a debate was raging in Washington and Taipei whether the US had “frozen” its arms sales to Taiwan. The debate was prompted by reports in **Defense News** (*US freezes \$ 12B in arms sales to Taiwan*, 9 June 2008) and the **Washington Post** (*Top US officials stalling arms package*, 12 June 2008).

The two reports noted that the Administration had not notified Congress yet on a total of some US\$ 12 billion, including 60 Blackhawk helicopters, 30 Apache helicopters, eight diesel-electric submarines, and four Patriot air defense missile batteries. The freeze reportedly also covered 66 F-16 C/D fighter aircraft for which the Taiwan legislature approved a budget earlier this year: the Bush Administration has yet to respond to a 2006 letter of request (LOR) from Taiwan for price and availability data on the fighter aircraft.

In response to the report, a State Department spokesman denied that there was a freeze in place, and stated that the US Administration was going through its internal interagency process, and that Congress would be notified once this process had been completed.

## *Congress asks for clarifications*

The reports also prompted expressions of concern by Congress. In a letter to President George W. Bush dated 30 June 2008, fourteen Senators led by the co-chairs of the Senate Taiwan Caucus, Senators Tim Johnson (D-SD) and James Inhofe (R-OK), wrote:

*We are concerned by recent reports of a possible “freeze” on all foreign military sales to Taiwan. We believe that a freeze on foreign military sales to Taiwan violates the spirit of the Taiwan Relations Act. We have made attempts to clarify the status of these requests but to no avail. We request a briefing on the status of these sales from all appropriate agencies, and urge the Administration to expeditiously execute consideration of these requests.*

The Senators added:

*In March 2007, China announced that their 2007 defense budget would total \$46 billion, although Secretary of Defense Gates estimated that China’s total defense spending for 2007 could be as high as \$139 billion. **The military and strategic imperatives for Taiwan are real and urgent, and if we fail to show the necessary resolve it would mean missing a significant opportunity to improve cross-strait peace and security - a vital U.S. interest.** (emphasis added – Ed.)*

On 31 July 2008 a similar letter was sent to the Administration by 25 members of Congress (12 Republicans and 13 Democrats), led by Congressional Taiwan Caucus co-chairs Shelley Berkley (D-NV) and Steven Chabot (R-OH).

## *Admiral Timothy Keating misspeaks*

On 16 July 2008, the episode got a new twist when in a speech to the Washington-based Heritage Foundation, US Admiral Timothy Keating, the US Commander in the Pacific, apparently acknowledged the halt on US arms sales: he stated that “...*there is no pressing, compelling need for, at this moment, arms sales to Taiwan...*” because China is highly unlikely to attack Taiwan. Admiral Keating also stated that the US Navy had regularly consulted with Beijing on weapon sales to Taiwan.



When asked about Admiral Keating's statements, State Department officials responded that they didn't know what Mr. Keating was talking about. In subsequent remarks, the spokesman said: *The Administration faithfully implements the Taiwan Relations Act, under which the United States makes available items necessary for Taiwan to maintain a sufficient defense.*

Photo: Defenselink



**Admiral Timothy J. Keating  
Commander, Pacific Command**

At the time of this writing, no notification of Congress had taken place yet.

**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** *The US Administration's stalling on the arms sales to Taiwan is both bad strategy and a direct violation of the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances: delaying the arms sales is playing into China's cards, which wants the sales stopped altogether, so Taiwan has increasingly less leverage in its negotiations with China.*

*It is also aiding the arguments of those within the new Kuomintang government of Ma Ying-jeou, who want to move away from the US and closer to China: they now say: "See you cannot rely on the US to help defend you, so we need to make peace with China at all cost."*

*To those who have worked hard and sacrificed to help make Taiwan a free and democratic country, the American hesitations boil down to a betrayal of the basic principles of human rights and democracy. They see a US that is more concerned with playing power politics with China than a US that truly values democracy, while for other countries in the region it puts into question US credibility as a proponent of democracy in East Asia.*

*Lastly, the hesitations – and particularly Admiral Keating's statements – fly in the face of what is laid down in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act and in the Six Assurances of 1982: that US arms sales will be based solely on Taiwan's arms needs, and that no consultations with China will take place on these sales.*

# The Kuomintang's UN bid

## Meaningless participation

*By Gerrit van der Wees, Editor of Taiwan Communiqué. This article was first published in the Taipei Times on 4 September 2008. Reprinted with permission.*

On 15 August 2008 the Administration of Ma Ying-jeou in Taipei launched its version of the annual bid to enter the United Nations. But instead of knocking on the front door and asking for membership – as was done in 2007 by former President Chen Shui-bian's DPP government – Mr. Ma is meekly asking for “meaningful participation” in the UN's 16 specialized agencies.

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By using this approach, Mr. Ma and his administration are undermining Taiwan's position on a number of fronts: 1) it opens the door for China to claim Taiwan as its subsidiary, 2) it is endangering Taiwan's sovereignty because it does not take its status as a free and democratic nation as starting point, 3) it gives the USA and other nations in the West an excuse to continue a “do-nothing” approach and let China



**Ma Ying-jeou on his sinking "flexible diplomacy" ship**

have its way in international organizations.

On the first point: Mr. Ma's stated approach is to downplay the UN bid and then rely on Beijing's “goodwill and flexibility” (literal quote from the foreign ministry in Taipei) to allow some sort of participation in the World Health Assembly.

But what is the chance that China will move on that issue: China's Taiwan Affairs Office Chairman Wang Yi has already stated that China will never agree to Taiwan's WHO membership. So the only thing left will be a pretzel-like construction whereby info on SARS, Avian Flu etc. would be channeled to Taiwan through Beijing. This should be termed *meaningless* participation.

The second point: Mr. Ma's fuzzy approach tries to sweep the issue of Taiwan's status under the rug. While this may be expedient in the short term, it amounts to an ostrich policy. Taiwan's case to the international community would be aided immensely if Taipei would clearly lay out its case for membership in the international community as a full, equal, free and democratic member. Ma's approach does the opposite and undermines Taiwan's sovereignty.

Not that such a clear argument is not available: in a recent book by Professor Peter Chow, titled "*The One China dilemma*", Taiwan professors Huang-chih Chiang and Jau-yuan Hwang of National Taiwan University give an excellent legal reappraisal of the statehood of Taiwan, and show that under international law, Taiwan meets all criteria for statehood. They conclude that Taiwan's non-recognition by major Western powers is thus based more on *political* (read the PRC's opposition) rather than *legal* considerations.

On the third point: while former President Chen's front-door approach may have made Western governments feel uneasy, it did appeal to their conscience in the same way appeals from Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1938 made the West feel uneasy. The subsequent developments in 1938 and 1939 showed how wrong it was for the US and Western Europe to turn the head the other way, and ignore the pleas of the Czechs and Poles.

Mr. Ma's approach appears equivalent to a latter-day Neville Chamberlain: he is pretending he is working for "peace in our time", but his actions and policies are strengthening a repressive China's claim to democratic Taiwan.

Mr. Ma likes to describe his policies as "flexible and pragmatic," but he is giving pragmatism a bad name: his policies are an example of expediency rather than principle. We predict that his UN bid will go nowhere, and that in the process he will undermine Taiwan's position in the international community.

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## **President Chen admits wiring campaign funds overseas**

In mid-August 2008, former President Chen Shui-bian conceded that during his presidency a total of some US\$ 20 mln. was wired to overseas bank accounts in Switzerland and the Cayman Islands. While the funds were not government funds but derived from donations during successive elections campaigns, the episode severely undermined the credibility of the former president.

While most would agree that the legal process should run its course, there are major questions whether in the politically-poisoned atmosphere in Taiwan this would be possible at the present time: the pan-blue pro-KMT press is hell-bent on pulling Mr. Chen further down with its sleaze-campaign, while the judiciary is to a large extent still controlled by pan-blue elements who will not give Mr. Chen a fair hearing. The following **Taipei Times** article goes into this aspect of the matter.

## *Does the corruption stop here?*

*This editorial was first published in the Taipei Times on 22 August 2008.  
Reprinted with permission.*

The allegations of money laundering that have surfaced over the last week against former president Chen Shui-bian have led to a frenzied debate about what can be done to prevent dishonest politicians from profiting from positions of power.

Copyright: Taipei Times

As usual, the pro-unification media have done their best to paint Chen as guilty, acting as judge and jury with sensationalized reports of underground money transfers and overseas bank accounts. Prosecutors' investigations are ongoing, however, and Chen has yet to be charged, let alone convicted, of anything. It could be a number of years before we know the result of any trial.



**Former President Chen in his campaign funding morass: "OK, I admit, I followed the wrong path."**

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), embarrassed by the revelations about its former leader and party strongman, has proposed measures to strengthen the regulation of public functionaries' assets. The changes would make unexplained and exorbitant income punishable by fines or a prison sentence.

The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), meanwhile — perhaps emboldened by its overwhelming victories in this year's legislative and presidential elections — seems

to think that a party that controls billions of NT dollars in stolen assets is worthy of bearing the “anti-corruption” mantle.

After electoral gains won in part because of President Ma Ying-jeou’s promises of clean government, the KMT sees Chen’s apparent downfall as an opportunity to strengthen its image as an organization staunchly opposed to corruption.

This, despite the fact that the KMT-dominated legislature failed to act on a proposal similar to that of the DPP during the last legislative session and has stalled a batch of promising “sunshine laws” for years.

One might be forgiven for having some faith in the shower of promises to clean up the system in the wake of the Chen scandal but for the complete lack of action that was displayed when a similar problem arose last year.

When Ma was indicted on embezzlement charges relating to his special mayoral allowance during his tenure as Taipei mayor there was a cacophony of calls to reform the fundamentally flawed special allowance system. More than a year and lots of hot air later, absolutely nothing has been done.

There has been no reform, no amnesty for past offenders and no action taken, other than a host of prominent pan-green camp members and former government officials being indicted over alleged misuse of their funds. Given the inaction on the special allowance issue, it is a safe bet that nothing will be done following this latest episode.

If Chen is eventually charged and convicted, it will be a decisive victory for the KMT in its decade-long struggle to get even with him. This would also do untold damage to the image of the pro-localization movement. It will further tarnish the DPP’s once respectable image, and the stain will take years, if not decades, to clear.

And yet all the promises of reform and talk of clean government will amount to nothing if, as in the past, the concern for this issue evaporates once the initial furor has died down and its usefulness for political gain has been expended.

# Report from Washington

## *Obama vs. McCain – what’s in it for Taiwan?*

In early September 2008, the US Presidential election campaign swung into high gear after Barack Obama and Joe Biden were nominated by the Democratic Convention in Denver, and John McCain and his running mate, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin, were nominated at the Republican Convention in Minneapolis-St.Paul.

In this report we briefly summarize the positions taken by the two candidates on the issue of Taiwan and its status.

### *McCain: Taiwan’s democracy merits our strong support*

Having been in the Senate for over 20 years, McCain has a long track of support for Taiwan. During these twenty years he frequently spoke out, in particular on the US coming to the defense of Taiwan if China attacks. For instance, in his article “Securing America’s Future” in **Foreign Affairs** of November/December 2007, he wrote: “*When China threatens democratic Taiwan with a massive arsenal of missiles and warlike rhetoric, the United States must take note.*”

This support also found its way into the Republican Party platform for the elections, which called Taiwan a “*sound democracy and economic model for mainland China,*” and reaffirmed the Taiwan Relations Act as the basis of US-Taiwan relations, rejecting any unilateral moves by either side of the Taiwan Strait to alter the “status quo.”

*“All issues regarding the island’s future must be resolved peacefully, through dialog, and be agreeable to the people of Taiwan,”* the platform said. “*If China were to violate these principles, the US, in accord with the Taiwan Relations Act, will help Taiwan defend itself;*” it added, also stating: “*As a loyal friend of America, the democracy of Taiwan has merited our strong support, including the timely sale of defensive arms and full participation in the World Health Organization and other multilateral institutions.*”



**John McCain**

## ***Obama: a sound US-Taiwan relationship***

The Taiwan section in the Democratic Party platform by contrast is much shorter and more non-committal on Taiwan's defense. It read: "*We are committed to a 'One China' policy and the Taiwan Relations Act, and will continue to support a peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues that is consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan.*"

However, there are other indicators: in a May 2008 letter to Taiwan's President-elect Ma Ying-jeou, Mr. Obama wrote: "*A sound U.S.-Taiwan relationship will certainly be the goal of my Administration. Your inauguration also holds promise for more peaceful and stable relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits, in no small measure because you have extended the hand of peace and cooperation to Beijing.*"

He added: "*Your election is the latest step in consolidating a democracy that has advanced over the last two decades. The people of Taiwan showed great maturity by endorsing a track of peace, prosperity, and good relations with the United States.*"



**Barack Obama**

The May 2008 letter also contained a message to Beijing. Mr. Obama wrote: "*I sincerely hope the People's Republic of China will respond to the beginning of your presidency in a constructive and forward-leaning way. It is important for Beijing to demonstrate to the people of Taiwan that the practical and non-confrontational approach that you have taken towards the Mainland can achieve positive results. I hope that there will be progress on issues including development of economic ties, expanding Taiwan's international space, and cross-Straits security,...*"

**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** *While each candidate of course tries to present his position in the most promising fashion, both platforms seem to drift away from the basic position that Taiwan's future needs to be determined **with the expressed consent** of the people of Taiwan. The formulations "agreeable to the people of Taiwan" (Republican Platform) or "consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan" (Democratic Platform) are watered-down versions which undermine the basic essence of a democratic decision on Taiwan's future.*

Several statements from both candidates also show they have some deep-seated misconceptions about Taiwan policy and recent developments in Taiwan: In an appearance before the World Affairs Council in Los Angeles right after the March 2008 elections, Mr. McCain stated that: “It’s pretty clear that the people of Taiwan, the voters, have opted for closer relations with China..” As we have shown in earlier analysis in Taiwan Communiqué no. 118 and 119, this statement is simply not true: the elections were primarily about the state of the economy and about clean government. Various opinion polls show that the electorate wanted **better** – not necessarily **closer** — relations with China.

But Mr. Obama also has his share of misconceptions and wishful thinking: in the May 2008 letter to Mr. Ma Ying-jeou, Obama described Ma’s election and inauguration as “...good days for the people of Taiwan, for the forces of democracy around the world, and for peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and western Pacific.”

In writing this, Mr. Obama totally overlooked the non-democratic character and heritage of the Kuomintang as a party, and negated the dangers inherent in the drift of Taiwan towards a very authoritarian China brought about by Ma Ying-jeou’s subsequent headlong rush towards China at the expense of Taiwan’s sovereignty, safety and security.

In addition, in his letter Mr. Obama expressed his support for the “one China” policy of the US. As we have expressed in many earlier articles: the “one China” policy is an outdated relic of the 1970s, and should be modified so as to express a much more positive stance towards Taiwan and its desire to be a full and equal member in the international community.

If the policy was so successful – as its adherents claim – why is there still a problem? Mr. Obama is for “**change we can believe in.**” In his acceptance speech in Denver, Mr. Obama stated that we should say “enough” to outdated policies of the past. Well, here is an excellent opportunity to put this into practice!

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## Book Reviews

While we usually have only one book review in each issue of *Taiwan Communiqué*, we now have three: during the past few months, several excellent books dealing with Taiwan were published. We thought it would be good to present these reviews as soon as possible.



## The “One China” Dilemma

*Edited by Peter C.Y. Chow. Reviewed by Gerrit van der Wees*

If one would be asked to name one single book which gives readers a comprehensive view of Taiwan and its international status, this is it: *The “One China” Dilemma* presents magnificent, detailed and vibrant analyses of Taiwan’s historical legacies, its statehood, its identity amid the rise of China, the dilemma of the US and European “One China” policies, and Taiwan’s national security and defense strategies.

Editor Peter Chow, who teaches at the City University of New York, starts out by explaining why it is essential to delve into this issue: with broad strokes he paints a concise picture of how Taiwan ended up as an “Asian orphan”. He describes the misconceptions regarding the status of Taiwan created by both the misguided policies of the Kuomintang and the expansionistic claims of a rising China, as well as the confusion created by the different interpretations of “One China”. He makes an eloquent plea for the US and other Western nations to base their policies on the basic principles of human rights and democracy, and move away from the stranglehold imposed by “One China” on our policies towards Taiwan.

The book then moves to a superb overview of “The myth of One China” by the late Prof.

Edward L. Dreyer, a historian at the University of Miami, who passed away in mid-2007. He details how the assertion that Taiwan and other territories have always been part of a unified China, whose borders are similar to those of contemporary China *is challenged by reality*. Dreyer weaves a fascinating picture of China’s Imperial history, shows that it had political unity for only brief periods and that Taiwan, Tibet and Outer Mongolia were never ruled by dynasties of Chinese origin. Only in the latter part of the Ching dynasty did Taiwan become closer linked with the empire.

In the next chapter, J. Bruce Jacobs from Monash University in Australia, focuses on Taiwan’s position during the Japanese period and the subsequent occupation by the Chinese Nationalists of Chiang Kai-shek. He describes the 1947 February 28<sup>th</sup>



Massacre of Taiwanese by the Chinese Nationalist troops, and the White Terror period which followed. After some 38 years of Martial Law the Taiwanese were able to push through their transition to democracy, leading to the democratic reforms of the early 1990s. Jacobs concludes that China's claim to Taiwan is based on false history and that the "One China" policies of the West need to be reexamined in view of Taiwan's democratization.

The following chapter, by Huang-chih Chiang and Jau-yuan Hwang, is a legal reappraisal of the statehood of Taiwan. It contains an excellent analysis of Taiwan's legal status. Chiang and Hwang argue that under international law, Taiwan meets all criteria for statehood. They conclude that Taiwan's non-recognition by major Western powers is thus more to *political* (read "the PRC's opposition") rather than *legal* considerations. The article is a **must-read** for the *legal eagles* of the US State Department, of European foreign ministries and those of international organizations like the UN and WHO, who at present generally don't have a clue of the basics on this issue.

Part II of the book, Taiwan identity amid the rising China, consists of two chapters: one by Prof. Hans Stockton of the University of St. Thomas in Houston TX, who attempts to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the nexus between Taiwan's domestic agenda (during the DPP administration of President Chen) of national identity formation – the (re)discovery of the Taiwanese identity – and Taiwan's main international ties, primarily with the US and Western Europe – which are based maintaining a tenuous *status quo*.

The second chapter of Part III is an excellent survey by Taipei scholars Shiau-chi Shen and Nai-teh Wu of the origins of the deep political schism in Taiwan: it is titled *Ethnic and Civic nationalisms; two roads to the formation of a Taiwanese nation*, and gives detailed results of opinion surveys done by the two scholars from 1992 to the present: it tracks self-perception, ethnic identity and political views of both Chinese mainlanders and native Taiwanese.

Based on their research, the writers argue that mainlanders are picking up a new Taiwanese national identity without giving up their Chinese ethnic identity, while the native Taiwanese are shedding their Chinese identity (imposed under the regime of Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo) for a new Taiwanese identity. The authors argue that in spite of the difference, there is a high degree of consensus that only the people in Taiwan should have a say in deciding the island's future.

Part IV of the book focuses on the “One China” *policy* dilemma. It contains two incisive chapters: one by Prof. Edward Friedman on Europe’s “One China” policy, and one by Prof. Arthur Waldron on Nixon’s opening of China in 1972 and its impact on Taiwan. It also includes two rather meager chapters: one by UC-Berkeley’s Lowell Dittmer on *Triangular diplomacy amid leadership transition* and the second by the University of Colorado’s Suisheng Zhao on Chinese *nationalism and the making of the Anti-Secession Law*.

Prof. Friedman does an excellent job in analyzing Europe’s balancing act between the economic opportunity of China’s rise and its traditional wish to support human rights and democracy. Prof. Waldron is in his usual outstanding form when he describes the machinations on Nixon and Kissinger in 1972, based on recently de-classified meeting records by the National Security Archives. He recounts how both gentlemen had little understanding of Taiwan, and basically wanted to sacrifice the island in order to achieve better relations with China. Taiwan’s subsequent democratization put a spanner in the wheel and moved the island to its *de facto* independent status which exists today.

Part V deals with *National security and defense strategy*. It starts with a chapter by Richard D. Fisher on the military balance in the Taiwan Strait. As we have come to expect from Fisher, it is rich in detail: any military analyst who wants a comprehensive overview can read this chapter and be sure he has a grasp of the essentials. Fisher shows that the PRC is moving towards military superiority in the Taiwan Strait, and that this is creating new challenges for the US. He also aptly describes how the pan-blue coalition in Taiwan (KMT + PFP) has systematically undermined Taiwan’s strategic position by opposing US arms sales to the island.

Alexander Huang of Tamkang University in Taiwan gives a solid analysis of the needs to arrive at a comprehensive strategy to deal with future challenges. He states that a strong defense capability and national resolve are necessary for Taipei to say “no” to China when it must.

Prof. York Chen complements Alexander Huang’s chapter with an analysis of the new imbalance in the equation of military balance across the Taiwan Strait due to the shift in the PRC’s favor. He makes a number of key recommendations to redress the situation.

The final chapter in the book is an appropriate gem: Prof. June Teufel Dreyer of the University of Miami gives a lucid analysis of Japan’s position and role: it has strong historical ties with Taiwan but is at the same time restrained, both by its desire for “stability” due to its economic interests in China and its 1947 Peace Constitution.

Still, Teufel Dreyer concludes that in a potential conflict in the Taiwan Strait, Japan has important strategic interests and will come down on the side of Taiwan and the US.

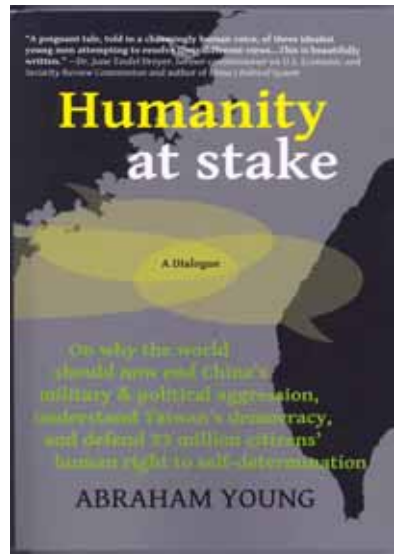
The complete title of the book is: *The “One China” dilemma*. Published by Palgrave MacMillan, New York, NY, May 2008.

## *Humanity at Stake: a Dialogue*

*By Abraham Young. Reviewed by Iris Ho, FAPA Headquarters*

The news of the Russian invasion of Georgia and the response of the West, including the U.S., have over the past few weeks been closely observed by concerned citizens, pundits, and policy makers worldwide, making this review of Abe Young’s “Humanity at Stake” very timely.

Taiwan watchers cannot help but draw parallels between the Georgia-Russia dispute and the Taiwan-China conflict. Many, especially foreign policy makers, might argue that the Georgia-Russia or the Taiwan-China detente is complicated, involving balance of power or realpolitik considerations. For others though, these two disputes represent a fundamental and simple argument – the struggle between democracy (Georgia and Taiwan) versus authoritarianism (Russia and China). As Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili wrote in an 11 August 2008 **Wall Street Journal** op-ed, *“This conflict is therefore about our common trans-Atlantic values of liberty and democracy. It is about the right of small nations to live freely and determine their own future.”*



In “Humanity at Stake”, second-generation Taiwanese-American Abe Young eloquently presents the wishes of this other small nation -Taiwan- to live freely and determine its own future. The human rights component, highlighted in the book, yet almost universally overlooked by foreign policy makers that deal with Taiwan, is the central theme that the author feels emphatically about.

The book successfully peels down layer after layer of the complicated cross-Strait conflict and goes straight to the core of the argument; an argument that should resonate easily after reading this book: regardless of the history between Taiwan and China for the past few hundred years, and regardless of the politics of the day in Taiwan, how can a country (especially a non-democratic one) justify its military intimidation through deployment of thousands of missiles and other means against another country (one that is democratic and much smaller in physical size and international influence.)

Moreover, the book leads one to ponder: How can the international community sit idly by and watch this disproportionate struggle continue? Are the Taiwanese people inferior to other global citizens and needs their right to be free to choose their own future without any outside intimidation succumb to bigger geopolitical calculations? Are human rights (“Freedom From Fear”) truly universal?

The pamphlet-style “Humanity at Stake” is an easy read; something almost impossible to find nowadays when it comes to publications on the US-Taiwan-China relationship and cross-Strait relations. It is an easy read and not necessarily because of its compact size, 73 pages of text plus 30 pages of supplementary documents and pictures. It is unique because rarely has the cross-Strait relationship been written about in a narrative style that is both engaging and lively as it is in this case.

Inspired by an actual conversation that took place in a bookstore in New York City, the setting of the book – three volunteers: one of Chinese descent, one of Taiwanese descent (the author), and an all-American former Gulf War pilot, striking up a conversation while volunteering – makes the story easy to relate to.

The book succinctly and effectively captures the most relevant information for anyone who wishes to understand the basics of Taiwan’s history and the cross-Strait dispute. The footnotes provide equally informative and important information. Spending a couple of hours reading this book guarantees that you are equipped with the ABCs of the topic.

“Humanity at Stake” is an excellent resource for those who are novices of the subject. But it is also helpful for international experts on Taiwan who might need a useful, quick reference that sums up a complicated situation. With the Taiwan Strait being one of the flash points in the world, the cross-Strait relationship is often looked at from a geopolitical and strategic approach and analysis. Rarely, if not for the first time, a book explains the situation from a personal angle and with engaging narratives.

“Humanity at Stake” is refreshing because it reminds us that decisions Washington makes regarding global hot spots should not merely be based on cold political

calculations, but that ultimately Washington's decisions affect human lives, such as the lives of the author and of his extended family in Taiwan, whose pictures are shown in the back of the book to underscore the often forgotten fact that behind every global conflict is a human face.

I look forward to a sequel. Or even better, to the publication of a translated version in different languages for Taiwan and for other parts of the world. The complete title of the book is: *Humanity at Stake: a Dialogue: On why the world should now end China's military and political aggression, understand Taiwan's democracy, and defend 23 million citizens' human rights to self-determination*. Published by Abe Young, New York City, May 2008.

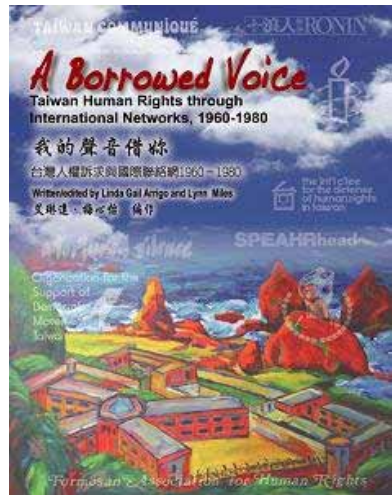
## *A Borrowed Voice*

*By Linda Arrigo and Lynn Miles. Reviewed by Prof. Jerome Keating*

Anyone involved in the Civil Rights Movements in the United States would scoff at the suggestion that the South intended all along to give blacks equal opportunity. The South was just waiting for the right moment. Anyone who knows the struggles against apartheid in South Africa would scoff at the suggestion that the Afrikaners were also just simply waiting for the right moment to share power with the majority of the people.

So too, anyone who knows Taiwan will laugh at implications that the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) was working hard to share power and to extend human rights to all citizens including the right to a representative two or more party system, the right to freedom of the press, freedom to assemble, the right to a fair trial etc. in sum the basic rights of a democracy.

Against despotic, autocratic rulers who strive to cling to their self-justified power, privilege and sense of entitlement, such rights can only be won by the sacrifice and struggle of the people. The grass roots work involved in wringing such rights from the self-appointed elite in Taiwan, is the subject of a new book, "A Borrowed Voice" written and edited by two veteran human rights activists, Linda Gail Arrigo and Lynn Miles.



The title “Borrowed Voice,” comes from the fact that while the KMT was doing all that was in its power to suppress the voices of the Taiwanese fighting for their rights, there were foreigners willing to lend their voices in speaking out for Taiwan internationally. The book contains such first hand, on the scene accounts from over forty foreigners who observed, experienced and documented this struggle for human rights against the KMT’s one-party state rule from 1960 to 1980. The reader should note that Taiwan’s democracy did not come in full for another sixteen years after 1980, but by that time Taiwanese were able to make their own voice heard overseas.

Through the book we get a look at what was going on at ground level with the numerous imprisonments, torture and even killings of that time; we also learn of the extent of the KMT spy network in Taiwan and on campuses in the United States and its efforts to keep any unfavorable information about the country leaking out. Present too are numerous characters who today are household names in Taiwan. They range from the GIO’s chief propagandist, James Soong to the ever cantankerous Li Ao to the authors Linda Arrigo and Lynn Miles both of whom have become permanent residents of Taiwan.

The public has long heard the KMT’s propagandized interpretation of this period; this book presents the experience and views of those struggling against that regime. For students of Taiwan’s immediate past it provides a strong counter-point to the KMT’s claim that it was working for Taiwan’s democracy all along and that it was simply a matter of timing, the timing of forty years of martial law and white terror and a half of a century before the people won their right to democratically elect their president.

There is a current irony as well at the timing of the publication of this book. When it had a one-party state rule, the KMT fought long and hard to suppress the Taiwanese voices; at the same time it kept a policy of three noes (no-contact, no-compromise and no-negotiation) toward the one-party People’s Republic of China (PRC) across the Strait.

Now however once the KMT experienced democracy and the democratic loss of the presidency in 2000 and 2004, it is falling all over itself to make contact, to negotiate and to compromise with that same autocratic PRC regime in Beijing. The KMT claims it is now doing it for Taiwan’s betterment but Taiwanese should take note for “*those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it.*”

The complete title of the book is “*A Borrowed Voice, Taiwan Human Rights through International Networks, 1960—1980.*” Published by Hanyao Color Printing Co. July 2008, Taipei.

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

Internet homepages: [www.fapa.org](http://www.fapa.org) and [www.taiwandc.org](http://www.taiwandc.org)

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