



# Taiwan Communiqué

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## Taiwan goes to the polls

### *Tsai Ing-wen likely to become new President*

Taiwan is heading into the final stretch of the 2016 legislative and presidential elections: on Saturday 16 January 2016, the people of the country will go to the polls and elect a new president and vice president, as well as a total of 113 members in the Legislative Yuan.

In May 2015, US Deputy assistant secretary of State Susan Thornton stated in a speech in Washington that “... *we look forward to another dazzling display of Taiwan’s robust democracy in action.*” She got her wish: it has been a vigorous campaign with many surprises – such as the Kuomintang’s ditching of its initial presidential candidate Ms. Hung Hsiu-chu in mid October, and President’s Ma unexpected meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Singapore in early November 2015 (see below).

Photo: AsiaTimes

But a most stable factor in the elections has been the solid position by the DPP’s Tsai Ing-wen, who had a strong lead when she was nominated by the party in April 2015, and who has increased her advantage ever since.

Most polls in mid-December 2015 gave her between 46 and 50%, with Eric Chu of the KMT at around 18%, and Mr. James Soong of the PFP trailing at 9 to 12%. If one takes out the “undecided” responses, this translates into an election-day victory for Tsai of over 60%, *a major landslide.*



**Tsai Ing-wen maintaining a strong lead in the presidential race**

On the following pages we present background information and insights, in particular on the vice-presidential choices of the three candidates, the main issues that in our assessment do play a role in the elections, and how the legislative races are stacking up.

## *Who are the vice-presidential candidates?*

In Taiwan it has become customary to announce the vice-presidential candidates relatively late in the campaign, usually just before the formal registration deadline, which this year was in the third week of November. So, it was no surprise that the three major presidential candidates, the DPP's Dr. Tsai Ing-wen, the KMT's Eric Chu, and the PFP's James Soong announced their respective vice-presidential running mates only in mid-November. Here follows a brief portrait of each of them.

Tsai Ing-wen announced on 16 November 2015 that her running mate would be Prof. Chen Chien-jen, who serves as vice-president at the Academia Sinica. He is a prominent epidemiologist who served as minister of the Department of Health during the SARS outbreak in Taiwan in 2003. Dr. Chen holds a doctorate of science in epidemiology and human genetics from Johns Hopkins University in the US.



**Prof. Chen Chien-jen**

A few days later, KMT candidate Eric Chu announced that his running mate would be Jennifer Wang, a women's rights activist and a lawyer who served as chair of the Council of Labor Affairs from 2008 through 2012. Mrs. Wang hails from Changhua in Central Taiwan, and is married to Mr. Huang Tung-shun, who until recently served as director of the Department of Government Ethics in the Judicial Yuan.

However, Wang ran into controversy almost immediately when it was disclosed that she and her husband had made speculative deals in housing reserved for military veterans. She reportedly bought and then sold at least twelve units, making NT\$13.8 million (US\$418,625) in profits.

On 30 November 2015, Mrs. Wang and her husband also had to move out of a government dormitory in Taipei's Daan District after the legitimacy of their residence there had been repeatedly challenged, as they owned a home in



**Mrs. Jennifer Wang**

Taipei and were therefore not eligible for the dormitory housing. In mid-December Mr. Huang resigned from his position in the Judicial Yuan over the military housing affair.

On 18 November 2015 PFP presidential candidate James Soong also announced his choice for a running mate: Ms. Hsu Hsin-ying, the chairperson of the Minkuotang / Republican Party, a new party she founded earlier in 2015 when she split off from the Kuomintang. Ms. Hsu's background is in engineering and technology, and has a doctoral degree in civil engineering from National Chiao Tung University in Hsinchu City.

When making the announcement, Mr. Soong stated that he was reaching out across party lines, as he wanted to transcend the traditional blue-green divide in Taiwan and move towards a coalition government. However, Ms. Hsu's Minkuotang Party ran into controversy because of the fact it put several shady former intelligence officials on its at-large list (see below). Ms. Hsu herself is reportedly also close to a controversial Buddhist leader by the name of Miao Tien, who is also a former intelligence official.



Ms. Hsu Hsin-ying

## *What are the main issues in the campaign?*

From an overseas perspective in the United States and Europe, Taiwan's elections are generally perceived as being all about relations with China. As has been on display since the Sunflower Movement of 2014, a large majority on the island indeed sees "sovereignty" as a key issue in the elections, and the rejection of President Ma Ying-jeou's drift towards China was indeed a major factor in the defeat of the Kuomintang in the local elections in November 2014.

Thus a more cautious approach towards China is high on the list of priorities of the electorate in Taiwan. Still, a number of other issues do play a significant role in the views of the voters. A brief overview:

- \* **Transparency and accountability in governance.** Time and again, these issues turned out to be major weaknesses in the Ma administration. From the government's lackadaisical response to typhoon Morakot in August 2009 through the Sunflower Movement in 2014, he came under intense criticism for his lack of transparency, responsiveness and accountability.

- \* **A slowing economy and uneven distribution of wealth.** Many believe that President Ma's economic rapprochement with China has not benefited the economy as a whole, but only the wealthy industrial captains who moved their factories to China, leaving Taiwan with very little to show for in terms of manufacturing industry.
- \* **The outflow of investments resulted in a higher unemployment** in Taiwan, especially among laborers and young professionals: many young graduates just out of college simply could not find adequate employment, leading to significant discontent among the young generation.
- \* **Increased cost of living.** In spite of stagnant wages, the cost of living – particularly in major cities such as Taipei – has risen significantly. Since President Ma came to power, housing prices have increased by 45%, much of it driven by speculative Chinese investment in real estate. For a young couple in Taiwan it is almost impossible to get married, because there is no affordable housing available.
- \* **Environmental protection and renewable energy.** The chumminess of the Ma administration with big corporations has also fed the perception that he has not done enough in the area of environmental protection and the promotion of renewable energy. The relentless push by Mr. Ma in support of nuclear energy was seen by many as damaging to Taiwan's natural beauty: particularly the younger generation is pushing hard for a more sustainable environmental and energy policy.
- \* **Weak defense policy.** Last but not least, many in Taiwan see President Ma's words and actions as detrimental to the country's capability to defend itself against China's aggression. In particular the fact that he let defense expenditures slip to a level of 2% of GDP was seen as a sign that the President was not serious about defense. They argue that Ma's accommodating approach to China has not resulted in any decrease of the number of missiles aimed at Taiwan or reduction of the buildup across the Strait.

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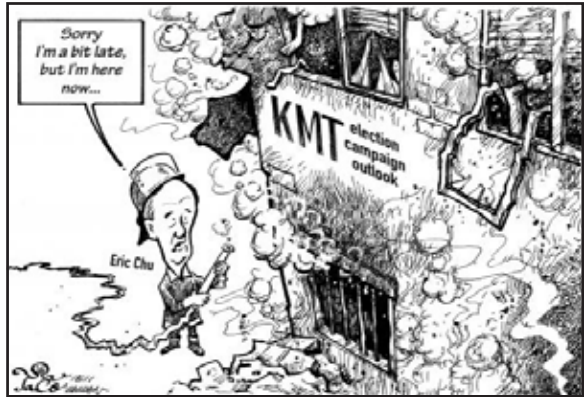
## How are the legislative races stacking up?

While the polls for the presidential elections indicate a landslide victory for Dr. Tsai Ing-wen of the DPP as highly likely, the outlook for the legislative elections is much less clear. The Legislative Yuan has traditionally been a stronghold for the Kuomintang: it even held a majority there during the eight years of the DPP administration of President Chen Shui-bian (2000-2008).

The structure of the Legislative Yuan is a peculiar mix of district seats and party representatives elected from an at-large list: there are 73 district races and a total of 34 seats allocated to the parties on the basis of the percentage they receive in the party-vote. With an additional six seats reserved for mountain and plain aborigines, this amounts to a total of 113 seats.

Copyright: Taipei Times

In the present legislature, the Kuomintang hold 65 seats (an absolute majority), the DPP has 40 seats, the green-leaning Taiwan Solidarity Union three seats, and the Legislative Yuan New Alliance (a group of several small blue-leaning parties, including James Soong's People's First Party) four seats.



### Dismal election campaign outlook for the KMT

However, according to a number of observers in Taiwan, there are indications that this time around it will be possible for the DPP to gain a majority in the legislature, either by itself, or in combination with one of the smaller third-parties which are leaning in the direction of the DPP.

A number of projections by observers in Taiwan indicate that the DPP may reach approximately 60 seats out of the 113 (an absolute majority), that the Kuomintang will drop down to around 40 seats, and that of the smaller third parties only James Soong's PFP and the newly-established New Power Party (NPP) headed by professor Huang Kuo-chang will each be able to get three or four seats.

According to these projections, none of the other small third parties – including the pro-China New Party or President Lee Teng-hui's Taiwan Solidarity Union — will be able to break the 5% threshold necessary to gain at-large seats. Below we present a brief overview of the situation.

## *District races*

Traditionally, the Kuomintang has enjoyed an advantage in the district races, as it had a well-developed grass-root organization, going down to city and township blocks, where the local party representative dispersed favors in exchange for votes for the party.

However, the tectonic shift in the political landscape which was on display in the November 2014 local nine-in-one elections showed a dramatic change, which resulted in a landslide for the DPP in local-level city and county councils. At the time, the DPP won 13 out of 22 city mayor and county magistrate positions, with three going to independent / DPP-leaning candidates, and only six to the Kuomintang.

In the battle for the district seats, the DPP has come up with a slate of candidates consisting of strong local politicians, many of them of the younger generation, thus positioning the party for a stronger and longer-term presence in the legislature.

In a number of districts, the DPP has also made room for candidates from smaller third-force parties, such as the New Power Party led by Sunflower leader Huang Kuo-chang, who has vowed to work closely with the DPP when elected.

The Kuomintang on the other hand is still relying on the older generation of established politicians, although Chairman Eric Chu decided to withdraw support from some of the more extreme members in the party, such as Alex Tsai and Chiu Yi, who have been in the forefront of smear campaigns against DPP leaders.

### *... and at-large seats*

While the district seats are a reflection of the grass root strength of the different parties, the make-up of the at-large list is generally seen as a reflection of the vision of the party leadership. So when the DPP and Kuomintang announced their respective lists of candidates, there was a flood of commentaries on its meaning for the overall direction of the parties.

On 24 November 2015, DPP Chairwoman Dr. Tsai Ing-wen announced the DPP's list of 34 candidates, of whom some sixteen will in all likelihood be elected. The candidates on these sixteen so-called "safe seats" represent a variety of social issues such as food safety, environmental protection, social welfare, health care, human rights and judicial reform. The DPP also emphasized that it was reaching out to many outside the party: of the list of 34 nominees, fourteen are presently not a member of the party, thus representing the party's openness and diversity.

By emphasizing these areas of expertise, the DPP intended to show the electorate that it intended to take these issues seriously. Mostly gone were party oldtimers who had previously occupied these at-large "safe seats," which carried the advantage that they didn't have to campaign for their particular seat, but could assist in the broader campaign.

On the Kuomintang side, the at-large list which was announced on 20 November 2015 ran into significant opposition from the start. In order to ascertain that Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng would continue to generate much-needed support for the KMT in the South, Chairman Eric Chu had put him into the number one spot. However, this drew heavy criticism, particularly from conservative KMT veterans, who dislike Wang with a passion.

Copyright: Taipei Times

Chairman Eric Chu also attempted to draw support from the issue-oriented electorate by putting half a dozen “individuals with certain expertise and capabilities” into the safe positions, but this drew criticism from civic groups who doubted the expertise of the individuals.



### **KMT Chairman Eric Chu throwing Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng an at-large seat**

For the remainder of the safe list, Mr. Chu relied on a number of old party stalwarts such as former Taoyuan County Commissioner John Wu, KMT legislator Huang Chao-shun, Presidential Office Secretary-General Tseng Yung-chuan, and legislator Alicia Wang. To many observers in Taiwan this represented a sign of weakness, that showed a lack of new blood in the party.

## ***How will the smaller parties fare?***

While Taiwan has traditionally had a two-party system in which the Kuomintang and DPP represented the two major parties, third parties have been around since the early 1990s, when the country made its transition to democracy. James Soong’s People’s First Party (FPF) and the New Party were offshoots of the Kuomintang, while the Taiwan Solidarity Union – established in 2001 by former President Lee Teng-hui – has traditionally leaned much more towards the DPP.

However, the Sunflower Movement of March-April 2014 sparked a whole generation of new third-parties that are now vying for seats in the Legislative Yuan. For a third party it is relatively difficult to gain seats, as in the district races (see above) the KMT and DPP



are dominating, while they can only get an at-large seat if they win more than 5% in the party vote.

But in order to be eligible for at-large seats, the third parties also need to run at least ten candidates in the district elections – where these candidates have little chance unless a major party decides not to run in that particular district, which happened in the present elections when the DPP made room for candidates of the New Power Party (NPP), led by Sunflower Movement leader Huang Kuo-chang.

Although there are several other third-parties on the green side of the political spectrum, such as Lee Teng-hui's Taiwan Solidarity Union and the coalition of the Green Party with the Social Democratic Party, these don't seem to have much chance of breaking the 5% threshold barrier. Opinion polls show that only the New Power Party appears to have enough momentum to break that barrier. The Taiwan Solidarity Union presently has three seats.

The New Power Party is running several well-known activists such as former Academia Sinica scholar Prof. Huang Kuo-chang and **Chthonic Heavy Metal** band leader Freddy Lim in district seats that have traditionally been KMT strongholds. In this way they hope to be able to break the KMT monopoly on power at the local level.

The NPP is also running several distinguished activists and scholars on its at-large list: it is headed by aborigine activist Ms. Kawlo Iyun Pacidal, followed by Soochow University political science professor Hsu Yung-ming, and National Taiwan University Economics professor Jang Shaw-ling, the Dean of the Economics Department who made name in 2014 when she criticized the cross-strait Service Trade Agreement proposed by the Ma administration. If the NPP breaks the 5% barrier these persons will become legislators.

On the blue side of the political spectrum, Mr. James Soong's People's First Party (PFP) is the only party that might break the 5% barrier and thereby continue with the two seats it presently has in the legislature. Others, such as the New Party, Republican Party, and



**Huang Kuo-chang**



**Freddy Lim**



China Unification Promotion Party have positioned themselves way out on the extremist pro-China side of the political spectrum, so that support for them is virtually nil.

Many in Taiwan perceive these parties as fronts for the PRC, and thus keep at a safe distance from them and their positions. It was indeed interesting that one of these parties, the New Party, reached out to the discredited former KMT presidential candidate Ms. Hung Hsiu-chu, and offered her a position on their at-large list, which she rejected.

The two other parties mentioned, Republican Party and the China Unification Promotion Party, have also been linked with criminal pro-China gangsters, such as Bamboo Union leader Chang An-le, a.k.a. “White Wolf”, and Mr. Chen Hu-men, a former military intelligence operative who was jailed over his involvement in the 1984 murder of California-based journalist Henry Liu. Messrs. Chang and Chen have been vocal advocates of unification with China and were involved in intimidation of supporters of the Sunflower Movement.

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## The Ma-Xi meeting in Singapore

### *It sure was a surprise !*

On 3 November 2015, the **Liberty Times** in Taipei broke the news that on the following Saturday, 7 November 2015, Taiwan’s president Ma Ying-jeou would travel to Singapore to meet with Chinese president Xi Jin-ping. The news was confirmed by Taiwan’s Presidential Office on the same day, and prompted a whirlwind of commentaries in the Taiwan and international press.

A main issue with the announcement was the “surprise factor”: Taiwan’s closest ally, the United States, had not been informed until the previous day, in spite of President Ma’s often-repeated promises that he would pull “no surprises” in the triangular relations between the US, China and Taiwan.

Another factor was his lack of prior consultation with Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan. In fact, Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng learned about it from the news media. Indeed, many in Taiwan saw the process as yet another example of the “black box” decision making by the Ma administration.

In any case, the meeting took place in Singapore, with “Mr.” Ma and “Mr.” Xi Jinping shaking hands of a full 81 seconds – the two sides had agreed not to use the “President” titles in order to avoid the impression that this was a meeting between two heads of state.

This was followed by a dinner – with each side paying its own share – and two separate press conferences: the one on the PRC side by spokesperson . . . and the one on Taiwan’s side by President Ma himself.

## *But was it “historic” or not?*

Many international news media termed the meeting “historic”, and it was indeed the first time in some 70 years that the leaders from the two sides had met each other – Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung reportedly met at the end of World War II.

Photo: Taipei Times

The problem with such a perspective is that it places Taiwan-China relations in the anachronistic framework of the decades-old rivalry between the Kuomintang and the CCP, and negates the democratic transition Taiwan has experienced, resulting in a very different and new Taiwan, that wants to be seen in its own right.



**Messrs. Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping shaking hands in Singapore**

In an analysis published on 9 November 2015, University of

Nottingham scholar Steve Tsang also argued that the event is not changing the cross-strait relationship in any basic way, and can therefore not be considered “historic” (*Xi-Ma summit falls short of historic*, **Nikkei Magazine**, 9 November 2015).

The New York Times also highlighted the fact that the meeting showed that China had not been able to “buy” a favorable opinion in Taiwan: in spite of the economic benefits and trade deals Beijing has reportedly showered on Taiwan during the past years, the overwhelming majority of the population is skeptical of Beijing’s moves (*Meeting with Taiwan shows limits of China’s checkbook*, **New York Times**, 6 November 2015).

## *Backfiring in Taiwan*

After the meeting, President Ma attempted to put a positive gloss over his meeting with President Xi, but overall it did backfire pretty badly in Taiwan itself. The main reasons are as follows:

- \* His embracing of the PRC's "One China Principle" position without any due democratic process in Taiwan, where that position is not supported whatsoever. He is thus buying into the PRC narrative and undermining Taiwan's position.
- \* His going into the meeting in a secretive fashion, typical of his "black box" modus operandus. To many in Taiwan this runs counter to the basics of the principle of checks and balances.
- \* His total silence on the basic ideas of freedom and democracy for which Taiwan is supposed to stand. Neither during his meeting with Mr. Xi, not in the press conference afterwards, did Mr. Ma reiterate that Taiwan is now a democracy, and that it elects its leaders in free elections, and wants to decide its future freely. *That* would have been a more principled position.
- \* His attempt to limit Dr. Tsai Ing-wen's room for future maneuver by emphasizing – together with Mr. Xi – that the "92 Consensus" is the only way forward for X-Strait relations. Many see that concept as an artificial concoction that simply has no traction anymore in Taiwan — if it ever had.

People in Taiwan are eager to have a *more stable concept* that lays the foundation for a longer-term, more sustainable relationship with China in which the PRC accepts Taiwan as a friendly neighbor instead of continuing the thrust towards unification. That would be a more forward-looking approach which contains better safeguards for Taiwan's continued existence as a free and democratic nation.

These criticisms of the way President Ma arranged and conducted the meeting found their way into the opinion polls in Taiwan. The clearest examples were found in the results of a poll conducted immediately after the Singapore meeting, and published on 12 November 2015 by Taipei-based **Taiwan Indicator Survey Research (TISR)**.

A brief summary of a few of the key questions:

- \* ***Did the Ma-Xi meeting benefit the mainland or Taiwan more?***  
Taiwan 20%, Mainland 49.6%, Same 11% and Undecided 1.9%
- \* ***At the Ma-Xi meeting, did President Ma defend the nation's sovereignty and dignity?*** Yes 30.2%, No 52.7%
- \* ***At the Ma-Xi meeting, was President Ma able to express your opinion and position?*** Yes 22.2%, No. 56.2%
- \* ***Do you trust Chairman Xi?*** Yes 17.9%, No 62.9%
- \* ***Do you trust President Ma?*** Yes 27%, No 60%

The survey also showed that the Ma-Xi meeting did not make a dent in the strong lead by DPP Chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen in the presidential election race: in that poll she received 46.2% against KMT Chairman Eric Chu 20.4%, with PFP leader James Soong trailing far behind with 10.4%. If one takes out the undecideds, this would translate into an election-day victory of 60%, against Eric Chu's 26.5%, and James Soong at 13.5%.

Below we present one more analysis on the Singapore meeting, by a young Taiwanese scholar studying at the London School of Economics, Mr. Chen Po-wen, who criticized the "ethnic card" both Presidents Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping tried to play in Singapore.

## ***“Kinship” a non-starter for young Taiwanese***

*By Chen Po-wen. A student at the London School of Economics and Political Science's Center for the Study of Human Rights. This article was first published in the Taipei Times on 14 November 2015. Reprinted with permission.*

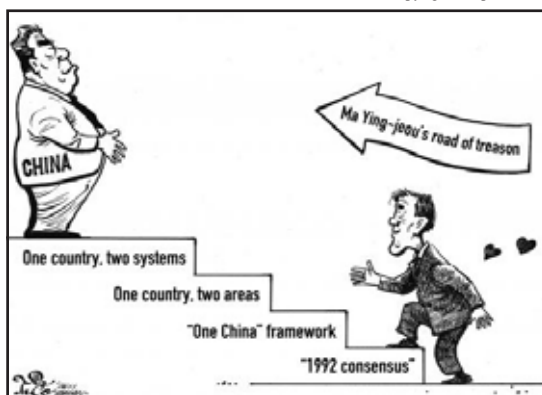
Much is being written these days about the “historic” meeting between President Ma Ying-Jeou and Chinese President Xi Jinping that took place in Singapore on Saturday last week. For talks to be “historic,” they need to mark a fundamental change that affects the course of history. That is simply not the case here: Ma came back glowing, but empty-handed.

As a young Taiwanese, I also object to the fact that at the meeting, both Xi and Ma emphasized the ethnic connection between two sides.

Xi said: “No power can separate us, because we are closely knit kinsmen, and blood is thicker than water.” Ma said: “We are all descendents of the Chinese people. We should cooperate together and rejuvenate the Zhonghua minzu [Chinese ethnic group].”

For most people born in Taiwan after the 1980s, these words are perplexing and reprehensible: We consider democracy and human rights to be far more important than vague racial bonds that should be relegated to the past. In addition, the increase in cross-strait exchanges over the past decade have shown us how different we are. Playing the “ethnic card” does not work in modern-day Taiwan.

Copyright: Taipei Times



### Ma Ying-jeou meeting Xi Jin-ping in Singapore: stepping towards "One China"

Let me elaborate. First, we grew up after Taiwan’s momentous transition to democracy. We have gone through various election cycles since the 1990s and learned the value of public affairs. We protested over a wide variety of issues and even occupied the legislature during the Sunflower movement in March and April last year to protest the lack of transparency in the legislative process.

However, in China there is no democracy and people are not allowed to build civic organizations to enhance their well-being. Even though there are many critics of the authoritarian government, the vast majority seem to support the repressive Chinese Communist Party regime. Most people in China seem to accept the concept of “Asian values,” which claims democracy does not suit Asian societies, and they discount Taiwan’s achievement of democracy.

Second, the histories of the two sides have followed very different courses. China, located on a huge continent with a large population, has gone through its own history of imperial dynasties. Taiwan belongs to the Austronesian cultural system and since the 17th century has experienced rule by the Dutch, the Spanish, the Qing Dynasty, the Japanese and then the Republic of China.

Resorting to the notion of *Zhonghua minzu* and applying a Sino-centric perspective of history fails to take into account, and hence ignores, Taiwan's unique and diverse history, which is also the reason that we protested against the revision of high-school history textbooks when the government was trying to impose such an outdated perspective.

Finally, living in the era of globalization, young people in Taiwan are eager to play an active role as members of international society. We have the passion, capacity and potential innovation to make valuable contributions to the family of nations. However, through China's perpetual attempts to isolate Taiwan, Taiwan's international space is limited. Young Taiwanese have lost a great number of opportunities to participate in international events and work with international institutions. We have been pushed off the world stage for too long .

So, for the young generation of Taiwanese, these "historic" talks and the cross-strait "brotherhood" are a non-starter. Instead of being held down by China's stranglehold, we want to be ourselves, we want to treasure and celebrate our democracy, and we want to determine our own future as a free and independent country.

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## Eric Chu's visit to Washington

### *A closed-door affair*

As we reported in our previous issue of *Taiwan Communiqué* (*The KMT's Comic Opera*, No. 153, pp. 1-7) the KMT's chairman Eric Chu became the party's presidential candidate on 17 October 2015, after the party ditched its original candidate, Ms. Hung Hsiu-chu. Ms. Hung had been the winner in the presidential primary in the Spring of 2015, but her poll ratings had subsequently gone way down because of her outlandish pro-China positions and statements.

One of Mr. Chu's first priorities after become the party's candidate was to plan for a visit to Washington, an idea that had been rejected by Ms. Hung. One of the purposes of such a visit was to show the people back home that the KMT was well placed to handle relations with the United States, and that Chu would be treated with the same *égards* as the DPP's Dr. Tsai Ing-wen had been during her visit to Washington in early June (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 151, pp. 1-6).

So, from 11 through 13 November 2015, Mr. Chu and his delegation came to Washington, and made the rounds. His visit was overshadowed by the Singapore meeting between Presidents Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou on 7 November 2015, just the weekend prior to Chu's Washington visit. One question Mr. Chu was certainly asked was why the United States received such a short notice (see above pp. 9-12): but apparently Mr. Chu was also kept out of the loop by President Ma.

Photo: Taipei Times

As it was, Mr. Chu's visit was mainly a closed door affair: no public speech like Dr. Tsai Ing-wen had done in June 2015, when she gave a major address at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).



Mr. Eric Chu visiting Washington

Mr. Chu did publish an OpEd in the conservative **Washington Times** and made brief remarks on Friday 13 November 2015 in front of the Brookings Institution, where he did have a closed-door session with a small group of scholars and members of think tanks. More on those below.

## *What did he write in the Washington Times?*

In the **Washington Times** article, which was published on 12 November 2015, Mr. Chu engaged in some irresponsible scare-mongering by implying that a win by the DPP opposition's candidate Dr. Tsai Ing-wen would be "incurring war." Mr. Chu wrote:

*But the cross-strait peace and stability is now on the line, as Taiwan's 2016 presidential election once again pits the pro-de jure independence Democratic Progressive Party against the incumbent KMT party.*

*For complicated historical reasons, China has an uncompromising position on Taiwan, that is, Taiwan is an integral part of China. Any declaration by Taiwan to separate itself legally and permanently from China will be viewed by China as a violation of Chinese territorial integrity, hence incurring war.*



To add to American angst about the matter, Mr. Chu continued: *A war across the strait may put the United States at the horn of a dilemma between realpolitik concerns and morality. The United States may be entrapped in an undesirable entanglement with China.*

He of course outlined how -- in the view of the Kuomintang -- "peace and stability" could be maintained, and criticized Dr. Tsai Ing-wen for not wanting to be bound by the "1992 Consensus" concept:

*President Ma stabilized the triangle by an innovative design, the "1992 Consensus — One China with Respective Interpretations." The "1992 Consensus" refers to the oral agreement between the two sides that across the Taiwan Strait there is but one China.*

However, the problem with the different interpretations is that the PRC simply maintains there is a "One China" headed by the government in Beijing, and that Taiwan has historically been part of that China. The fact is that Taiwan has never been ruled by the PRC, and that in history it was not part of China for extended periods, such as in the 1600s when it was under Dutch and Spanish colonial rule, and from 1895 through 1945, when it was a Japanese colony.

The interpretation by the Kuomintang government in Taipei is equally problematic: it contends that "One China" is the Republic of China and that the mainland is part of that China -- an equally unrealistic and unsustainable position.

Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party has not wanted to accept the "1992 Consensus." During her visit to Washington, DPP Chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen stated that she wants to "maintain the status quo across the Taiwan Strait", and is committed to a "consistent, predictable, and sustainable relationship with China."

**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** *The problem with Mr. Chu's remarks is that President Ma's policies, and in particular the "1992 Consensus", have little support in Taiwan because they are seen to undermine Taiwan's democracy and play into the cards of the undemocratic and belligerent CCP government in Beijing.*

*The "1992 Consensus" may be – as Mr. Chu writes – a linguistic formula to "agree to disagree", it is also a concept that is eroding Taiwan's democracy, and will in due time deprive it of the possibility to have a free choice on the country's future. History shows that the Chinese authorities have never bothered to respect the rights and freedoms of the people who were forced to give in to the pressures from Beijing: just look at East Turkestan, Tibet and Hong Kong.*

*It is also a fundamental misperception to think that the present “peace and stability” is a firm foundation for cross-Strait relations, as it is based on the false premise – advanced by both Ma Ying-jeou and Xi Jinping — that Taiwan is inexorably moving towards unification with China.*

*To the contrary, real peace and stability will only be realized if the people of Taiwan can maintain their freedom and democracy. A truly solid basis for a long-term sustainable relation across the Strait can therefore only be achieved if Beijing renounces the use of force, dismantles its 1600+ missiles aimed at Taiwan, and accepts the reality of a free and democratic nation at its doorsteps.*

## ***Eric Chu’s reckless scare-tactics in Washington***

*By Mark Kao, President of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs. This article was first published in the Taipei Times on 18 November 2015.*

*Reprinted with permission.*

In mid-November 2015, Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman and presidential candidate Eric Chu visited Washington. Most of the Taiwanese media were primarily interested in whether Chu was extended the same courtesy, and met with people at the same level, as Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairperson and presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen during her visit to the US capital in June.

Indeed, the US government did bend over backwards to make sure that was the case, and emphasized that it does not take sides or play favorites in Taiwan’s election campaign.



Copyright: Taipei Times

**President Ma to Dr. Tsai Ing-wen: *This is my favorite "One China principle" pet -- please take good care of it.***

Taiwanese wanted to focus on the substance of Chu’s message to Washington, but regrettably, Chu did not give any public speech, like Tsai did at the Center for Strategic

and International Studies, where she gave a major policy address that was widely applauded.

There are only two snippets of Chu's message to Washington: an opinion piece in the conservative **Washington Times** on Thursday last week and brief remarks before his closed-door meeting at the Brookings Institution on Friday.

In the Washington Times article — titled “*Cross-strait peace on the line*” — Chu said that “cross-strait peace and stability is now on the line,” adding that if Tsai is elected president in January, any deviation from the so-called “1992 consensus” would be “incurring war.”

Chu's words amount to irresponsible scaremongering. He is playing into China's hands by threatening that any move away from the current failed policies of President Ma Ying-jeou would lead to disaster.

Chu obviously neglected to mention to his US interlocutors that Ma and the KMT are so unpopular in Taiwan precisely because of their pro-China policies of the past seven years. A majority of people in Taiwan see these policies as a dangerous slippery slope toward unification.

That is why Taiwanese want to see new policies and are so supportive of Tsai and the DPP, who are searching for a new formula to provide a more solid and long-term basis for stable relations across the Taiwan Strait, whereby China accepts Taiwan as a friendly neighbor. This would provide better safeguards for Taiwan's future as a free and democratic nation.

By harping on about the concocted “1992 consensus,” Ma and Chu want to restrict Tsai's room for maneuver if she is elected president, and prevent her from exploring new avenues where a better peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait can be achieved.

As it is, Chu also committed a diplomatic blunder by raising differences between the political parties in Taiwan while visiting a foreign nation. There is an unwritten rule internationally that states that partisan politics should stop at national borders. By failing to observe this rule, Chu acted in an un-statesmanlike fashion.

However, the main issue is whether Taiwan — and the US — should pursue policies that push Taiwan closer to a repressive and undemocratic China, as Ma's government has done during the past seven years, or whether it is possible to devise a new and more constructive approach that helps Taiwan remain a free and democratic nation.

The answer on the Taiwan side is to be given when Taiwanese go to the polls on Jan. 16 and elect a new president and legislature.

On the US side, there also needs to be some serious rethinking, so the US can move beyond its worn-out “one China” policy mantra, and develop a new and more constructive framework that celebrates Taiwan’s vibrant democracy. One that is more supportive of gaining a rightful place in the international community for Taiwan and its freedom-loving people.

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## Report from Washington

### *Obama administration announces new arms sales*

On 16 December 2015, the Obama administration notified the US Congress that it had approved a US\$ 1.83 bln. arms package for Taiwan. The sale announcement is the first in four years: the previous sale was the US\$ 5.9 bln. package announced in September 2011. The present package includes:

- \* Two FFG-7 Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigates and associated materials (at a refurbishment and upgrade cost of US\$190 million);
- \* 36 AAV-7 Assault Amphibious Vehicles (US\$375 million);
- \* 13 MK 15 Phalanx Block 1B ship defense Close-In Weapon Systems, upgrade kits, ammunition, and support (US\$416 million);
- \* 208 Javelin guided missiles, technical assistance, logistics, and program support (US\$57 million);



**Perry class frigate in Taiwan's Navy**

- \* 769 BGM-71F-series TOW 2B Aero Radio Frequency anti-armor missiles, support, and training (US\$268 million);
- \* 250 Block I-92F MANPAD Stinger missiles, related equipment and support (US\$217 million);
- \* Taiwan Advanced Tactical Data Link System (TATDLS) and Link 11 communication systems integration (US\$75 million);
- \* Follow-on support for Taiwan's MIDS/LVT-1 and JTIDS previously procured (US\$120 million).

While the sale was widely applauded in Washington DC, there was also significant criticism, in particular by leading members of the US Congress, who argued that the process of approval by the Obama administration had taken too long. **US Senator John McCain**, the chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said in a statement:

*"I strongly support the Administration's notification of a new round of arms sales to Taiwan. This decision is consistent with both the legal requirements of the Taiwan Relations Act and our national interest in helping the democratic government in Taipei preserve stability across the Taiwan Strait."*

*"The United States must continue to support the efforts of Taiwan to integrate innovative and asymmetric measures to increase cross-Strait deterrence, including the future sale of capabilities and high-end training that will help improve Taiwan's air- and sea-denial capabilities."*

*"Going forward, the United States must establish a more regularized process for considering requests for arms sales to Taiwan in order to avoid extended periods in which a fear of upsetting the U.S.-China relationship may harm Taiwan's defense capabilities. For its part, Taiwan will also need to work to meet its commitment to spend at least 3 percent of its annual gross domestic product on defense."*

The Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, **Congressman Ed Royce (R-CA)** also expressed his concern about the slow process:

*"While I'm glad these sales – which include frigates provided by legislation I pushed through the House last year – will soon be completed, I remain deeply concerned about the administration's delays that needlessly dragged out this process. In fact, some Taiwanese requests have still not seen the light of day. We should handle arms transfers for Taiwan just as we would for any other close security partner."*

*“Our friends in Taiwan face many challenges, and these arms sales will bolster our support for Taiwan to promote peace and security in the Asia Pacific region. I am glad that the Obama administration has finally acted.”*

Copyright: Taipei Times

Congressman **Eliot L. Engel (D-NY)**-the ranking Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, also applauded the sale, adding: *We cannot allow our relationship with the People’s Republic of China to come at the expense of our friendship with the people of Taiwan or our commitment to Taiwan’s defense. The United States and Taiwan are bound together by shared values, a commitment to democracy, and a unique bond of friendship. This sale of these military items to Taiwan will contribute to peace and stability across the strait as well as in the Asia-Pacific region.*”



**US to the Ma Ying-jeou administration: Don't complain! You can't expect us to sell advanced weapons to a China-friendly government ...**

Other observers expressed concern that the US was not providing Taiwan with adequate means to defend itself, particularly in view of the more belligerent attitude China has shown in the region, and the continuing military buildup along the coast.

The **US-Taiwan Business Council** asked in a press release dated 16 December 2015 why Taiwan isn't being offered any new capabilities to counter changes to the Chinese threat in the past four years, while in an editorial on 21 December 2015, the **Wall Street Journal** asked why the US has not moved forward with technologies and systems that Taiwan really needs, such as new F-16 aircraft and technology and subsystems for Taiwan's newly established indigenous submarine program (*Punting on Taiwan's Security*, WSJ, 21 December 2015).

The sales comes after repeated urging by the US Congress to move forward with such arms packages so Taiwan can defend itself. Below is a recent letter from the Senate.

## *Senators write President Obama on Taiwan arms sales*

On November 19, 2015, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator John McCain (R-AZ), and the ranking member, Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) sent a joint letter to President Barack Obama, urging him to develop and implement a new plan for Taiwan's military modernization. Below is the text of the letter.

*Washington DC, November 19, 2015*

*Dear President Obama,*

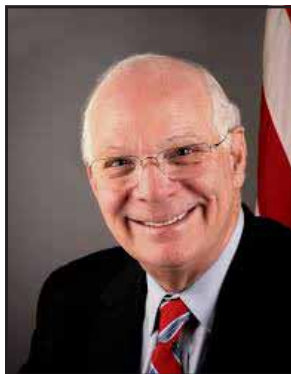
*America's long-standing commitment to Taiwan is a multifaceted and bipartisan effort that includes many components, all of which must be exercised as we seek to support and safeguard the ability of the people on Taiwan to determine their own future. One critical component is U.S. security assistance and arms sales to Taiwan to help modernize and build the capacity of its armed forces. We believe this support must be more robust.*

*While recent relations between Taiwan and China have been more encouraging, we remain concerned that China's ongoing military modernization, and the threat it poses to peace and security in the Taiwan Strait, is not being adequately addressed.*

*We recognize that a great deal of bilateral security cooperation is taking place between the United States and Taiwan, including more than \$12 billion worth of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan since the start of your administration. These actions have been welcome. However, we are troubled that it has now been over four years - the longest period since the passage of the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979 - since the administration has notified Congress of a new arms sale package.*



**Senator John McCain**



**Senator Benjamin Cardin**



*The United States must continue to further our interests in cross-Strait stability - a vital component of which is arms sales to Taiwan, pursuant to the Taiwan Relations Act - even when doing so brings short-term tensions in our relationship with China.*

*The United States should develop and implement an ongoing plan for Taiwan's military modernization, including how the administration plans to address Taiwan's legitimate requirement for additional new manned fighters and submarines and other self-defense articles and services. Given some of the obstacles with the current approach, we believe that a regular and routine process for the provision of security assistance to Taiwan is essential.*

*Finally, we believe that it is equally important that Taiwan strive to meet President Ma Ying-jeou's 2008 commitment to invest at least 3 percent of its annual gross domestic product on defense. We are increasingly concerned that, absent a change in defense spending, Taiwan's military will continue to be under-resourced and unable to make the investments necessary to maintain a credible deterrent across the strait, especially as its limited defense resources are increasingly constrained by growing military personnel costs.*

*Consistent with the requirements of the Taiwan Relations Act, which call for regular consultations between the Executive Branch and Congress, we look forward to the opportunity to discuss together how best we can support and strengthen Taiwan's self-defense capabilities, including any arms sales under consideration or planned.*

*Sincerely,  
Benjamin L. Cardin, United States Senator  
John McCain, United States Senator*

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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*

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