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New Political Map of Taiwan

Milestone in island's history

The major gains made by the democratic opposition of the DPP in the December 1992 Legislative Yuan elections mark a new milestone in Taiwan's history. The subsequent departure from office of the conservative hard-line general-turned-prime minister Hau Pei-tsun, who turned in his resignation to President Lee Teng-hui on 30 January 1993, is quickly leading to a redrawing of the political map in Taiwan.

Firstly, the election results: the fact that the DPP received 31% of the vote and won 50 of the 161 seats, while the Kuomintang sustained a significant loss, means that the KMT's monopoly on power has disappeared and that Taiwan is growing towards a truly multi-party system. In the Legislative Yuan, which is increasingly becoming the center of political decisionmaking, shifting balances and alliances between the three major groupings (KMT "*Mainstream*", KMT "*Non-Mainstream*", and opposition DPP) mean that no single grouping has the absolute majority.

Secondly, the transfer of the premiership from the elderly mainlander hardliner **Hau Pei-tsun** to the younger Taiwanese technocrat **Lien Chan** signifies a watershed in the island's political history. It is the first time that the mainlanders, who have held the island's political system tightly in their grip since the end of World War II, relinquish this important position to a native islander.



The KMT divided: "Two-headed dragon."

Mainstream versus non-Mainstream

Even before the December 1992 elections, there was increasing pressure on the Kuomintang authorities for Prime Minister Hau Pei-tsun to resign. To the democratic opposition of the DPP — and to the reform-minded forces within the Kuomintang itself — he had become the major stumbling block on the road towards a more democratic political system.

While President Lee Teng-hui had managed to do some deft maneuvering to get around the Prime Minister, Mr. Hau's stubborn clinging to the *status quo* and to the anachronistic claim that the government in Taipei was still the rightful ruler of "one China", had meant a virtual stand-still in the reform process.

One important result of the elections was that it has brought out into the open the significant differences within the Kuomintang itself, with President Lee Teng-hui and his "**Mainstream Faction**" pushing for progress towards democracy and a better international status for Taiwan, and Prime Minister Hau Pei-tsun with his "**non-Mainstream Faction**" attempting to maintain the *status quo*.

During the final weeks of 1992, and the beginning of 1993, there was intense maneuvering between the conservative Hau-camp and the more progressive Lee forces. The events even prompted elderly mainlander veteran supporters of Prime Minister Hau to take to the streets, and engage in battles with the police in front of the Kuomintang's office in Taipei. Traditionally, street demonstrations were considered by the Kuomintang to be reserved for the rambunctious DPP supporters. A fighting scene between KMT-supporters and police would have been unthinkable even a few months ago.

The Changing of the Guard

During three meetings — on 17, 18, and 25 January — President Lee attempted to convince Mr. Hau to resign. However, the Prime Minister held out, attempting to gain some say in the naming of his successor, and the appointment of others in the KMT-Party and the government. Finally, on 30 January 1993, Mr. Hau submitted his resignation to President Lee, and on 3 February, the resignation was approved by the KMT's Central Standing Committee.

On 10 February 1993, President Lee named Provincial Governor **Lien Chan** to be the new Prime Minister. Mr. Lien is a 56 year-old American-educated technocrat with a Doctorate in Political Science from the University of Chicago. After returning to Taiwan in the early 1970s, he first joined the Political Science Department of National Taiwan University, where he became chairman. He later joined the civil service, became ambassador to El Salvador, and subsequently served as vice premier, foreign minister, communications and transportation minister, and since 1990 as Provincial Governor of Taiwan.



New Premier Lien Chan

Elections major victory for DPP

The ruling party won ... but lost

The major gains made by the democratic opposition of the DPP — up from 24% to 31% of the vote and from 18 to 50 (maybe 51) seats — and the significant loss of the Kuomintang, mean that the KMT's monopoly on power has dwindled considerably and that Taiwan is growing towards a truly multi-party system. The 19 December 1992 elections for the Legislative Yuan in Taiwan were thus a milestone on the road towards a democratic political system on the island.

In the Legislative Yuan, there will be three major groupings — the KMT's "**Mainstream**" faction (some 68 members), mainly native Taiwanese and liberal mainlanders aligned with President Lee Teng-hui, the KMT's conservative "**Non-Mainstream**" faction (approximately 35 members), aligned with outgoing Premier Hau Pei-tsun, and the opposition DPP (just over 50 members).

On the following pages we give an overview of the elections, the results in facts and figures, prominent winners, and an assessment of the fairness of the elections by the **Asia Resource Center**.

A typically “Taiwan experience”

The December 1992 elections for the 161-seat Legislative Yuan were the first time in the history in Taiwan that elections were held for all seats of this legislative body: up until December 1991, the large majority of the seats were held by old mainlanders, elected on the Chinese mainland in 1947. The elections were thus a significant step forward in the process of parliamentary reform, which was initiated by the democratic opposition in the early 1980s.

This progress was made due to a number of conditions which are very specific to Taiwan. It is important to emphasize this, as some editorial commentators in the press (e.g. **New York Times**, *"China plus democracy"*, Dec. 30, 1992) attempted to link it to China. This was wide off the mark, for the following reason: The "China-question" did not have a significant influence on the elections: local issues and personalities played the dominant role. This is primarily due to the fact that, because of the multi-seat district system, candidates in Taiwan have to run strongly individual campaigns. In a proportional system, broader issues would have a stronger influence. Only indirectly did the question of *"One Taiwan, One China"* play a role in these elections (see article on pp. 15-19).

The two main reasons for the DPPs gains were: a) the DPPs strategy to emphasize the need for "checks-and-balances" in Taiwan's political system, as a counter-weight against the Kuomintang's monopoly on power, and b) the effective anti vote-buying campaign, especially in the big cities, where the voters longed to see a clean campaign. Religious organizations, including the Presbyterian Church, the Catholics and the Buddhists joined forces, and called on the voters to refuse to sell their votes to the "golden oxen." However, in the rural areas the practice of vote-buying was still rampant (see *"Were the elections fair ?"* on pp. 6-13).

The reasons for the KMT's loss are a complex set of factors: firstly, the internal bickering between the "Mainstream" and "non-Mainstream" worked against the party. Secondly, for many more forward-looking people, the "Mainstream" faction was not progressive enough, and they crossed over to the DPP. Thus, although the "Mainstream" still won a large number of the seats (68 elected persons), several of the leading members of the liberal **Wisdom Club** lost their seats.

Also, the "Mainstream" relied too much on the traditional strategy of nominating "golden oxen" and local factional leaders, who applied their trusty old methods of offering money, banquets and gifts to voters in exchange for votes.

Ironically, the more conservative "non-Mainstream" candidates won more seats than expected, some 35 in total. The candidates associated with the military generated a sense of crisis by playing on the fears of the elderly mainlanders and in the closely-knit military villages. The equally-conservative **New KMT Alliance** -- with the support of younger mainlander technocrats such as former Environmental Protection Agency chief Jaw Shao-kang and former Finance Minister Wang Chien-shien (who both ran as non-affiliated) -- was able to portray itself as reformist and anti (Mainstream) establishment.

The Results: Facts and Figures

An overview of the results is given in the table below.

	KMT	DPP	Social Demo- crats	Other small parties	Non- Affil- iated	TOTAL
Number of VOTES (mln.)	5.03	2.94	0.126	0.056	1.331	9.489
Percentage of votes	53.0%	31.0%	1.3%	0.6%	14.0%	100.0%
% of votes by political parties **	61.7%	36.1%	1.5%	0.7%	—	100.0%
Number of SEATS elected:						
Regular Districts	73	37	1	0	14	125
“Non-regional” seats	19	11	0	0	0	30
Overseas Taiwanese	4	2	0	0	0	6
Total:	96	50	1	0	14	161
% of seats:	59.6%	31.1%	0.6%	0.0%	8.7%	

** used in determining the allocation of
“non-regional” & overseas seats to the parties.

A number of comments can be made on these election results:

1. As compared to the results of the 1991 National Assembly elections, the 1992 results show a significant shift downwards for the KMT (from 71% down to 53%) and up for the DPP (from 24% up to 31%).
2. The category “Other small parties” and “non-affiliated” went up from some 5% to some 14%. This was mainly due to the fact that a number of Kuomintang members ran without party endorsement.
3. The Kuomintang ran stronger in the rural areas. This was mainly due to the fact that vote-buying was more rampant there, and the fact that the DPP still has less of an organizational network there.
4. In many cities, the DPP ran almost even with the Kuomintang: e.g. in Taipei City, the Kuomintang received 41% of the vote, while the DPP reached 35.6%. In Chiayi City, the DPP received even a higher percentage than the KMT, and the DPP candidate (Mr. Chai Trong-jong) won.
5. In 14 out of the 29 election districts, DPP-candidates were the number one individual vote getters. Particularly important “*Number One's*” were:
 - * medical doctor **Shen Fu-hsiung** in Taipei City South,
 - * former political prisoner **Shih Ming-teh** in Tainan City,
 - * the former US-based professor **Chai Trong-rong** in Chiayi City,
 - * incumbent DPP-legislator **Peng Pai-hsien** in Nantou County,
 - * incumbent DPP-legislator and lawyer **Lee Ching-hsiung** in Kaohsiung City North,
 - * former political prisoner **Huang Chao-hui** in Kaohsiung City South,
 - * incumbent DPP-legislator **Yu Cheng-hsien** in Kaohsiung County.

Were the Elections Fair ?

While the present elections can certainly be characterized as more open than before, they were still not fully fair. Control of television and vote buying by pro-government candidates were the most obvious methods used by the Kuomintang authorities in distorting the results. The fullest assessment to date on these aspects was made by *Ms. Robin Herr* of the the Washington D.C.-based **Asia Resource Center**, whose report is given on the following pages.

The Asia Resource Center reports

By Robin Herr

From 5 December to 20 December 1992, I traveled with Mr. *Tim E. Wang*, President of the **Formosan Association for Human Rights** throughout Taiwan to observe the elections for the Legislative Yuan. We interviewed ordinary people, local and national government officials, candidates and staff of major political parties, and representatives from non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. We also attended many campaign events.

The purpose of our trip was to gather information on the people's perception of the: 1) fairness of the election process, 2) major issues that national politicians need to address, and 3) progress of democratization and respect for human rights. Our findings reflect the concerns conveyed to us in discussions with the Taiwanese people.

I. The 1992 Election Process:

Approximately 90% of the people we interviewed thought the election process was unfair and favored the ruling KMT party. The others stated that recent democratic reforms outweighed any advantages given to the ruling party.

People gave the following reasons for their conclusion that the elections are not fair:

1. *Vote-buying can influence the outcome of the elections and the majority of vote-buying is done by the KMT.* Virtually everyone we talked to was concerned about vote-buying and its effect on the outcome of the elections. A pro-KMT scholar noted that vote-buying had increased this year as compared to last year's national Assembly elections due to the increasing competition.

Supporters from all political parties provided us with detailed explanations of the vote-buying process. Vote-buying was often described as a two-stage event which began with presents and ended up with gifts of cash immediately before the elections. In one county, a KMT candidate had given out fruit blenders, while in another we were shown gifts of expensive meat worth approximately 1,000 NT (US\$ 40) which was passed out by a KMT candidate. Reported cash gifts varied from 500 (US\$ 25) to 1,000 NT\$. Many types of people were named as traditional vote-buying agents, but the "*Lin*" (ward) and "*Li*" (block) chiefs were mentioned the most. In one county, we were told that a local "*Li*" chief was provided with NT\$ 20,000 for vote-buying purposes.

A majority of local people acknowledged that they would not report vote-buying activities to local authorities because they thought the judicial system was biased towards the ruling party or because they were afraid of being intimidated by local leaders. During campaign rallies, candidates from all political parties condemned vote-buying and pledged to not engage in it themselves. However, in follow-up interviews, no KMT-candidates were initiating any activities to prevent possible vote-buying or had information on vote-buying activities by opposition candidates.

In addition, a representative of the Central Election Commission revealed that no actions were being taken at the national or local level by the government election commissions to monitor or prevent vote-buying. On the other hand, opposition candidates reported various activities they had initiated to confront vote-buying. This included the training of individuals in local communities to monitor vote-buying, prosecution of certain candidates known to be vote-buying and education of local people not to sell their votes.

2. *The electronic media is biased towards the KMT.* The majority of the people we interviewed stated that the electronic media clearly favors the KMT in its coverage and tends to portray the opposition as violence prone. Some elderly people mentioned that the electronic news coverage is also unfair because it is broadcasted in Mandarin, a language that many over 65 cannot understand.

When asked why the electronic media has not been opened up to include independent channels, a senior official of the Government Information Office stated, “We are now considering whether to revise the Broadcasting Law. Maybe for the next election, political parties can freely use the TV.” In the meantime, the formally illegal “Fourth Channel” that does exist reaches some 150,000 households in Taiwan. (The island’s population is 20 million).

Most people feel that the newsprint media is less biased because of the existence of independent newspapers which balance out the two leading newspapers, which are pro-KMT. However, a worker mentioned that he had trouble purchasing the independent newspapers, because they were not available at his workplace.

3. *The KMT is highly organized from the national to the local level and can manipulate votes in order to ensure the election of its candidates.* KMT control is present in many sectors of Taiwanese society, including: a) local and provincial governments, b) local associations of farmers, parents and teachers, workers, veterans, etc. c) employees at government and KMT-owned businesses, d) civil servants, e) professors, and f) active and retired military.

The extent of KMT control can be illustrated by the education system. University rectors and school principals are all appointed by government officials. All major textbooks are produced by the government. The leading teachers' college, Normal University, is pro-KMT. In addition, military officers are present at all high schools where they give grades to students for "*proper behaviour.*"

Military leaders are also appointed as Vice-deans of Discipline at all public and private universities. Within this environment, KMT officials are able to ask leaders in all educational institutions to encourage teachers and parents to vote for particular candidates. Obviously, the majority of teachers and professors continue to refrain from speaking out against the KMT.

Many people described how the KMT could influence the votes of the above mentioned sectors of society. We were told that promotions could be given to people who voted KMT or were able to influence a number of votes. One civil servant mentioned that his year-end bonus was increased from one month to one-and-a-half months five days before the election. In addition, individuals could be punished if they were clearly for the opposition. One overqualified hospital employee was not given a promotion for four years, while her colleagues received promotions yearly.

A KMT official estimated that the KMT can influence approximately 20% of the votes by asking the military, retired veterans, civil servants, teachers, and employees at government or KMT-owned industries to vote for particular candidates. It is difficult to determine the extent of direct influence the KMT can have on the election outcome based on control over certain sectors of society. However, it is a well-known fact that the military vote is easily manipulated.

4. Campaign laws are cumbersome and favor the incumbents. The *Election and Recall Law* consists of many regulations which limit the campaign work of candidates. In general, it is the opposition candidates who suffer most, because they do not have a strong organizational network and must rely more heavily on rallies and other campaign activities to get votes.

We discovered many instances of candidates from all parties who were able to bypass election laws. However, at times authorities did not allow candidates to do this. In one instance, an independent candidate officially announced a break in the rally to allow a non-registered opposition leader to speak. Although this is a well-known method of bypassing election laws which state that all rally speakers must be registered, the local commission inspector intervened and the speaker stopped after a few minutes.

In another case, police officers fined and tried to stop a rally of an independent candidate which lasted after 10 o'clock. Across the street, a KMT candidate held a benefit concert that lasted until 12 midnight. Lastly, we met one candidate who was denied access to campaign in a military village.

II. Major issues that politicians should address:

In general, some voters, particularly in rural areas, favored politicians that they thought would address local issues which they considered important. Problems mentioned included: a) trash, b) industrial pollution, c) poor local facilities and social services, d) heavy tax burden, e) inadequacy of social welfare, f) inadequate government support for farmers, and g) high land prices. In some rural areas, voters tended to pick candidates according to reputation rather than issues.

Other voters, particularly supporters of the DPP or urban voters thought the issue of national identity was of primary importance. In a number of instances, voters in both rural and urban areas thought the issue of national identity needed to be resolved before local issues could be adequately addressed. Many undecided voters were confused about what the term "*One China, One Taiwan*" meant. However, 90% of the voters we talked to stated that they did not want to be unified with China.

III. The progress of democratization and respect for human rights.

People from all viewpoints say it is clear that democratization has increased in Taiwan. The recent revision of **Article 100** and release of many political prisoners contributed to unprecedented freedoms enjoyed during the campaign period. Despite the progress of democratization, opposition leaders feel that the pace is slow and that many reforms are needed to open Taiwanese society in the future. For these leaders, the elections are only a small step in the ongoing process of democratization. Additional reforms mentioned include a complete overhaul of the national government (to do away with many mainland leftovers, such as the Bureau for Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs, the Mainland Affairs Council, etc.), direct presidential and local government elections, as well as guaranteed traditional freedoms of speech and association as experienced by democratic countries.

Ordinary people, particularly those in the rural areas, seem less affected by the recent democratic changes. Many people in rural areas refused to talk to us about their views of the election process. Those who did, stated their friends were afraid

to talk because of possible repercussions by local leaders. Despite this environment, it is difficult to tell whether local people had experienced intimidation in the recent past or whether they had been affected by the history of past KMT intimidation. It is clear that some people are afraid to speak out.

Although the recent elections are considered the most fair ever, election fraud has been reported in Chiayi and in Hualien Counties. In addition, efforts have been made to prevent certain opposition leaders from engaging in campaign activities. Mr. **Cheng Tzu-tsai** was imprisoned for “illegal entry” into Taiwan directly after he held a press conference announcing he would hold a 23 speech-tour campaign for the DPP. Mr. Cheng will serve a one year prison term and is not eligible for parole.

Several opposition leaders, including Taiwanese-American **Dr. George Chang**, have been released on bail but still have to face trial, and the government has yet to restore their Taiwanese citizenship.

Lastly, a number of foreign nationals were denied visas to enter Taiwan to observe the elections. These include Mr. **Coen Blaauw**, Director of the Formosan Association for Public Affairs in Washington DC, and Dr. **Gerrit van der Wees**, the Netherlands-based editor of the *Taiwan Communiqué*.

In conclusion, the Legislative Yuan elections marks a vital step in the continuing democratization of Taiwan. However, efforts are still needed to preserve the basic human rights of the people of Taiwan, so they can fully participate in their own government. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 21: “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government.” This is the aspiration of the people of Taiwan.

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Ballot rigging in Hualien

Mr. **Huang Hsin-chieh**, the DPP patriarch and a former chairman of the party was a candidate in the December 1992 legislative elections in the remote Hualien county, where the ruling KMT has a virtual monopoly on power. The DPP planned to get a foothold there to begin building a political base, if Mr. Huang, a charismatic campaigner, would get elected.

Initially, the local KMT officials did not consider Mr. Huang as a serious threat because he was an outsider. But Mr. Huang proved to be popular with the voters and his rallies attracted large crowds.

Gary Hoff, Taiwan Church News

On 19 December 1992, Mr. Huang's campaign staff monitored the counting of ballots in various polling stations. Their own tallies showed that Mr. Huang led Mr. Wei Mutsun, a KMT candidate, by some 700 votes. Mr. Wei is mayor of Hualien city. Fraud was suspected when the official result showed Mr. Huang Hsin-chieh lost the election by a slim margin of 62 votes



to Mr. Wei. Mr. Huang's supporters cried foul and accused Mr. Wei of rigging the election. For three days hundreds of Mr. Huang's supporters demonstrated in front of the election office and demanded a recount of the ballots.

On 22 December 1992, the ballots from 54 ballot boxes from Hualien city, where irregularities were suspected to have taken place, were recounted and discrepancies totalling 738 votes were found in 13 ballot boxes. In eight ballot boxes, the number of ballots was more than the number of registered voters. The news of election fraud in Hualien made headlines in the press. Mr. Wu Po-hsiung, minister of interior and head of the central election commission, offered to resign to take responsibility. Mr. Wu Kuo-tung, the county magistrate of Hualien and head of the local election commission followed suit.

On 28 December 1992, the DPP led a largest demonstration ever in Hualien city to protest the fraud. More than 10,000 people from all over Taiwan came to join the march. The pressure produced results: subsequently, nine employees of the city government of Hualien, who served as supervisors of polling stations, were arrested on charges of interfering with the election, a crime punishable up to five years in prison. On 3 January 1993, Mr. Tsai Kun-lung, supervisor of polling station No. 27, which contained 141 irregular ballots, confessed in talks with investigators to ballot-rigging on election day.

On 11 January 1993, three more suspects were arrested. Mr. Wei Mu-tsun's younger brother, Wei Tung-ho, who is a member of the county council of Hualien, was also detained. Two officials in the city government of Hualien, Mr. Huang Chin-fu, a relative of candidate Wei Mu-tsun, and Mr. Ke Chang-sheng were arrested.

On 15 January 1993, a breakthrough was made when Mr. Ke confessed during investigation that fraud was committed. He implicated Mr. Wei Tung-ho as the person who masterminded the fraud scheme in order to insure the election of his brother. Mr. Ke said that on 13 December 1992, he was invited to a secret meeting in Mr. Wei's house where Mr. Wei instructed the others on techniques how to stuff pre-marked ballots in the ballot boxes without arousing suspicion. The nine supervisors who are under custody were also present at the secret meeting.

On 7 February 1993, the Provincial Election Commission stated that it would announce Mr. Huang the winner, if the District Court investigation proved that the election was rigged to help Mr. Wei win.

Towards a new Taiwan policy

The significant breakthrough, which has now taken place in Taiwan, means that other nations will have to reassess their Taiwan-policy: instead of a "benign authoritarian" regime from which they could more easily distance themselves, they now find an increasingly democratic nation, which is eager to claim its rightful and equal place among the international family of nations.

Below, we briefly analyze the situation from the US and European points of view.

New opportunity for Clinton Administration

The shifting political winds in Taiwan provide a good opportunity for the new Clinton Administration in the United States to chart a new and fresh course for America's Taiwan policy.

Until now US policy towards the island has been overshadowed by concerns about the reactions from the People's Republic of China, which previous US administrations tried to placate because of its size and global counterweight to the former Soviet Union.

The new Clinton Administration can indeed play an important role by supporting further progress towards a fully democratic political system in Taiwan, and by expressing support for a fully free decision on the future status of the island, in accordance with the principle of self-determination as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations. It is **not** "*for the Chinese on either (!?) side of the Taiwan Strait to work (this) out*" (**New York Times**, 30 December 1992) , but the free choice of the Taiwanese people themselves to determine the future status of their island.

Can Europe chart a new Taiwan course ?

For Europe, it is also important to grasp the significance of the recent events in Taiwan, and to strengthen the economic and political relations with the island. As is often the case, the French seem to be leading the way: in the beginning of February 1993, France announced that it was upgrading the status of its office in Taipei.

France combined its cultural, trade, and visa offices in Taipei into the ***Institut Français à Taiwan***, which is headed by a regular foreign service officer from the Quai d'Orsay in Paris, Mr. Jean-Paul Reau.

It is expected that other European nations will follow: many are also attracted by the possibilities for their industries to get involved in the large infrastructure projects, which Taiwan is implementing under the Six-year Development Plan.

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *Europe still has some way to go in understanding the political developments in Taiwan itself, and the need for support for further democratization and a free decision on the future status of the island. It should thus actively chart a new course, and move away from the stand-offish approach which has characterized Europe's policy to the island during the past two decades. It can do this by establishing closer contacts with the democratic opposition of the DPP and with the more progressive forces within the Kuomintang itself.*

Taiwan and China

“One Taiwan, One China” debate continues

While in the Legislative Yuan elections of December 1992, the results were mainly determined by the personalities of the candidates, the “checks-and-balance” strategy of the DPP, and the general dissatisfaction with the internal bickering within the KMT, the issue of “*One Taiwan, One China*” remained an important issue, which was brought to the surface on a number of different occasions by various people. Below we give a brief rundown.

At the end of January 1993, former Prime Minister **Lee Kuan-yew** of Singapore even got himself involved in the debate, when he stated during a private visit to Taiwan that “*if Taiwan attempted to move towards independence, the mainland would use military force.*”

Taiwan Communiqué comment: *we suggest that Mr. Lee Kuan-yew mind his own business. If he wishes Singapore to unite with China, he may propose this in Singapore, but Taiwan's future is for the people on the island themselves to decide.*

Another voice on the issue was that of Mr. **Wang Ruowang**, a 73 year-old mainland dissident writer, who was imprisoned by Peking for 14 months following the crackdown of the June 1989 student democracy movement in Peking. Mr. Wang stated during a recent trip to Taiwan that Peking's threats against Taiwan are simply a “*hollow threat.*”

A third, and more important voice — because he speaks as a Taiwanese — is that of professor Peng Ming-min, whose account is given below.

Professor Peng Ming-min speaks out

Ending 22 years of exile, prominent political dissident Peng Ming-min returned to Taiwan on 1 November 1992. Dr. Peng, formerly the dean of the National Taiwan University's Political Science Department, was arrested in 1964 for attempting to publish a manifesto which called for democratic reform and Taiwan independence. Dr. Peng escaped from house arrest in 1970 and has lived abroad ever since.

Peng's immediate reason for returning was to assist Democratic Progressive Party candidates in their bid for Legislative Yuan seats. During the hectic weeks before the December 19 elections, Peng tirelessly toured the island, making appearances at DPP rallies. Although critical of the DPP's factional infighting and lack of party discipline, Peng maintains that building a strong opposition party is essential to a healthy democracy.

In an interview with *Taiwan Communiqué* correspondent **Phyllis Hwang**, professor Peng revealed that his return to Taiwan held only one surprise for him. In restaurants, Peng discovered that often anonymous well-wishers already paid for his meals. At his speeches, crowds hailed him as "President Peng." Says Peng, "before I came back, I was not sure whether people would still be interested in me. This was the only surprise — the enthusiasm. There were record-breaking crowds to hear my speeches. I was very pleased and flattered."

What Peng had prepared for was the less than welcome attention that he and his staff also received. "The moment I got here, I was followed everywhere, 24 hours a day. All my personnel get threatening phone calls, telling them, "be careful." Peng relates that a car lent to him was vandalized with obscenities and that his driver was attacked outside a restaurant. Peng also spoke out against the failure of the television stations and newspapers to cover his activities, which he alleges is the result of the KMT party's rigid control over the media.

While the elections are over, Peng will continue to participate in Taiwan politics, as an educator. For Peng, this is a crucial role, as he believes that the Taiwanese have been "brainwashed since the kindergarten level. My role is to make people think and feel differently from the government's forty years of brainwashing." Peng hopes to introduce new perspectives with which the public may critically analyze the KMT's current policies and ideology. In particular, Peng urges people to re-examine the KMT's "One China" policy and promotion of a Chinese identity.



Professor Peng Ming-min

Peng argues that the KMT's advocacy of "One China" has no basis in current reality, and continued support for such claim will only give Peking more justification for military intervention in Taiwan. "The government keeps saying that Taiwan is part of China, but that China does not exist. It only exists in their fantasy. So Taiwan belongs to a non-existent China — is this a sound basis for formulating policy?This is a disaster, paving the way for the Communist Chinese to invade Taiwan."

Regarding the issue of a Taiwanese identity as separate from a Chinese identity, Peng points out that there is a fundamental difference between racial and political identity. " 'Chinese' to me is an ethnic description. However, '*zhong guo ren*' translated literally means 'those who have Chinese nationality.'" This is semantically confusing. If people ask me, I answer I am a Taiwanese of Han Chinese descent. I am not anti-Chinese. I am also proud of my Han culture and heritage."

"The greatest obstacle, the greatest danger to democracy is our unreasonable and unhealthy China obsession. We have to cut off this China obsession, otherwise there is no hope for Taiwan. Taiwan is basically a nation of immigrants. And it is natural for immigrants to have some nostalgia, some special attachment to the land and culture of their ancestors. But this is a cultural attachment and has nothing to do with politics. The government purposely tries to confuse this because most of the people in Taiwan came from China, so they say, 'we are Chinese, we have to be united with China.' They use this natural nostalgia for political purposes."

The return of Peng Ming-min has renewed hope for those who have long been involved in the movement for democratic reform in Taiwan. Many would like to see an individual with his charismatic leadership and firm commitment to Taiwan assume a more formal role in politics. For now, while Peng's visions for Taiwan's future are far-reaching, his plans for his own role in the island's political development remain modest.

"I have no political ambitions. I only have my convictions, my beliefs. I think Taiwan political structure is wrong. We have a right to demand a government that bases its policies on law, on reason, on truth. I ask, when did Taiwan ever exist for the Taiwanese people's sake? Never. We have always, for 400 years, been used, been the victim of world power politics. When did we have something to say about our destiny? Never. We should stand up now and insist that Taiwan exist for the Taiwanese."

The United Daily controversy

The issue of “One Taiwan, One China” was also central to a controversy surrounding the **United Daily News**, one of the two major pro-Kuomintang newspapers on the island with circulation over three million. It is known for its right-wing extremist line and its support for the ruling KMT’s hardline non-Mainstream faction, which still advocates unification with China.

In an article on 30 October 1992, the United Daily News quoted Mr. Li Rui-huan, a member of China’s Communist Party Politburo, as saying that China would stop Taiwan from declaring independence by any means, including bloodshed. By carrying Mr. Li’s remark as the major story on the front page without any criticism of China’s policy towards Taiwan, the United Daily News was using Mr. Li’s remark as a scare tactic against those advocating a free and independent Taiwan.

For many people in Taiwan, the article was only the last straw which broke the camel’s back. In a press conference on 13 November 1992, Professors **Lin Shantien** and **Lin Feng-ching** of the Taiwan Professors’ Association, Dr. **Li Chengyuan** of the Medical Professionals Association and Rev. **Yang Chi-shou**, secretary-general of the Presbyterian Church, announced that they were leading a “*boycott United Daily News*” campaign, and urged readers to cancel their subscription and advertisers to stop buying advertisement in the newspaper.

Prof. Lin stated that the United Daily News has consistently tilted toward China: he said that by giving front page coverage to statements by leaders of the Communist government in Peking attacking Taiwan’s independence movement, it has become “China’s mouthpiece”, and “the Taiwan edition of People’s Daily” (the official organ of the Chinese Communist Party). The campaign was supported by the opposition DPP. None of the DPP candidates bought advertisements in the United Daily News during the election campaign. It was estimated that more than 10,000 people canceled their subscription.

However, in a counter-move, the United Daily News on 29 December 1992 filed a libel suit against the four leaders of the boycott campaign, accusing them of “disseminating false information.” The move galvanized organizations from inside Taiwan and overseas to join hands to form an Alliance to start a media reform movement.

The Alliance was formed on 4 January 1993, when 19 organizations in Taiwan, including religious, human rights, labor and writers organizations, decided to expand the “*boycott the United Daily News*” campaign to cover the television stations, which toe the government line and are often biased against the opposition in their news coverage. The Alliance aims to push for an objective and fair coverage in news reporting. Professor Lin Shan-tien, president of the Alliance pointed out that the major newspapers and especially the television stations are often biased in their news coverage often portraying the independence movement in negative light.

On 4 January 1993, sixteen Taiwanese organizations in the United States and Canada announced they were joining the “Boycott the United Daily News” campaign by urging overseas Taiwanese to boycott the U.S. based **World Daily News**, a sister newspaper of the United Daily News.

The National Assembly meets again

In the period March through May 1992, the newly-elected National Assembly received headlines in Taiwan when it met for a 70-day special session to discuss Constitutional reform. That session led to calls for abolishment of the Assembly, because it failed to decide on any significant reforms. Even the issue of direct election of the President was postponed until 1995.

One of the decisions the Assembly did take, was to meet annually and to hear a “State of the Nation” report by the President. The first regular meeting of the new Assembly was thus held from 25 December 1992 through 31 January 1993. Below is a summary of what happened.

National identity dominates debate

For the largest part of the session, the meeting was uneventful. Only the “State of the Union” address by the President on 4 January 1993, the confirmation of the Control Yuan members (see below), and the final session on 31 January 1993, gave rise to political fireworks.

President Lee’s address itself was a bland reiteration of the KMT’s traditional points and issues: economic progress, “pragmatic foreign policy.” In order to pro-

tect himself from criticism from the Kuomintang's rightwing hardliners, he emphasized his attachment to the principle of unification with China, but at the same time he stated that it was the intention of his government to "return to the United Nations."

In the debate, which took place during the following two days, the issue of "national identity" dominated. The DPP emphasized the need to move towards an independent political status, while most Kuomintang speakers supported the *status quo*. However, one Kuomintang assemblyman, Mr. **Chen Chong-tsan**, sent the ruling party into a shock, when he held a speech openly calling on President Lee to recognize reality, and to switch from the present "One China" policy to a "One Taiwan, One China" policy.

During the closing ceremony of the National Assembly session, on 31 January 1993, the meeting turned into an uproar, when Prime Minister Hau Pei-tsun uncharacteristically started to shout and shake his fists at DPP National Assembly members who spread banners that called for his resignation. On the previous day, Mr. Hau had announced his intention to resign.

Control Yuan or no Control Yuan

Another new task of the National Assembly was to confirm appointments made by President Lee Teng-hui to the new 29-seat Control Yuan, a watchdog body with powers to recall public officials and to impeach the president.

The members of the old Control Yuan used to be elected by the members of the Provincial Assembly and the Taipei and Kaohsiung City Councils, which in the past gave rise to large-scale vote-buying (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 28, p. 9 and no. 29, p. 6-8). The DPP has argued in favor of abolishing the Control Yuan, because during the past decades it has hardly functioned: it only dared to handle cases of minor officials, and avoided involving itself in major cases. The opposition thus said it was "*swatting flies instead of catching tigers.*"

However, the Lee Teng-hui administration is attempting to rejuvenate and reinvigorate the Control Yuan by making the seats appointive seats (thus avoiding vote-buying), and by appointing Mr. Chen Li-an, the 56 year-old former Defense Minister, as Control Yuan President.

On 3 January 1993, President Lee Teng-hui thus submitted the names of 29 people as members of the Control Yuan, including four members of the DPP. This didn't

sit well with the DPP, since they saw it as an attempt by the ruling KMT to coopt the party, and pre-empt the party's arguments to abolish the Control Yuan.

The DPP also opposed the nomination of the four, since it took place without any prior consultation at all with the DPP leadership. They argued that if there was any representation by DPP members in the Control Yuan, this should be on the basis of proportionate representation, which would give the DPP nine to ten members in the Control Yuan, as the DPP won more than 30% of the vote in the December 1992 legislative elections. However, the KMT authorities refused.

On 15 January 1993, twenty-five members were approved by the National Assembly. Four were rejected, three of them KMT members: Messrs. Chin Mao-sung, a member of Taipei City Council and Hung Mao-chun, a member of Kaohsiung City Council, were rejected because of alleged involvement in illicit business and real state deals. Mr. Hsu Kuo-liang, a overseas Chinese from the Philippines was rejected because of his dual nationality.

The fourth nominee to be rejected was Dr. **Chen Yung-hsing**, a leader of the DPP National Assembly caucus. He was rejected by the KMT-dominated Assembly because he doesn't support the KMT's claim of sovereignty over China. Dr. Chen is a psychiatrist and human rights activist. Three other members of the DPP were accepted. They are Messrs. Kang Ning-hsiang, a former legislator; Chang Teh-ming, a lawyer, and Chen Chin-teh, a member of the Provincial Assembly. They — along with all other new members of the Control Yuan — were urged by the DPP to give up their party membership in order to ensure their judicial independence.

On 1 February 1993, the 25 members of the new Control Yuan were sworn into office and held their first meeting under chairmanship of the new president, Mr. Chen Li-an.

F-16 and Mirage-2000 deals go through

In our previous issue, we reported on the proposed sale of French and American fighter aircraft to Taiwan, as well as on a possible revival of the Dutch submarine issue and on the efforts by Hong Kong governor Chris Patten to bring fuller democracy to Hong Kong (*"China, three struggles and a half"*, issue no. 57, pp. 4-7). Below is an update on the first three issues.

France formally decides on Mirage-2000 deal

While the Americans confirmed the deal for 150 F-16s in November 1992, French officials had been holding off formal confirmation in order not to aggravate relations with China. However, during November and December 1992, Chinese officials loudly continued to sound ominous warning against the French, that if the deal went through, there would be severe repercussions for France's trade and other relations with China.

This left the French little choice but to formally confirm the Mirage-2000 deal: on Tuesday, 5 January 1993, French Industry Minister Dominique Strauss Kahn said that his government had formally approved the contract signed by the Dassault company. He added that France considered China's retaliatory measures unjustified. He also pointed out that China did not take similar measures against the United States for its decision to allow the sale of 150 F-16s to Taiwan.

China retaliated against France by ordering it to close its Consulate at Guangzhou and by shutting out French companies from bidding on a US\$ 1 billion subway contract in the southern Chinese city.

DPP protest high aircraft costs

During the first half of January 1993, the Legislative Yuan in Taiwan discussed the budgets for the proposed aircraft purchases. DPP legislator **Chen Shui-bian** strongly criticized the deals because he considered the price of the aircraft much too high in comparison to what other nations had paid in recent years.

Taiwan is paying some US\$ 40 million a piece for the US-made F-16, while countries like Malaysia and Pakistan paid some US\$ 24 million a piece only a few years ago. Taiwan's Minister of Defense, Mr. Chen Li-an, explained that the difference was mainly due to the fact that the aircraft Taiwan had ordered included more advance weapon systems and electronics.

According to press reports in Taiwan, the price of the French-made Mirage-2000 was even considerably higher than the F-16: the full deal was reported to amount to US\$ 6.7 billion for the 60 aircraft, which would mean an amount of US\$ 111.6 million per aircraft, including missiles, electronic equipment, and spare engines.

Member of the Legislative Yuan also criticized the Defense Ministry for failing to extract sufficient off-set orders from the Americans and French. Independent legislator **Chen Ting-nan** of Ilan County urged the Taipei authorities to ensure that sufficient technology transfers would be made and that at least 10% of the value of the orders would be placed with industries in Taiwan as off-set orders.

Another aspect of the deal which didn't sit well with the legislators was that the Ministry of Defense already made down payments to the US and France, even before the deal was reviewed and approved by the legislature. According to press reports in Taiwan, the Taipei authorities made a payment of US\$ 98.8 million to General Dynamics in November 1992, while an amount of US\$ 150 million was paid to the French aircraft maker Marcel Dassault.

In spite of the opposition, the budgets were approved by the Legislative Yuan on 12 January 1993. During the debate, DPP legislator **Chen Shui-bian** and independent legislator **Chen Ting-nan** suggested — tongue in cheek — that the newly-appointed Control Yuan investigate the irregularities in the aircraft deals. The President of the new Control Yuan happens to be Mr. **Chen Li-an**, who — as Defense Minister — was politically responsible for the aircraft deals.

The Germans say no, and the Dutch wiggle on submarines

On 26 January 1993, the German government in Bonn buckled under political pressure from Peking, and decided against giving approval for a proposed sale of up to ten submarines and ten frigates to Taiwan. German shipyards had been in competition with the Dutch RDM shipyard company for the submarines.

In the meantime, the Dutch shipyard intensified its lobbying effort with the Dutch government to gain approval to build the submarines, preferably in the Netherlands itself, but if that was not possible due to the political sensitivity, the shipyard wanted to build the submarines in Taiwan with Dutch assistance.

However, the Dutch authorities continued to wiggle on the issue, fearing political repercussions from China and economic reprisals against Dutch companies vying for orders in the People's Republic if they agree to the deal too openly.