



# Taiwan Communiqué

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# 135

## 2012 elections: a retrospective

### *Mostly free but partly unfair*

Taiwan's presidential and legislative elections took place on 14 January 2012. Two months have passed, so this is a good moment to look back and assess what happened.

On the following pages we first present our assessment of the elections: what were the results, and what were the driving issues in the campaign. We also focus on the election process, and conclude that these elections were mostly free but partly unfair.

Many observers concluded that the playing field is not level, primarily because the ruling Kuomintang party still has inordinate advantages. It is the wealthiest party in the world -- a fortune amassed during some five decades of one-party rule -- and it uses its assets lavishly during the election campaign.

The elections were also influenced by China's increasing influence on the island, which cast a shadow over the proceedings.

In this issue we also look ahead at what the future may bring, both in terms of Taiwan-China relations as well as Taiwan-US relations.

Photo: Taiwan Communiqué



**A high point in the campaign: former President Lee Teng-hui endorsing Dr. Tsai Ing-wen**

## *The elections: results and issues*

The outcome of the election represented a win for incumbent president Ma Ying-jeou, who received 51.6% of the vote, against 45.6% for his main challenger, Dr. Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP Party. The third candidate, Mr. James Soong of the Peoples' First Party, received a meager 2.77% of the vote.

The vote for Mr. Ma represented a significant decrease as compared to the 58.45% he received in 2008. His margin at that time against DPP candidate Frank Hsieh was more than 2 million votes, while the present margin in the race against Dr. Tsai was around 800,000 votes. The overall voter turnout was 74.3% this time, against a slightly higher 76.3% in 2008.

In the race for seats in the Legislative Yuan, the Kuomintang won 64 seats out of a total of 113 seats. The DPP garnered 40 seats (35.4%), while its ally, the Taiwan Solidarity Union, received three seats. Another six seats went to smaller parties and to independent candidates.

In comparison to the 2008 elections, the KMT's number of seats dropped 17 seats from the 81 in 2008, while the DPP's share of seats rose 13 from the 27 in 2008. These numbers are significant in that it gives the DPP more than 25% of the vote so they can block unilateral moves by the ruling Kuomintang to change the Constitution, which requires a three-quarter majority. It also gives them the more than the 25% of the vote required to initiate recall proceedings against the president or vice-president, although a recall can only go forward if it receives 2/3 of the vote in the Legislative Yuan.

## *Domestic issues versus the China factor*

For most of the campaign, domestic issues were at the forefront. The DPP's candidate Tsai Ing-wen was able to focus the debate on the economy, jobs, the environment and nuclear energy. She travelled to all corners of the island, and galvanized people with her level-headed and rational approach to the issues.

The campaign was also marked by fascinating twists and turns, such as the DPP's piggybank campaign, which took off after a KMT government official threatened to punish the DPP for accepting piggybanks from three toddlers who had donated their savings to DPP candidate Tsai Ing-wen (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 134, pp. 5-6).

Relations with China entered the picture with the sudden announcement by President Ma in mid-October 2011 that if elected he would sign a “peace accord” with China, which sent his popularity tumbling, prompting a hasty retreat of the proposal (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 134, pp. 4-5).

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Late in the campaign, the “China” factor was increasingly prominent, with Chinese officials warning that Taiwan should vote for the “right” candidate or else..... This was echoed with increasing frequency by the heads of big Taiwanese companies with investments in China. They expressed their support for Ma and warned that a vote for Tsai would lead to “instability.” (more on this in “*The Chinese shadow over Taiwan’s elections*”, below).



**TV election debate: Pinocchio Ma Ying-jeou and the two other candidates**

The China issue came to a head in the debate on the two opposing approaches by the KMT and the DPP. President Ma and his Kuomintang emphasized that only their “1992 Consensus” would lead to a continuation of stable relations across the Taiwan Strait. The formula refers to the “One China, different interpretations” concept, which the KMT says was used in 1992 for the first round of talks between the two sides.

The DPP, and former officials such as President Lee Teng-hui, countered that there was never any consensus in 1992, and that the idea was invented in 2000 by the Mainland Affairs Council chair Su Chi.

The DPP’s candidate Tsai Ing-wen instead proposed to have a “Taiwan Consensus” first, and then engage China on the basis of an internal agreement on principles within Taiwan. However, President Ma and the Kuomintang lambasted the idea, saying it was “too vague.”

## *The US factor in Taiwan's elections*

Last but not least, the United States also became a factor in the elections. In early October 2011, US assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Mr. Kurt Campbell, stated in a House hearing that:

*We do not believe any one party or leader on Taiwan has a monopoly on effective management of the relationship, and we do not take sides in the elections. We will work closely with whatever leadership emerges from Taiwan's free and fair elections to build on our enduring commitment to Taiwan's people, its prosperity, and peace.*



**Kurt Campbell**

This was an excellent statement of neutrality. However, the actions of the administration in the subsequent weeks and months led many observers to believe that it was taking sides in favor of the Ma administration. The perception of partiality actually started back in September 2011 already, when, after DPP candidate Dr. Tsai Ing-wen met with U.S. officials in Washington, an anonymous senior member of the administration called the Financial Times and said: “*She left us with distinct doubts about whether she is both willing and able to continue the stability in cross-strait relations the region has enjoyed in recent years.*”

Though the State Department quickly disavowed the statement, this unusual breach of confidence left lingering suspicions that the sentiments expressed by the unnamed source indeed represented the views of the White House (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 133, pp. 9-11).

Then, in a span of three months, there was a quick succession of more visits by high-level U.S. officials to Taipei than during any calendar year in recent memory. In September, Assistant Secretary of Commerce Suresh Kumar visited Taiwan. In December Rajiv Shah, the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, also made an official visit to Taiwan.

This was followed closely by the visit, also in December, by U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman, who became the highest-ranking American official to go to Taiwan in nearly a decade. The atypical pace and high profile of these visits, in the midst of an intensely competitive election campaign in Taiwan, only engendered further doubts about the professed neutrality of the US government.

Finally, on December 21, 2011, less than one month before the January 14 election, the U.S. State Department announced Taiwan's eligibility for participation in the Visa Waiver Program.

***Taiwan Communiqué comment:*** *This series of statements and actions by the administration during a politically sensitive time led many observers, American and Taiwanese alike, to reach the conclusion that the U.S. government was taking sides in favor of the incumbent administration in Taipei.*

*This left advocates of democracy in Taiwan and the United States embittered: they had hoped for more support from a US administration that came to power under the heading "Change we can believe in." However, instead of supporting a vision of a free and democratic Taiwan, the US was taking the side of an ambivalent "status quo" in which Taiwan is increasingly pushed in the unwelcome embrace of an undemocratic China. Is this really what President Obama wants?*

In the following two articles we focus on the lack of a level playing field in Taiwan's elections and on how the "China factor" played a role.

## ***Taiwan's imperfect democracy***

*By Julian Baum and Gerrit van der Wees. This article first appeared in the Tokyo-based The Diplomat on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2012. Reprinted with permission.*

[In January 2012] Taiwan concluded its fifth presidential election in a confirmation of the momentous transition to democracy that began in the 1990s under former President Lee Teng-hui. Since then, the island republic has been a beacon of democratic practices in Asia, and passed through two changes of power between political parties. Observers in the United States and other Western countries routinely and justifiably praise the island and its people for their democratic achievements.

Taiwan's democracy is indeed vibrant and often colorful and rambunctious. Yet a closer look reveals built-in hurdles and impediments that tilt the playing field heavily in favor of the ruling Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT). These obstacles strongly work against a healthy public discourse and fair competition, and especially against the opposition Democratic Progressive Party and other smaller parties that would like to have their voices heard.

A significant reason for this imbalance is the island's lingering authoritarian past and stalled agenda for political reform. The KMT ruled Taiwan as a one-party state under

martial law from the late 1940s until 1987. Many vested interests in the administrative system, military, educational institutions and the press still favor the KMT. Despite reforms during the 1990s, the KMT retains political influence over key institutions, including the police, military and judiciary.

In addition, the KMT's large holdings of financial assets, corporations, and media outlets give it an abundance of resources, allowing it unrivaled capacity to spread its message and influence voters with advantages not tolerated by more mature democracies. In the election campaign just passed, for instance, the KMT outspent the DPP by more than 10:1. Drained of support from Taiwan's business community by pressures from the KMT and especially from China, the DPP had to rely on numerous small donations from the grassroots.

This asymmetry in resources is troubling since electoral campaigns are now waged heavily through TV advertising, and to a lesser extent in buying votes for cash, especially in the 73 district legislative races. While vote-buying is a criminal offense, often prosecuted, there were numerous reports in this election that the practice continues.



Photo: Taiwan Communiqué

**Tsai Ing-wen at her final campaign rally  
in Panchiao**

As Finnish political scientist Mikael Mattlin argues in his recent book, *Politicized Society: The Long Shadow of Taiwan's One-Party Legacy*, many aspects of Taiwan's democratic consolidation remain incomplete. The book describes how Taiwan possesses the veneer of democracy, but shows that many formal and informal political structures are essentially unchanged since the martial law era. These include popular values and attitudes toward power that social scientists say make up a society's political culture.

In a new twist, this year's presidential and legislative elections saw a myriad of ways in which China is learning to influence voters on the island. These include overt statements by Chinese officials that Taiwanese needed to vote for the "right" candidate, to corporate



business leaders influencing their workers and urging the public to support the government's policies. One of those businessmen also happens to be an influential publishing conglomerate.

The basic scare tactic used by China and its allies was that a vote for the DPP and its candidate would be a vote for "instability." That would of course be bad for business, and scare voters away from Tsai. During the campaign, Tsai emphasized that she would work for stable relations with China, but in ways that would not discount Taiwan's sovereignty and democracy. Her message was undercut by a news media generally attuned to flogging the doubts and uncertainties about her candidacy coming from KMT and Chinese sources.

A delegation from the International Committee for Fair Elections in Taiwan has also concluded that this year's elections were mostly free, *but only partly fair*. The group of 24 election observers from Europe, Canada, the United States and Japan was led by former Alaska governor and U.S. Senator, Frank Murkowski.

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The challenges for democracy everywhere are enormous. The Taiwanese know this better than anyone. They know, too, that their own experiment with democratic governance is only the beginning of a long and rewarding journey. That journey can only be successful, however, if the hurdles and impediments are cleared away.



### The Kuomintang's "incentives" for the voters

For the United States and other Western democracies it's important to ensure that Taiwan's democracy retains a level playing field. Only in this way can the Taiwanese people make a fully free choice on their future and become a true beacon for democracy in East Asia, including China.

*Julian Baum is a former Taiwan correspondent for the Far Eastern Economic Review. Gerrit van der Wees is a former Dutch diplomat who presently serves as editor of Taiwan Communiqué, a publication of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs in D.C.*

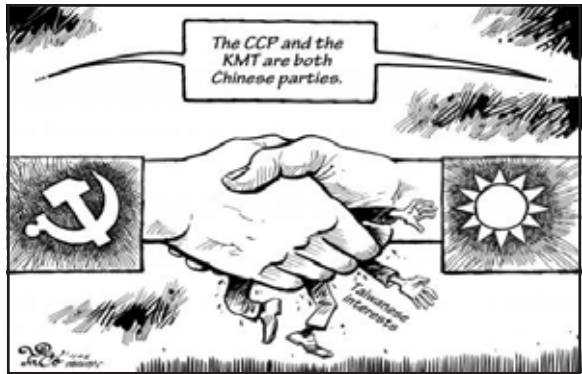
## *The Chinese shadow over Taiwan's elections*

*By Gerrit van der Wees. This article was first published in the Taipei Times on 30 Jan. 2012. Reprinted with permission.*

The dust is settling over the Jan. 14 elections and many a commentator has weighed in with the conclusion that this was a vote for “stability,” in particular across the Taiwan Strait.

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I would disagree, for a number of reasons, which will be elaborated on below. However, first, I would like to mention that I speak from the perspective of a long-time Taiwan observer, who started to follow and analyze the country's political developments in the late 1970s, and who experienced Taiwan's momentous transition to democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.



**The KMT and CCP are both Chinese parties ...  
strangling Taiwanese interests**

During the recent election campaign, I was “on the ground” with a delegation from the International Committee for Fair Elections in Taiwan (ICFET), headed by former Alaska governor and senator Frank Murkowski. We visited Greater Kaohsiung, Greater Tainan, Greater Taichung and Taipei and met with representatives from all three major political parties participating in the elections, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the People First Party (PPF).

The ICFET observer group will come out with its report in the near future, but I can already highlight two major conclusions:

One was that the elections were only partly fair because of the authoritarian legacy and widespread vote-buying, combined with extensive use of administrative power and party assets. In the 2008 presidential campaign, then-presidential candidate Ma Ying-jeou promised to divest the party of these assets, but this never happened.

The second element of unfairness in the recent election was China's influence and economic leverage. The Washington Post recently published an article about a Taiwan-



ese businessman who had invested in China, influencing the elections through his wealth and control of news media. However, this was only one element in the pervasive influence China exerted in these elections: The “agricultural purchasing missions” to southern areas and the throttling back of tourist groups prior to the polls were other means of “subtle” influence.

The bottom line is that the playing field was not level. In particular, the uneven access to resources is detrimental to the democracy we all want to see flourish in Taiwan

One cannot thus say that it was a vote for “stability,” but more a vote out of a fear of instability. And this fear of instability was induced by both the Chinese side, through a number of statements that a choice for the DPP would lead to a break in economic relations, and the KMT itself, which played up these concerns.

What is the net result of a win for Ma, the KMT and Taiwan? In the short term, there may be a fictitious peace and quiet, but the Chinese leaders will interpret the situation as going their way and will pressure Ma to start “political talks.” This will put increasing pressure on the country’s democracy and increasingly diminish the freedoms and liberty Taiwanese achieved in their transition to democracy.

The ultimate question is whether Taiwanese will be able to freely determine their future as a democratic nation. Its authoritarian heritage and China’s shadow over the recent elections have already significantly reduced this freedom.

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## **The future of Taiwan-China relations**

### ***The DPP does soul-searching on China ties***

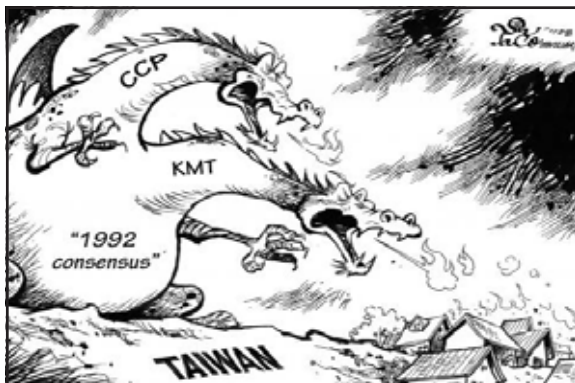
The defeat in the presidential election prompted a heated debate within the DPP about the future direction in the party. The Kuomintang and the pro-blue media also poured oil on the fire, saying that the DPP’s failure to embrace the “1992 Consensus” was the root cause of its loss in the elections.

However, in her final weeks as party chairperson, Dr. Tsai Ing-wen and her team did an election review and concluded that there was little evidence the party’s opposition to the “1992 Consensus” turned off voters.

Rather, the election review, which was presented to the party in mid-February 2012, concluded that the following six reasons contributed to the loss in the elections:

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1. Voters' doubts about having the DPP as a ruling party at the present time, against the background of the PRC strong opposition and the Kuomintang's grip on political power in Taiwan;
2. A joint effort on the part of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to use cross-Strait economic stability as a scare tactic;



**The two-headed "1992 Consensus" dragon threatening Taiwan**

3. The Kuomintang's party assets and the abuse of its administrative resources as campaign tools;
4. The fact that many DPP supporters, particularly in the South, could not return to their hometowns to vote, due to the fact that elections were held just one week before the Lunar New Year;
5. The lower than expected voter turnout, which benefitted the Kuomintang;
6. "Tactical voting" in which many supporters of third-party candidate James Soong were pressured to "abandon Soong to save Ma."

On the basis of this review, the DPP decided that at the present time there is no reason to change the DPP's overall policy direction. In her farewell speech on February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012, Dr. Tsai Ing-wen did emphasize that it was necessary to engage China and increase bilateral exchanges. However, she said that that cannot be done until the party establishes a mechanism to prepare Taiwan for Beijing's "united front" tactics.

At the end of February 2012, Dr. Tsai stepped down as party chairperson and made way for Kaohsiung mayor Chen Chu, who would serve as interim chair until the election of a new chairperson at the end of May 2012.

## *Wu Poh-hsiung's "One country, two areas"*

The discussion on relations with China was propelled to the front pages in Taiwan again on 22 March 2012, when former Kuomintang chairman Wu Poh-hsiung took part in the annual KMT-CCP forum in Beijing, and pronounced to Chinese President Hu Jintao that further cross-Strait relations could be based on the "One Country, two areas" concept.

The democratic opposition in Taiwan, the TSU and DPP, reacted furiously, arguing that this move was further undermining Taiwan's position, as it is very similar to the "One Country, two systems" approach, advocated by Beijing. Former DPP chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen termed the move "dangerous" and asked "if Ma accepts that one country represents the ROC, then he needs to explain the difference between the ROC and the PRC, and the relationship between them." Dr. Tsai added that in the eyes of the international community, "China" is represented by the PRC, and if Ma now agrees that Taiwan is an "area" of "One country" named China, then Taiwan's position will become untenable.

The Ma administration acknowledged that it had authorized Mr. Wu to make the proposal, and countered that there had been "no change" in cross-Strait policy. It emphasized that the "One country, two areas" was embedded in the 1947 "Republic of China" Constitution.

Copyright: Taipei Times

Still, the DPP and TSU were not satisfied and promised to organize a large-scale demonstration on 20 May 2012, the day of Ma's inauguration for his second term, to protest the new policy line.

The announcement by Mr. Wu Poh-hsiung in Beijing also laid bare a significant dysfunction within the Ma administration: both Mainland Affairs Council Minister Lai Shin-yuan and National Security Bureau Director-General Tsai Der-sheng admitted under questioning in the Legislative Yuan that they had not been consulted by President Ma on the new policy.



**Ma administration: *How do you like my new "One Country, two areas" pet?***

The National Security Bureau Director-General Tsai Der-sheng admitted under questioning in the Legislative Yuan that they had not been consulted by President Ma on the new policy.

## *International scholars: more cross-Strait tension*

The “One Country, two areas” episode also shows the validity of analyses by several US scholars right after the Taiwan elections, who argued that rather than decrease tension across the Strait, the election of Ma would in due time lead to increasing tensions, in particular due to the fact that Beijing will start pressuring Taiwan into political talks on unification. Such discussions are highly sensitive in Taiwan, and few have shown any enthusiasm to move in that direction.

In an article titled “Why Ma won the elections and what’s next for Taiwan and China” (**Foreign Affairs**, 15 January 2012), University of Southern California professor Dan Lynch wrote “*So, rather than stabilizing the cross-Strait status quo .... Ma’s election might usher in a new period of instability in which the Chinese demands on Taiwan intensify.*”

A few days later, Prof. Denny Roy at the East West Center in Hawaii published an article, titled “Taiwan: Crisis deferred, but maybe not for long” (**Asia Pacific Bulletin**, 19 January 2012), in which he wrote: “*During Ma’s second term, therefore, Taipei may face increasing PRC pressure to begin negotiations on political issues..... Given that the PRC has not even taken the strategically insignificant but symbolic step of moving its mobile short-range missiles away from firing positions opposite Taiwan, it is unlikely that China will be willing to offer Taiwan anything worth the Taipei government wants, permanently restraining its future options.*”

A third analyst, Dan Twining of the Washington-based office of the German Marshall Fund, argued along similar lines. In an article titled “Taiwan’s election and the future US-Taiwan relationship: No end to the affair” (**National Bureau of Asian Research**, January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012) he stated “*Ma Ying-jeou’s re-election last week should not be misunderstood as a victory for China. During the campaign he had to reassure voters that his policy of economic engagement with China would not erode Taiwan’s ability to determine its own future vis-à-vis the mainland. Any lingering suspicion that President Ma will put Taiwan on a path to reunification with China on Beijing’s terms should compel him, in his second term, to continue to robustly defend Taiwan’s autonomy, including through policies that may displease Beijing.*”

Last but not least, Prof. Steven Phillips of Towson University, wrote in an OpEd with the telling title “Storm brewing across the Taiwan Strait” (**Baltimore Sun**, 2 February 2012) that “*...the leaders of Taiwan may not be able to meet the expectations of their mainland*

counterparts. Over the past four years, the two sides forged a series of pacts to encourage trade, travel and investment. The least contentious agreements with tangible economic benefits have been concluded. At some point, mainland leaders will want to move into political talks on unification or military matters. Few on Taiwan have shown enthusiasm for such discussions.”

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## How to move forward in Taiwan-US relations *Where is the beef?*

Relations between the US and Taiwan were off to a rocky start in the New Year, when right after the Taiwan presidential elections, the United States started pressuring the Ma government to agree to relax restrictions on the import of US beef. During a visit to Taipei right after the elections, American Institute in Taiwan Chairman Ray Burghardt reportedly raised the issue with the Ma administration.

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**The US pressuring Taiwan on the beef issue**

The issue has a long history: it started back in 2003, when the mad cow disease (BSE) was reported in the US, and Taiwan and many other countries put in place restrictions on US beef imports. In 2007, the Chen Shui-bian admini-

stration expressed the intention to resolve the issue by setting maximum residue levels for the leanness enhancing feed additive ractopamine, but was faced with a KMT dominated Legislative Yuan and an unfriendly Bush administration, and thus did not have much incentive to follow through.

Then in October 2009, the secretary-general of the new Ma administration’s National Security Council, Mr. Su Chi, signed a protocol with the American Institute in Taiwan, agreeing to lift most of the remaining restrictions on the import of US beef into Taiwan. However – illustrative of the Ma administration’s lack of democratic practices — the NSC

secretary-general had not consulted with either the Council of Agriculture, the Department of Health, Ministry of Economic Affairs or with the legislature.

The Legislative Yuan, in which the KMT had more than three-quarters of the seats at the time, was furious and with an overwhelming majority enacted new restrictions in January 2010. In the run up to the 2012 presidential elections neither side dared to touch the issue for fear of provoking an outrage by a populace that has seen a long series of food scares, including melamine in baby powder from China.

So, when news came out that the US was urging the Ma administration to move on the beef issue right after the elections, the perception that the US had “supported” Ma in exchange for a relaxation on beef imports gained ground. While US sources emphasized there was no such “deal”, this perception was strengthened in early March when president Ma suddenly preempted an ongoing process of inter-departmental and legislative negotiations by announcing that his government would “conditionally lift the ban on beef containing ractopamine.”

The move re-inflamed the debate in Taiwan about the issue and even sent protesters into the streets.

**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** *While the issue has a long and complicated history, as summarized above, the United States could take several steps to resolve it. We suggest the following points:*

- 1. The US needs to realize that it is not an “anti-American” sentiment that is driving the protests: it is first and foremost a health issue, and secondly a protest against the high-handed handling of the situation by the Ma administration, both back in November 2009 and now in March 2012.*
- 2. The health concerns are broadly based, and not confined to the democratic opposition of the DPP and TSU. The Ma administration still has an overwhelming majority in the Legislative Yuan, and could push it through if it wanted to. But the fact is that many of the KMT legislators do listen to their constituents (this is what democracy is all about) and will not walk the party line on this issue.*
- 3. The US is exerting pressure on Taiwan by holding up the TIFA talks until the beef issue has been resolved. This is a tactical mistake. As senior partner in the relationship it needs to show its magnanimity and move forward with the TIFA talks, and then deal with the beef issue in that context.*



4. From the DPP side, the suggestion has been made (see the article by former DPP legislator Winston Dang, who also served in the US EPA for several decades (see “Taiwan can learn from the EU on the beef issue,” *Taipei Times*, 29 March 2012 <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2012/03/29/2003528947>) to follow the EU model, which imports US ractopamine-free beef under a special agreement. The US would do well to examine such an agreement for Taiwan.

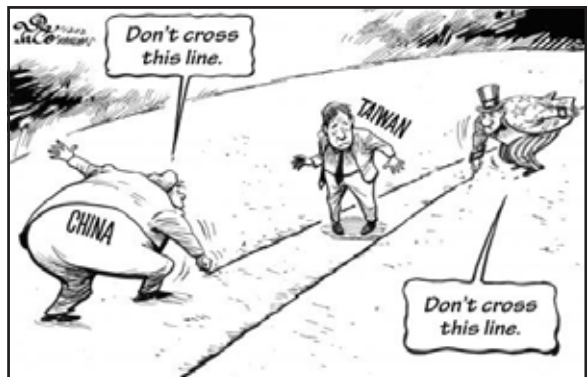
From a very different, and much broader perspective of US-Taiwan relations, we now present a recent essay by former US ambassador Nat Bellocchi, who refers to the recent celebrations of 40 years of the US opening towards China, and asks the question why — if visionary leadership was able to break through barriers of conventional wisdom and mainstream thinking 40 years ago — we cannot break through similar barriers in the present situation and work toward the normalization of relations with Taiwan?

## *Taiwan deserves normalized relations*

*By Ambassador Nat Bellocchi, former chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan. This article was first published in the Taipei Times on 6 March 2012. Reprinted with permission.*

In the first week of March 2012, the 40th anniversary of the 1972 visit to China by former US president Richard Nixon and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, was celebrated in Washington with a major conference at the US Institute of Peace. Celebrities like Kissinger himself heralded “The Week that Changed the World.”

While we indeed can celebrate the fact that 40 years ago, the US took steps to end China’s political isolation and normalize relations with the People’s Republic of China (PRC), we also need to see what needs to be done to end a remaining injustice, the continuing political isolation of Taiwan.



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**US and China to Taiwan: "Don't cross this line"**

In the early 1970s, Taiwan was ruled by the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) under the dictator Chiang Kai-shek, who had come to the island after World War II. Chiang ruled with an iron fist and did not allow the native Taiwanese (85 percent of the population in Taiwan at the time) any say in the political system. Chiang believed in reconquering the mainland and maintained the pretense of ruling all of China.

Over the years, that fiction became less tenable, and with Resolution 2758 in October 1971, “the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek” were expelled from the UN. The Nixon-Kissinger trip followed shortly thereafter. De-recognition by the US came a few years later, under then-US president Jimmy Carter.

While these developments normalized relations between the PRC and the West, at the same time they pushed Taiwan into political isolation.

Taiwanese, who did not have any say at all during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, were still without a voice in their national affairs. This only came after the country’s momentous transition to democracy in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Suddenly, Taiwanese could speak freely and express their views on their future.

One of the first topics on the agenda under this newly found freedom was membership in international organizations, or “international space.” However, because of the clout of a rising China, the international community has been hesitant to respond positively to this quest for international recognition. Taiwanese, pragmatic as they are, are made to do with an uneasy “status quo.”

Still, one wonders if visionary leadership was able to break through barriers of conventional wisdom and mainstream thinking 40 years ago, why can we not break through similar barriers in the present situation and work toward the normalization of relations with Taiwan?

For China, it would be much more advantageous to be able to work with a friendly neighbor on the basis of mutual recognition. It could stop its military buildup, dismantle the weapons aimed at Taiwan and put those resources to good use in building the economy. That is the only way in which the cross-strait conflict can be removed as one of the Cold War’s remaining flashpoints.

For the US and other Western nations, the normalization of relations with Taiwan would mean increased trade, cultural and, yes, political exchanges with one of the few vibrant democracies in East Asia. For Taiwan, these exchanges are a lifeline for its freedom and democracy. Its future as a democratic nation depends on it.

So, as we celebrate the achievements of 40 years ago, let us take steps to help bring the 23 million Taiwanese out of a political isolation imposed on them in the early 1970s by unfortunate circumstances beyond their control. Since then, they have fought hard to achieve their democracy and deserve to be accepted as a full and equal member in the international community, just like any other nation.

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## **Former President Chen Shui-bian hospitalized ..... and returned to prison again**

Picture: Taipei Times

On 7 March 2012, former president Chen Shui-bian, who is serving 17 ½ years on two partially concurrent prison sentences in Taipei Prison in Taoyuan County, was hospitalized and underwent treatment for heart problems. Mr. Chen has been imprisoned since 11 November 2008 on corruption charges. In the course of 2009 and 2010 he did receive a trial, but international observers, including former Harvard Law Professor Jerome Cohen and other international scholars concluded that the proceedings were severely flawed and that there was significant political interference by the ruling Kuomintang.



**Former President Chen being  
returned to prison**

Since the beginning of February 2012 he had asked for a medical checkup, but it wasn't until twelve DPP legislators and one member of the Taiwan Solidarity Union raised the issue in the Legislative Yuan in early March, that he was allowed to go to Taoyuan General Hospital. There, doctors diagnosed him with acute coronary syndrome and a significantly reduced blood flow to the heart. He was taken to the Intensive Care Unit of the hospital after undergoing an urgent cardiac catheterization procedure the next day. Also, a prostate tumor was found during the checkup, among other undisclosed conditions.

Since December 2010, former President Chen has been serving his jail term in Taipei Prison. Together with a cellmate he is confined to a damp, undersized cell of about 50 square ft, 24 hours a day. The cell has a toilet, but there is no bed, desk or a chair: if he wants to read or write, he has to sit or lie down on the floor.

Chen's doctors attribute his poor health to long-term deprivation of sunlight, lack of exercise and an inactive life style. Unlike other inmates, who are able to work eight hours a day in prison factories, Chen has been confined to his cell 24 hours a day. He is only allowed 30 minutes of outdoor exercise each day.

In the past two years, President Chen's incarceration was brought up on a number of occasions, both by members of Congress as well as by international scholars writing to President Ma Ying-jeou. However, the Ma administration has been totally unresponsive to these human rights concerns.

## ***An appeal for medical parole***

The deteriorating health and physical condition of the former President prompted the DPP Caucus in the Legislative Yuan in Taiwan to appeal to the Taipei government to release Chen on medical parole.



**Picture of Chen's prison cell:  
no chair or desk**

On, 20 March 2012, at a press conference in Taipei, almost all DPP and Taiwan Solidarity Union legislators jointly appealed to the Ministry of Justice to grant Chen a release for medical treatment. After the press conference, the lawmakers were joined by some 200 supporters, including representatives from various civic groups, in a visit to the Justice Ministry, handing a letter of appeal to Deputy Minister of Justice Chen Shou-huang to request a release.

Overseas, several international organizations such as the Formosan Association for Human Rights (FAHR), the Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), and the Toronto-based Taiwanese Human Rights Association of Canada, also launched campaigns in support of medical parole for the former President.

# Report from Washington

## *House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing*

*By Janice Chen, Jean Wu and Eileen Lin, staff members at FAPA HQ in Washington DC*

On 28 March 2012, the House Foreign Affairs Committee chaired by Rep. Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) convened a hearing to assess the military and economic threat posed by China's rise. Witnesses and committee members discussed a wide range of issues, from the PRC's growing aggressiveness in its territorial claims, to persistent imbalances in its trade relationship with the U.S., to the risks to U.S. national security from Chinese economic espionage, cyber warfare, and support for other authoritarian regimes around the world.

Picture: VOA / Tina Chung

From the outset, members made clear that the continuing military threat to Taiwan by the PRC was one of their chief pre-occupations, with ranking member Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) admonishing China during his opening remarks to renounce the use of force in its political dispute with Taiwan. Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH), citing his experience as founding co-chair of the



**From left to right: witnesses Dean Cheng, John Tkacik, Larry Wortzel, and Taylor Fravel**

Congressional Taiwan Caucus, specifically asked the witnesses to address the current nature of China's threat to Taiwan. He noted that the few hundred missiles which the PRC had aimed at Taiwan when he was first elected to Congress in the 1990s had now grown to an arsenal totaling over 1600.

During the question and answer session, Congressman Berman asked the panel their opinion about the sufficiency of the upgrades to the model A/B F-16s that the Obama

administration offered to Taiwan in September 2011. Dean Cheng, of the Heritage Foundation, pointed out that the upgrades were for aircraft which are already 20 years old, while the model C/Ds that Taiwan has been requesting are intended to replace the even older planes in Taiwan's fleet. He said the bottom line is that with only the upgraded A/Bs, Taiwan's air force will shrink in size as a matter of simple attrition.

Multiple lawmakers also expressed concerns that steps by the Ma Ying-jeou administration in Taiwan to engage economically with the PRC is resulting in Taiwan's increasing over-reliance on the Chinese economy, which is accompanied by Chinese dominance over Taiwan's politics and foreign policy. John Tkacik, former U.S. foreign service officer, told the committee that if the trend continues, Taiwan will soon depart the community of Asian-style democracies to rest firmly within the sphere of China's political influence.

Congressman Chabot asked if the trend is irreversible. The witnesses pointed out that while the government of President Ma was put into office by the voters of Taiwan in a democratic process, and that as Americans they were not in a position to tell the Taiwanese what is in their best interest, a stronger and less ambiguous stance from the United State would help Taiwan to resist Chinese political pressure.

Tkacik added that the net effect of Taiwan policy by multiple U.S. administrations have given people in Taiwan the impression that the U.S. has "cut Taiwan loose," and thus they have no choice but to elect the candidates who will be more accommodating toward the PRC. Cheng advised that the U.S. implement a "consistent strategy, and persistent action" with regard to all of its alliances in East Asia in order to help counteract this impression.

In response to a question by Rep. Jean Schmidt (R-OH) about the possible repercussions to U.S. national security if the trend of Chinese dominance over Taiwan continues along the trajectory set by President Ma, Tkacik outlined the military assets that would fall under China's control with Taiwan's political integration into the PRC, including sophisticated basing infrastructure, advanced radar capabilities and naval bases near Japanese territory.

Congressman Chabot also used part of his allotted questioning time period to comment on the continued incarceration of former Taiwanese president Chen Shui-bian, calling the "criminalization of politics" by the current Taiwan government "a real tragedy," and urged Ma Administration to deal with the issue soon.



# Book Review

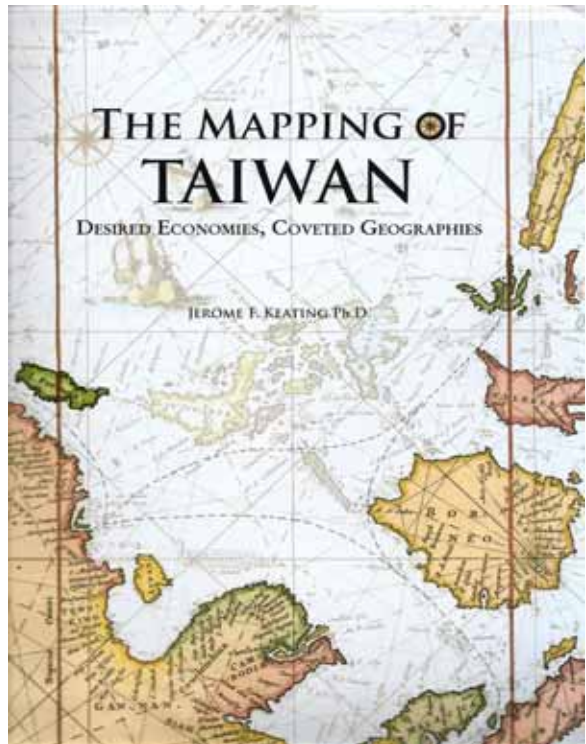
## *The Mapping of Taiwan; Desired Economies, Coveted Geographies*

*By Jerome F. Keating, Ph.D., reviewed by Gerrit van der Wees*

This book is a valuable treasure. It is not only visually attractive, as it contains many rare old maps of East Asia, but also in terms of content, as it narrates Taiwan's history through the ages. It would grace any coffee table, but its great value is in the narrative of how Taiwan gradually appeared on the maps of Western explorers. The main theme of the book is how this portrayal changed as the economic interest of various nations in the island rose or fell.

The subtitle of the book, “Desired Economies, Coveted Geographies” captures the essence of the narrative in which around 1600, the island appears on the maps of early Spanish and Dutch explorers on their way to the East to partake in the Spice Trade, and trade with China and Japan.

But Keating starts his narrative, and rightly so, with the aboriginal tribes that inhabited Taiwan for thousands of years before the arrival of Western explorers. He gives a concise overview of how recent DNA and linguistic research has shown that many of the peoples of Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia trace their origin to the aboriginal



tribes of Taiwan. With their sea-going canoes these people already traversed the oceans long before the advent of the Western explorers.

In the subsequent chapters covering the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> century Keating gives a fascinating bird's eye view of developments and events in Portugal, Spain, the Italian City States, the Netherlands and England that led to their quest for the East, and particularly the Spice Islands. Mapping of the newly discovered territories was an important tool for these explorers: sea captains closely guarded their maps as they showed the way to reach these coveted geographies.

Monopoly of trade between desired economies and the homeland became a prime goal, leading to new riches. But with increased shipping, local trade was increasingly part of the business. Keating describes how Taiwan was initially coveted by the Dutch and Spanish because of its location straddling the sea lanes between South East Asia, China and Japan. The Dutch wanted to trade with China and Japan and interdict the Spanish, who were headquartered in Manila. Spain established a short-lived colony in Northern Taiwan to protect its galleons crossing the Pacific to Acapulco.

But soon, Taiwan became a producer of valuable goods in its own right: deer hides were highly valued in Japan, and the Dutch imported seasonal laborers from the Fukien coast to cultivate rice and sugar. This started the immigration of Hoklo and Hakka speaking people from the coastal provinces, but also made Taiwan a main source for rice for Japan and sugar for places as far away as Persia.

Keating describes eloquently how this increasing economic importance was accompanied by, and even enabled by, improved mapping of the island, in particular by Dutch cartographers: precise information of the coasts, inlets, islands, was an essential piece of information for the flow of trade to and from the island.

In the following chapters Keating describes how in the 18<sup>th</sup> and most of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Taiwan became a backwater, as it was administered by the Manchu Ch'ing Dynasty via Fukien, and mainly functioned as a refuge for coastal farmers escaping the frequent famines and wars in China. It wasn't until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century that it became economically important again, and was therefore coveted by other nations such as Japan and France. The encroachment by other powers forced the Manchu Ch'ing to formally make it a province, but this lasted only eight years.

The maps continue to provide a visual historic footprint of how the desired economies of many nations impacted Taiwan and shaped its history. When Taiwan became a colony

of Japan in 1895, the Japanese started major infrastructure projects, roads, railroads, opening the island to traffic and commerce. They also systematically mapped many aspects of the island, geography, economy, infrastructure and population in great detail – by far the most extensive mapping of the island in its history.

In the final chapter, “20<sup>th</sup> Century On”, Keating describes how despite satellite images and GPS, mapping is still needed and how it provides new possibilities for needed information. But his main argument in the closing pages is that – after so many centuries of having their island being mapped by others – the Taiwanese have brought about a powerful combination of their own “Taiwanese” identity and the advent of democracy, and can map their own future. It needs to set its own course, determine the priorities of its own desired economy, and chart its own destiny.

The full title of the book is: *The Mapping of Taiwan; Desired Economies, Coveted Geographies New Perspectives on Cartography, Competing Monopolies and the Destiny of Taiwan*, by Jerome F. Keating, Ph.D. Published by SMC Publishing, Taipei, Taiwan, 2011. The book contains some 80 pages of old maps and illustrations as well as 50 pages of accompanying narrative. Highly recommended.

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## Welcoming Xi Jinping to Washington

Picture: Taiwan Communiqué



**On 14 February 2012, Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping was welcomed at the White House. Outside, the Taiwanese-Americans -- together with the Tibetans and Uyghurs -- made sure their message was heard.**

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CONTENTS

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**2012 Elections: A retrospective**

<i>Mostly free but partly unfair</i> .....	1
<i>The elections: results and issues</i> .....	2
<i>Domestic issues versus the China factor</i> .....	2
<i>The US factor in Taiwan's elections</i> .....	4
<i>Taiwan's imperfect democracy</i> by Julian Baum and Gerrit van der Wees .....	5
<i>A Chinese shadow over Taiwan's elections</i> .....	8

**The future of Taiwan-China relations**

<i>The DPP does soul-searching on China ties</i> .....	9
<i>Wu Poh-hsiung advocates "One country, two areas"</i> .....	11
<i>Int'l scholars: more cross-Strait tension</i> .....	12

**How to move forward on US-Taiwan relations**

<i>Where is the beef?</i> .....	13
<i>Taiwan deserves normalized relations</i> by ambassador Nat Bellocchi .....	15

**Former President Chen Shui-bian hospitalized**

<i>... and returned to prison again</i> .....	17
---	----

**Report from Washington**

<i>House Foreign Affairs C'tee hearing</i> .....	19
--	----

**Book Review**

<i>The Mapping of Taiwan, by Jerome Keating</i> reviewed by Gerrit van der Wees .....	21
--	----

*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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