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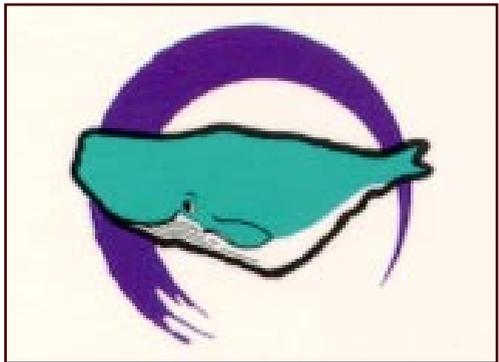
Historic Election in Taiwan

Under a threatening Chinese cloud

Taiwan's first-ever presidential elections will be held on 23 March 1996. It is the first time in history that the people on the island will be able to cast a direct vote for their President. The election is thus the culmination of Taiwan's transition from fifty years of authoritarian one-party KMT rule to a full-fledged democracy.

However, freedom and democracy in Taiwan is something the Communist rulers in Beijing can't stand. Since mid-1995 they have tried to threaten and intimidate Taiwan with missiles and military exercises, in a vain attempt to prevent Taiwan from moving in the direction of being a fully-recognized, free and democratic nation.

The Chinese threats are having the opposite effect: the Taiwanese people are rallying around the candidates who take a firm position against China — the DPP's Peng Ming-min and President Lee Teng-hui himself. In fact, during the past months president Lee has significantly shifted his position towards that of the DPP, has increasingly emphasized his Taiwanese identity, and presented himself as a populist "Taiwanese President."



The DPP's campaign symbol: a whale, in the shape of Taiwan. *The aqua-blue color (blue water and green land) symbolizes Taiwan's status as an "Ocean nation."*

In this issue we first present our editorial on Taiwan's quest for recognition, then discuss the elections in Taiwan themselves, followed by an overview of the developments during the past two months relating to the China threat. We also present views from members of Congress, the Administration, and commentaries from major international publications.

Taiwan's Quest for Respect

Editorial

On 19 February 1996, professor Lucian Pye of M.I.T. published an excellent treatise in the **New York Times**, titled "*China's Quest for Respect.*" It inspired us to put the following thoughts on paper, in order to help Americans, and others, understand why we Taiwanese are longing to be fully recognized as a free, democratic, and independent country. Thus the title "*Taiwan's quest for respect.*"

Many of the older generation of Taiwanese were born during the pre-1945 Japanese period, and experienced the post World War II influx of the Chinese nationalists of Chiang Kai-shek. To them, China was a faraway land, with which Taiwan suddenly became entwined after 1945, when China disgorged its defeated Chinese Nationalist armies onto the island.

The Taiwanese were initially glad to get rid of the Japanese, but soon their joy turned into sorrow and anger: the newcomers from China turned out to be corrupt, repressive, and uncivilized. The tension burst out into the open in the **February 28th Incident** of 1947, when a small incident in Taipei led to large-scale demonstrations. The Kuomintang was initially taken aback, but secretly sent troops from the mainland, which started to round up and execute a whole generation of leading figures, students, lawyers, doctors. In all between 18,000 and 28,000 people were killed, and during the "white terror" of the following years, thousands of people were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and murdered by the KMT's highly efficient KGB-machine, the Taiwan Garrison Command.

In 1949, Chiang Kai-shek lost the war on the mainland, and fled to Taiwan, where he established the remainder of his regime. For the next four decades, the people of Taiwan lived under Martial Law, while the KMT attempted to maintain the fantasy that they ruled all of China, and would some day "recover" the mainland. The Chinese mainlanders who came over with Chiang Kai-shek constituted only 15 percent of the population, but were able to maintain themselves in a position of power over the 85 percent native Taiwanese through tight control of the political system, police, military, educational system and media.

Against this background, the transition which took place over the past ten years from a repressive authoritarian regime to an open and democratic society is truly remarkable, and a credit to the democratic opposition which worked hard to achieve it, and whose members often paid for it with imprisonment, and in some cases with their lives.

The question must be asked, what prompted this transition, what inspired it ?

Deep down, the inspiration for all of us came from our Taiwanese identity, from a history of being oppressed for centuries, from a common culture and language. Or, in the words of Lucian Pye: *“...a trove of ideals and principles, myths and symbols, and stories of heroes that could be woven together to produce an uplifting, positive nationalism.”*

We were also inspired by the values we learned from the West. Terms like “*freedom*” and “*democracy*” came to have meaning for us. In Mandarin, the Chinese dialect brought over by Chiang Kai-shek, these expressions don’t even exist. The United Nations as an institution which stands for principles such as self-determination came to have meaning for us. Many of us studied in the United States and Europe and observed the freedom and openness of the society. We became convinced that this is what we wanted Taiwan to be.

So, for the past four decades Taiwanese on the island and overseas worked stubbornly towards the goal of a free, democratic, and independent Taiwan. A nation that would be accepted by the international family of nations as a full and equal partner. We had, and still have, *“...a shared and inspiring vision of what the nation should stand for in the world of nation states”* (Lucian Pye).

This vision is now nearing completion: in the coming weeks Taiwan will elect the first democratically-elected president in its history. We have a democratic, if somewhat rambunctious, legislature. The economy is vibrant. We are ready to join the world community

but we hear no words of welcomeWhy ?

China is threatening that — and we quote newspapers reports — if Taiwan “drops a pledge to reunify and tries to declare independence” it will launch an attack and invade our island. We want to emphasize here that we Taiwanese *never* gave any “pledge” to unify. We were never asked about our future. The problems stem from an old Chinese Civil War between the Communists and the Nationalists. We believe that our future should not be held hostage to that Civil War.

China has two choices: 1) continue the hostilities, have tension and military confrontation for years to come — and wreck its chances to economic development and respect in the international community, or 2) come to an accommodation with Taiwan and strive for peaceful coexistence as two good neighbors. I hope it will chose the latter.

What can the international community do to help bring this about ?

For one, **all nations** can play a role by abandoning their reticence towards Taiwan, and accepting a free, democratic, and independent nation as a full and equal partner in your midst. Furthermore, by making it clear to China that if it wants international respect, it needs to respect the rights of other nations, and not threaten and bully.

The **United Nations** has a particularly important role to play: is was founded on the principles of “equal rights” and “self-determination”. In addition, the 1951-52 UN-sponsored San Francisco Peace Treaty, which formally ended World War II, concluded that “...*the future status of Taiwan will be decided in accord with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.*” It is time for the UN to live up to these principles and embrace Taiwan as a new member.

The **United States** is in a particularly sensitive position: it wants to enhance its relations with China through its “constructive engagement” policy, and at the same time continue its unofficial relations with Taiwan. This present “status quo” policy was set out in the 1970s by Messrs. Nixon and Kissinger, and continued since then by Presidents Carter, Reagan, Bush, and now Clinton. However, it was founded on a situation in which Taiwan was ruled by a repressive regime which still wanted to “recover” the Chinese mainland. This policy is therefore now outdated.

The United States has been tinkering to adjust its Taiwan policy. But there is now a **wholly new Taiwan**, which is founded on the principles of freedom, human rights, and — in the worlds of American visionaries — “*life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*” There is thus a need for new visionary thinking from the United States, a vision that takes account of the principles on which the US itself was founded.

Taiwan has transformed itself into “**unique and worthy nation**” (again we are echoing the words of Lucian Pye). Like all of you, this new Taiwan wants liberty, respect and recognition — from all of you.

Taiwan elects its President

The candidates and the issues

Taiwan's 23 March 1996 presidential elections are not only overshadowed by China's military threats (see following story), but also give the Taiwanese voters a complex choice of candidates and issues. It is the first time that the people on the island will be able to cast a direct vote for their President. Until 1992, the President was selected by the ruling Kuomintang in a closely-controlled vote in the National Assembly — a body mainly consisting of old Chinese mainlanders, who came over with Chiang Kai-shek in the 1940s. It is thus the culmination of Taiwan's transition from fifty years of one-party KMT dictatorship to a full-fledged democracy. Below we give a brief overview of the candidates, the issues, and an assessment of the fairness of the campaign.

Peng Ming-min: "Give Taiwan a Chance"

The DPP's candidate is Professor **Peng Ming-min**, a former political science professor at Taiwan National University, who won the DPP's primary in September 1995. Professor Peng is a long-time political activist, who played a pioneering role in the island's democracy movement: in 1964 he was arrested and imprisoned for publishing a manifesto titled "*A Declaration of Formosan Self-Salvation*", a document in which he and his co-workers called on the Kuomintang authorities to abandon their goal of "recovering" China, and urged the establishment of a democratic system under constitutional rule on the island.

His running mate is Mr. **Hsieh Chang-t'ing**, a prominent lawyer, who became well-known in Taiwan in 1980, when he served on the defense team for the "Kaohsiung Eight." This trial of eight major opposition leaders, who were arrested after the December 1979 Kaohsiung Incident, a human rights day celebration which became a



Professor Peng (R) and Mr. Hsieh (L)

turning point in Taiwan's history. For further background information, see *Taiwan Communiqué* issues no. 68 and 69.

Professor Peng and Mr. Hsieh's campaign has focused on rediscovery of the Taiwanese identity, in contrast to the Kuomintang's emphasis on its Chinese heritage. As an example: under the Kuomintang-dominated education system, history classes teach children in Taiwan only about ancient Chinese emperors, but never anything about Taiwan's own history. The DPP intends to change that.

Professor Peng also rejected Beijing's "One country, two systems" formula, reminding his audiences that the Chinese Communists had made exactly the same promises to Tibet in 1951.

Asked if his party's pro-independence platform is "provocative" to China, Professor Peng points out that if China is motivated by ethnic nationalism or aspirations for territorial expansion, then neither the DPP nor the KMT positions (of indefinitely postponed unification) can provide any guarantee against Chinese aggression. He stated that from any perspective — political, economic, legal, historic, or cultural — it is clear that Taiwan is not part of China.

Lee Teng-hui: becoming more "Taiwanese"

President **Lee Teng-hui** does at the moment hold a lead, but a number of dissenting Kuomintang members have declared their own candidacy, and are expected to cut into the KMT's dwindling support on the island. During the past few years the Kuomintang's percentage in elections has dropped from near 80 percent in the late 1980s to less than 50 percent during the most recent Legislative Yuan elections of December 1995.

Still, Mr. Lee is a popular politician, who has increasingly presented himself as the populist "Taiwanese President." He has campaigned hard, in particular in the Southern part of the island, where he often spoke in Taiwanese instead of the Mandarin dialect brought over by the Nationalists from China. He has also been able to make use of his incumbency by spreading improvements of roads and sewer systems to areas where he campaigned.

Another major "plus" for Mr. Lee in his campaign is the fact that he is being attacked so ferociously by the Communist authorities in Beijing. These attacks are having the opposite effect, since they strengthen the "Taiwan-solidarity" feeling among the

population, and strengthen his support, in particular since he has increasingly presented himself as being “Taiwanese.”

Officially Mr. Lee still adheres to the old and outdated Kuomintang policy of “unification” with China, but has stated that this can in due time only happen if China becomes democratic and has a level of economic development comparable to that of Taiwan.

Lin / Hau: attacking Lee Teng-hui

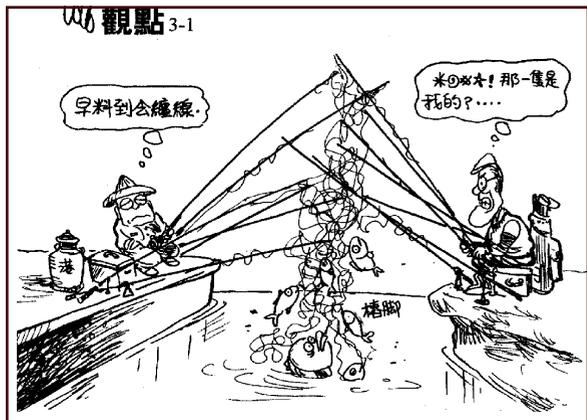
The third candidate is Mr. **Lin Yang-kang**, a former vice-chairman of the Kuomintang, who declared his candidacy in August 1995. Mr. Lin has always been closely associated with the right-wing “Non-Mainstream” faction of the KMT. He is thus a rival of

President Lee, who heads the “Mainstream” faction, which has gradually liberalized the party and the political system on the island. Mr. Lin is generally considered to be opportunistic, always eager to boost his own political ambitions at the expense of principles.

Mr. Lin’s link-up with old hardliner-general and former Prime Minister **Hau Pei-tsun** as vice-presidential candidate seemed to have been a marriage-of-convenience. The pair is mainly receiving support from the extremist pro-“unification” groupings of the

“Non-Mainstream” faction in the Kuomintang and the New Party. The pair has been relentlessly attacking President Lee Teng-hui for “betraying” the principles of the Kuomintang and for moving Taiwan into the direction of independence.

To add to the confusion in the pro-unification camp, Mr. **Chen Li-an**, the son of a former KMT prime minister, also declared his candidacy. According to estimates by observers, he will not get more than 10 percent of the vote.



Candidates Lin Yang-kang and Lee Teng-hui fishing for traditional KMT support.

**Lin: "I expected that our lines would tangle."
President Lee: "Damn it...., where is my big fish?"**

Elections still not fully fair

In spite of the fact that these are the first presidential elections in Taiwan's history, and that open and free-for-all campaigning was allowed, the process was still flawed. The elections can thus still not be considered fair, since there is not a level playing field for the candidates. The principal shortcomings are:

1. The three main television stations are still totally Kuomintang-controlled, and are strongly biased towards the ruling party. President Lee Teng-hui received a large amount of free coverage, both in the news reports, and in general programming. Teams monitoring the broadcasting in Taiwan estimate that Mr. Lee received four to five times as much coverage as any of his competitors.
2. The Kuomintang is making extensive use of the governmental structure for its own political purposes, although the administration in Taiwan is officially supposed to be non-partisan.
3. The Kuomintang is allowing "overseas Chinese" to vote also in the elections. These are generally KMT-loyalists who have long-since become citizens of other countries, but for the purpose of the elections they are invited back to Taiwan, and will be flown in in chartered Boeing 747's at the expense of the ruling party.
4. The Kuomintang is shifting enlisted military personnel to vote in Districts where they may make a difference in favor of Kuomintang candidates. This is particularly relevant in the races for the National Assembly, which are coinciding with the Presidential elections.

The National Assembly — not to be confused with the Legislative Yuan (which is the real legislature) — is gradually becoming more irrelevant, since its main function used to be the election of the President. The democratic opposition of the DPP has argued for abolishing the National Assembly, and will not devote significant resources to that part of the election.

China bullying and intimidation

Military maneuvers and missile tests

In our previous issue (*Taiwan Communiqué* no. 69, January 1996), we reported on the Chinese threats against Taiwan, and outlined why the Taiwanese do not have any desire whatsoever to “unify” with China.

Since then, the Communist Chinese campaign to intimidate and bully Taiwan and the military threats have intensified significantly. As this issue of *Taiwan Communiqué* was going to press, the Chinese had just announced that they would conduct new missile tests just 12 miles off the coast of Taiwan, and had launched the first three missiles. Below, an overview of the events, and a survey of the international response.

The first piece of evidence of the increasing belligerent behavior of the Chinese came in an article in the **New York Times** of 24 January 1996, which reported that the PRC’s People’s Liberation Army had completed plans for a conventional missile strike against Taiwan each day for 30 days, if Taiwan presses on with its quest for international status. The report stated that this information was contained in a message carried earlier in January 1996 from Beijing by former Assistant Secretary of Defense Chas. W. Freeman Jr. The report stated also that the attack would be mounted in the weeks after Taiwan’s presidential elections of 23 March 1996.

In the subsequent days, Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng (the “Butcher of Tienanmen”) made further statements threatening and bullying Taiwan: on January 30th, he said in a speech commemorating that one year ago Chinese President Jiang Zemin launched his stillborn “Eight-Point Plan” (see *Taiwan Communiqué* no. 65, April 1995), that China would not give up the use of force.

On 5 February 1996, the **Washington Post** reported (“*China Plans Maneuvers off Taiwan*”) that US intelligence reports indicated that the Chinese were pulling together a military force of some 150,000, had more than doubled the number of fighter planes along the coastline, and was deploying amphibious landing craft in Xiamen and Pingtan, near the Taiwan-held islands of Kinmen and Matsu. In the subsequent weeks the threat of a military action increased, as the Chinese moves grew bolder (“*China Masses Troops on Coast Near Taiwan*”, **Washington Post** 14 February 1996).

However, in spite of American warnings (see article “*What is the Western response?*” below), and many international expressions of concern, the Chinese started to launch ballistic Scud-type missiles at two areas just off the coast of Taiwan, one 30 miles to the southwest of the island, and the other only 12 miles to the northeast of Taiwan.

What are the real reasons ?

What are the real reasons for China’s belligerence. Analysts have come up with three factors, and feel that a combination of these are prompting the irresponsible behavior of the Chinese Communist leaders:

- 1) to *divert attention from the increasing chaos and power struggle* in China itself. What is easier than to play on the Chinese chauvinistic emotions and threaten and bully a small neighboring country, Taiwan ? That’s what Mr. Hitler did in the 1930’s in Germany when he invaded Czechoslovakia and Poland, right after



Chinese tanks on military exercises

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain visited him in Munich in 1938 and tried to pacify Nazi Germany with his “peace-in-our-time”.

- 2) the Chinese leaders are *scared of the example Taiwan is setting* in terms of democratic elections and free speech. “Democracy” and “freedom” are concepts the Chinese want to prevent from spreading at all cost.
- 3) the Chinese authoritarian leaders are making so much noise about the issue of Taiwan in order to *throw up a smokescreen to divert attention from their widespread violations* of international agreements and agreements with the United States, ranging from non-proliferation (their secret exports of nuclear technology to Pakistan) to copyrights on CD’s pirated from US companies.

A Taiwanese North-American Appeal **for a Clear Western Response to Continuing Threats from China**

In response to the military threat from China, the Taiwanese community in the United States and Canada on 8 March 1996 issued the following appeal:

President William J. Clinton
The White House

Washington March 8th, 1996

Dear President Clinton:

As representatives of the Taiwanese American community, we write you to register our strongest protest against China's latest round of live missile exercises, scheduled to take place between March 8 and 15, and targeted as close as 12 miles from Taiwan's largest trading ports of Keelung and Kaohsiung. The proximity of these exercises to Taiwan will create a virtual blockade of these vital trade ports. We must make it clear to Beijing that this escalation of its military threats against Taiwan and this blockade are totally unacceptable. Moreover, these exercises are scheduled to take place just before Taiwan's first-ever democratic presidential election on March 23, and are clearly designed to intimidate Taiwan's voters and disrupt Taiwan's trade and economy. We urge the United States to condemn this latest Chinese attempt at intimidation and obstruction of Taiwanese democracy.

China's announcement of missile exercises, coming after strong statements from Secretary Perry and Assistant Secretary Lord, indicate that American words are not enough and that the Chinese do not take the United States seriously. It is time to consider specific concrete actions. We urge the Administration to begin by taking the following three steps. First, publicly condemn China's continued threats and military provocations, which violate the provision for peaceful settlement with Taiwan, as mandated by the Taiwan Relations Act. Second, send a message to Beijing by speeding up the delivery of weapons systems already contracted for and purchased by Taiwan, such as the F-16, Patriot, and anti-missile defense system. Third, consider other deficiencies in Taiwan's security and enhance Taiwan's capabilities to defend itself.

Regardless of China's military capabilities or strategies, this latest Chinese attempt poses a serious threat to the Taiwanese people. In the last round of Chinese missile exercises, one live round missed its target by over 200 nautical miles. Furthermore, as the world's 13th largest trading nation and the 7th largest trading partner of the United

States, what may amount to an eight-day blockade of Taiwan's main trading ports must not be taken lightly. Finally, the firing of live ammunition into international waters constitutes a blatant violation of international law and presents great hazards to some of the world's most important shipping and air lanes.

Mr. President, the time has come for the United States to take a strong stand against China's hegemonistic acts. China's transfer of nuclear and conventional weapons and technology to non-democratic states, violation of an international moratorium on nuclear weapons testing, and continued violations of intellectual property rights laws are proof positive that the current United States policies of "quiet diplomacy" or "strategic ambiguity" have failed. As representatives of the Taiwanese American community, we strongly urge you to take the actions outlined above, and begin by immediately issuing a strong, public condemnation of these exercises and reiterating the United States' commitment to peace in the Taiwan Straits.

The Statement was endorsed by more than twenty Taiwanese organizations in the United States and Canada.

Articles in the Western Press

On 25 January 1996, the **New York Times** commented in an editorial ("*China Threatens Taiwan*"): "(The Chinese threats) ... suggest that Beijing has lost sight of one of the basic understandings underlying the improved Chinese-American relations since the Nixon Administration — that Taiwan's future must be settled by peaceable means."

.... Taiwanese point to their centuries of separate cultural development and, more importantly, their hard-won political democracy and thriving capitalistic economy as good reasons for standing somewhat apart. More than anything else, it is the fear that today's freedoms and prosperity would be lost under Beijing harsh authoritarian rule that fuels Taiwan's quest for a separate identity. The United States must vigorously reject military bullying from Beijing in cases like this.

A few days later, on 2 February 1996, columnist **A.M. Rosenthal** described in an excellent piece on the editorial page of the New York Times how US Secretary of State Dean Acheson in a speech in January 1950 did not include South Korea within the defense perimeter to be protected by the United States. Six months later North Korea attacked the South. Drawing a parallel with today, Mr. Rosenthal urged a much firmer

posture of the US, and said that the US should clearly spell out to China the consequences of its actions.

In what was one of the best reactions during this period, the London-based **The Economist** highlighted the Chinese threats against Taiwan on the cover of its February 3 - 9 1996 issue, and clearly stated: **“Don’t even think about it.”** The Economist concluded its excellent editorial with the following words: *“And if China blunders on? The job of America and its allies is to help Taiwan defend itself. That means providing it with anti-missile defenses and other military equipment and, if necessary, moving ships from the American Seventh Fleet into position between China and Taiwan.”*

“Too provocative? It is China that is being provocative. By leaving China with the impression that it can swallow Taiwan at will, America would be nourishing this crisis. Only clarity now and toughness, where needed, can bring it to an end.”



The Economist: timely cover article

On 6 February 1996, the **Washington Post** states in an editorial (**“If China Attacks Taiwan”**): *“If it came to that, the United States would have no choice but to help Taiwan — a flourishing free-market democracy — defend itself*

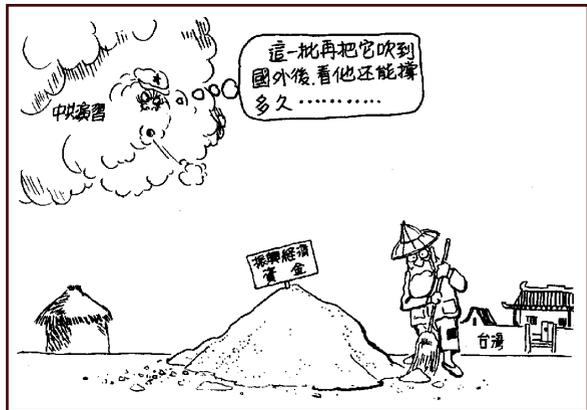
against attack by Communist China. No treaty or law compels this response, but decency and strategic interest demand it. An American government that allowed the issue of Taiwan’s future to be settled by China’s force would be in disgrace as well as in error.”

In another excellent article on the issue, Columnist **Jim Hoagland** wrote in the Washington Post on 11 February 1996 (**“China, before there is a War”**): *“The Clinton Administration now confronts the consequences of clinging to a failed China policy The US concessions that have been justified in the name of engagement have not purchased moderation.”*

Buying more planes from Russia, nuclear exports to Pakistan, and developing cruise missiles

The increasing unpredictability of China and its push for expanding its capability to militarily threaten others came in the beginning of February 1996, when almost simultaneous reports were published in the **New York Times** and **Washington Post** that China was purchasing 72 high-performance Sukhoi-27 fighter planes from Russia, and had exported sensitive nuclear weapons-related equipment to Pakistan.

On 7 February 1996, the **New York Times** reported that the Sukhoi-27 deal was announced in Moscow by the commander of the Russian Air Force, general Pyotr Dneikin (*"China to Buy 72 Advanced Fighter Planes from Russia"*, NYT, 7 February 1996). The \$ 2 billion deal involves a license to produce the SU-27 in China.



Ill wind from China: "I am blowing all those investments away, and we'll see how long you can survive !!"

During the same period there were reports that China was negotiating with a Spanish shipyard for the purchase of an aircraft carrier which could carry S- and VTOL military aircraft (*"Boost in Chinese Buildup fuels Asian worry"*, **Defense News**, January 29 - February 4, 1996).

On 8 February 1996, the **Washington Post** reported that China had sold 5,000 specialized magnet rings which are used in the production of highly enriched uranium. The report stated that, incredibly, the United States was considering to waive economic sanctions against China (*"US May Waive Sanctions for sale Related to Nuclear Arms"*, 8 February 1996). Such sanctions are mandatory under a series of US laws meant to deter and punish nuclear proliferation.

In an editorial on the following day, the **Washington Post** expressed its exasperation at the fact that the Clinton Administration was even thinking about the possibility of a

waiver, stating that the Administration's China policy is "...at the edge of incoherence" ("*China's Nuclear Exports*", **Washington Post**, 9 February 1996).

Finally, at the end of February 1996, it was announced that the United States had asked the Export-Import Bank to defer any new financing for American companies doing business with China for one month, while the Administration was weighing how to respond to the evidence that China had shipped nuclear technology to Pakistan in violation of international non-proliferation treaties and US laws.

By many this was still considered only a half-hearted step. The **New York Times** stated in an editorial on 26 February 1996 that the United States should try stronger forms of pressure, including "...*signing up American allies to apply coordinated penalties when international treaties are seriously breached.*" The Times continued: "...*Washington must be prepared to apply the full rigor of American law in cases like the magnet sales to Pakistan*" ("**Better Tools Needed on China**", NYT, 26 February 1996).

Finally, in the beginning of March 1996, the American publication **Defense News** reported that China was accelerating its development of a ground-launched, land attack version of the C-802 antiship missile. The low-flying cruise-type missile was still needing development of guidance packages based on the U.S. Global Positioning System (GPS) and terrain contour-matching radar systems.

According to the Defense News report the Chinese goal is to develop a cruise missile that could hit the presidential palace in Taipei "*with minimal collateral damage.*" The report also said that China was developing several new ballistic missile systems, including the DF-31, a new mobile missile with a planned range of about 8,000 kilometers, and the DF-41, a new intercontinental missile designed to carry multiple warheads ("*China speeds development of missile with Taiwan range*", **Defense News**, March 4-10, 1996).

What is the Western Response ?

The Clinton Administration firms up

After the Chinese threats against Taiwan became louder and more shrill at the end of January, the Clinton Administration also started to act, and in a series of statements by high State Department and Defense officials made it clear to China that the treats were

not acceptable and that any military action by China against Taiwan would meet an American response:

On 6 February 1996, US **Defense Secretary William Perry** said that he was concerned that with the military maneuvers China was, in not-so-subtle ways, threatening Taiwan and trying to influence the elections. On the next day, in a Hearing before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Assistant Secretary of State **Winston Lord** said that it is apparent that a majority of the people on Taiwan wish to be separate from the PRC. He stated that the US feels strongly that the people of Taiwan can determine their future peacefully, and said that if there were any attempt to resolve the question by other than peaceful means, the United States would meet its obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979.

At the same Hearing, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense **Kurt Campbell** spelled out that under the TRA, the United States is continuously assessing the military balance between Taiwan and China, and makes equipment and services available so Taiwan has an adequate self-defense. In addition, the United States itself has sufficient military capability in the area (more than 100,000 troops deployed) to help ensure the safety and security of Taiwan.

A few days later, on 13 February 1996, US Secretary of Defense **William J. Perry** stated in an Asia policy speech that China was not acting responsibly, and that its military maneuvers and missile tests were endangering the safety and security in the Taiwan Straits.

On 15 February 1996, General **John Shalikashvili**, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated in an interview with reporters that China does not have the capability to carry out a military invasion in Taiwan, because it lacks the necessary sealift capability to mount such an attack across the Taiwan Straits, which is five times as wide as the Channel between France and Britain. He stated: *“We do not believe that they have the capability to conduct amphibious operations of the nature that would be necessary to invade Taiwan.”*

However the American warnings to China to tone down didn't seem to work, as on 5 March 1996 the Chinese announced that they were going to conduct large-scale missile tests near Taiwan between 8 and 15 of March 1996. Mr. Perry subsequently stated that the Chinese were *“making a very bad mistake”*, while the State Department termed the tests provocative and warned China of *“consequences”* if the tests go wrong and hit Taiwan.

Presidential Candidates state their views

From mid-February through the beginning of March 1996, all major Republican presidential candidates expressed their views on the issue of China's threats against Taiwan. A brief overview:

On 11 February 1996, candidate **Patrick Buchanan** said on NBC's "*Meet the Press*" that the United States should stand behind Taiwan, if China perpetrates acts of aggression, for the basic reason that the United States has a moral commitment to the Taiwanese. He would clearly tell the Chinese what the consequences would be if they tried to attack Taiwan. He emphasized, the problem of trying to cross the Taiwan Straits, and compared it with the massive exercise the Allies had to go through to cross the English Channel. He predicted the Chinese would "... *wind up on the bottom of the Taiwan Straits.*"

On 1 March 1996, the view of Republican candidate **Steve Forbes** were analyzed in an article by Elaine Sciolino in the News York Times. Mr. Forbes said that if China uses force against Taiwan, the US should come to its defense. He would "*draw a line in the water.*" Mr. Forbes also expressed support for Taiwan membership in the United Nations.

Finally, on 3 March 1996, Senator **Bob Dole**, in a TV-Interview on ABC's "*This Week with David Brinkley*" also expressed his support for Taiwan's membership in the United Nations. On the issue of China's threats against Taiwan, Mr. Dole said: "*I'd tell (the Chinese) they'd better be careful because, if they make a move, we're committed to help Taiwan, and they should understand that very clearly.*"

The only major candidate who didn't express himself clearly on the issue of Taiwan yet was **Mr. William J. Clinton**.

European Parliament: protect "rare flower" of Taiwan democracy

In mid-February 1996, the European parliament in Strasbourg, France discussed the rising tensions in East Asia, and strongly criticized China for its aggression against Taiwan. Euro Members of Parliament slammed the preparations for maneuvers by more than 150,000 troops as an attempt to intimidate Taiwan ahead of the democratic presidential elections.

The European Union's directly elected assembly warned Beijing not to “*carry out any aggressive acts*” against Taipei. The deputies said the EU must demand assurances from China that it would “refrain from all intimidation aimed at interfering with the elections.” The development of democracy in Taiwan “is now threatened by noisy saber-rattling from across the Straits,” said British liberal **Graham Watson**, who recently headed a parliamentary delegation to the region.

British Labor Party member **Gary Titley** said the European Union had to make it clear to the “aggressive regime” in China that elections for a successor to President Lee Teng-hui “*will not be interfered with under any circumstances.*” Titley said Beijing's belligerence stemmed from “a power struggle” in the government which augured ill for the West. A change in leadership in Beijing was imminent and all the candidates for the top post were trying to court the military by sounding the most aggressive, he warned.

Watson said the European Union member states were individually afraid to help Taiwan, at the risk of damaging trade relations with China. But he pleaded with them to act together and protect the “*rare flower*” of Taiwanese democracy.

A Taiwan Reality Check

Common misconceptions in the newsmedia

The following are a number of common misconceptions and canards, often stated and repeated by newsreporters writing about Taiwan, and by American officials and scholars speaking on the Taiwan issue.

Misconception no. 1: *Taiwan has always been part of China.*

Reality: Not correct: Taiwan has its own history, language and culture. See the overview of Taiwan's 400 years of history on our homepage (**URL: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/taiwan/>**). It was under the rule of the Manchu Dynasty for only eight years, from 1887 to 1895, when it was ceded in perpetuity to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki.

Misconception no. 2: *Taiwan is a renegade province, which split off from China in 1949.*

Reality: In 1945 Taiwan was part of the Japanese Empire. After Japan's defeat, Taiwan was occupied "*on behalf of the allied forces*" by the Chinese Nationalists of Chiang Kai-shek, who was fighting a losing Civil War on the Chinese mainland. **Taiwan and the Taiwanese people did not have anything to do with that Civil War.** In 1949 Chiang lost the war, moved his remaining troops and government to the island, and subjected the people of the island to 40 years of martial law.

During those 40 years, the Kuomintang authorities kept alive the anachronistic fiction that they were the "legitimate government of all of China", and regarded Taiwan a province of the **China they didn't rule.** In response, the Communist authorities claimed sovereignty over a **Taiwan they didn't rule.**

Martial Law ended only in 1987, and for the first time in history the people of the island were able to give open expression to their desire for a free, democratic, and independent Taiwan.

Misconception no. 3: *The future of Taiwan should be decided by the Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Straits themselves.*

Reality: The large majority of the people on the island (85 percent) do not consider themselves Chinese but *Taiwanese*. They have their own language, culture, and history, and are as distinct from the Chinese as the Americans are distinct from the British.

Under the provisions of the **San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1952**, the United Nations decided that "*...the future status of Taiwan will be decided in accord with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.*"

The Charter of the UN contains article 1.2 which states that it is a purpose of the UN "*To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples...*" The San Francisco Peace Treaty thus decided that the people of Taiwan should determine the future status of the island based on the principle of self-determination.

Misconception no. 4: *The present tension with China is caused by Taiwan's attempts to enhance its international status, and in particular by President Lee Teng-hui's June 1995 visit to Cornell.*

Reality: Mr. Lee earlier visited the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand and conferred with the heads of state in those countries. China's reaction was minimal. Only when Mr. Lee visited his alma mater Cornell in June 1995 — he didn't even come to Washington — did the Chinese Communist leaders in Beijing **manufacture a crisis atmosphere**.

Misconception no. 5: *Advocacy of "Taiwan independence" heightens tensions and will provoke a Chinese attack on the island.*

Reality: The government of the PRC has never ruled Taiwan, not even for one day. Under the provisions of the UN San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1952 (see above) the people on the island have the right to determine their own future. This is the principle of self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The "*Taiwan is part of China*"-line is a remnant of an **outdated fiction** kept alive during the past forty years by two repressive regimes, the Chinese Communists and the Chinese Nationalists. **The Taiwanese people themselves had no say in it.** The reality is that Taiwan has been a separate entity all along, and that the Taiwanese people have — inspired by the universal principles of democracy and human rights, and through their own hard work — have now achieved democracy. Under this new-found democracy they now aspire to be recognized as a free and independent nation.

Taiwan independence is as "provocative" as American independence was to the British in 1776. We must remember that 200 years ago Great Britain was a world power — "Britannia ruled the waves." Still, a small band of American colonists decided to write the American Declaration of Independence. Why? "*Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.*" These are precisely the same ideals which inspire the Taiwanese to work for independence for their island.

In Conclusion: *During its 400 year history, Taiwan was never an integral part of China. It is a free, democratic, and de facto independent country, which deserves to be fully recognized by the international community.*

Report from Washington

China's military threats and intimidation against Taiwan evoked a strong reaction in the US Congress. Across the political spectrum, members of the House and Senate expressed their anger and dismay at China's bullying. Below, you find some excerpts from the statements. It is followed by a summary of the efforts in the House to introduce a Resolution on the safety and security of Taiwan.

Congress Condemns Chinese Threats

On 24 January 1996, on the same day as the New York Times article appeared, Senator **Larry Pressler** (R-SD) called attention to the Chinese threats, and stated that they were *"...a blatant attempt to influence the outcome of the upcoming Presidential elections in Taiwan."* Mr. Pressler strongly criticized the Clinton Administration for its confusing "creative ambiguity" policy, and called on the Administration to recognize its current had failed. He urged the US government to *"... send a clear signal to China that the United States will not accept the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland by force."*

On January 25, Rep. **Sherrod Brown** (D-OH) issued a statement in which he called on the US Administration to *"...reject military bullying from Beijing."* He also said: "Peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits is in the political, security and economic interest of the United States. United States interests are served by supporting democracy abroad. It is therefore necessary that the U.S. reaffirms its safety and security commitment to the people of Taiwan, and declare that it is the right of the people of Taiwan to determine the future status of Taiwan without any interference from China."

On the same day, Rep. **Robert Torricelli** (D-NJ) appeared on the floor of the House of Representatives, and gave a 7 minutes-long speech in response to the article and the Editorial in the New York Times of the previous day.

Mr. Torricelli concluded: *"I simply make an effort to communicate with the leaders in Beijing, to let them know that the firing of the missiles was not only wrong, but threatening military action is irresponsible."* *"And so I hope that parties to this potential dispute will again renew their commitment to peace, and ensure that our actions remain responsible, that all parties at the end of the day recognize that the United States will not witness the forceful end of the Government of Taiwan."*

On 26 January 1996, Senator **Craig Thomas** (R-WY), chairman of the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs in the US Senate, also made a strong statement, saying “...there are 21 million people in Taiwan, who have made clear their desire to live in a free and democratic society. It is consequently not for the PRC, under the guise of reuniting the motherland to unilaterally dictate the terms, timing or conditions of that reunification.”

Senator Thomas continued: “The PRC should make no mistake; I strongly believe that any attempt to establish a military or economic blockade of Taiwan, or other such military threat, will be met with the most resolute condemnation and reaction on the part of the United States, and indeed the rest of the community of nations. It is my view that actions such as the missile tests and threat of military force will have the exact opposite of their desired outcome. As we have seen, the people of Taiwan did not let themselves be intimidated at the polls by the launching of (last summer’s) missiles. I believe that such threats can only make them more resolute in their goals.” Mr. Thomas called on the Clinton Administration “...to relay our position to Beijing in the clearest and most unequivocal terms.”

On 2 February 1996, in a letter to President Clinton, initiated by Congressman **Tom Lantos** of California and signed by eighty members of Congress, the Congressmen wrote: “...China’s aggressive posture against Taiwan, and its latest threats of missile attack and possible invasion following the impending presidential elections on Taiwan, are outrageous. These attempts by China to intimidate the people of Taiwan into abandoning their rightful quest for international respect, commensurate with their role in the world, are wrong and must not succeed. Furthermore, China’s poorly veiled threats against the United States are equally unacceptable and reprehensible. We therefore urge you to resist this aggression with all the means at your disposal, and provide Taiwan with the means to defend itself.”

On 6 February 1996, Senator **Paul Simon** (D-IL) called attention to the Washington Post editorial of that date (“*If China Attacks Taiwan*”), called for a firm US position vis-à-vis China — which he referred to as “a dictatorship and a dictator” — and said that the United States should use its air power to help defend Taiwan.

Resolutions on Safety and Security of Taiwan

On 31 January 1996, Congressman **Robert Torricelli** (D-NJ) introduced a Resolution in the U.S. House of Representatives, stating that “any attempt by the People’s Republic

of China to threaten the peace and security of Taiwan is a threat to peace and security in the Pacific and tantamount to a threat to the interests of the United States.”

The measure was cosponsored by Congressmen **Peter Deutsch, Tom Lantos, Sherrod Brown, Gary Ackerman** among others. However, in the beginning of March 1996, it was decided that in view of the new developments, it was necessary to develop a new, stronger resolution, which was initiated by Congressman **Christopher Cox** (R-CA).

The resolution proposed by Mr. Cox expresses “...*the sense of the Congress that the United States is committed to the military stability of the Taiwan Straits and United States military forces should defend Taiwan in the event of invasion, missile attack, or blockade by the People’s Republic of China.*”

As this issue of **Taiwan Communiqué** was going to press, we learned that prominent members of the United States Senate introduced Resolution no. 43, which called on the PRC to stop its bellicose actions, and termed the missile tests a threat to the peace, security, and stability of Taiwan.

Taiwan on the World Wide Web

We are pleased to announce that four Taiwanese organizations in Washington, DC have jointly set up an Internet “homepage”. The organizations have each played a key role in the transition of Taiwan from an authoritarian repressive system to a full-fledged democracy. They are: the Center for Taiwan International Relations (CTIR), the Formosan Association for Public Affairs (FAPA), the DPP Mission in the United States, and Taiwan Communiqué.

The URL address is:

<http://www.taiwandc.org>

The four organizations jointly present information on history, news and current events, and upcoming events such as the March 1996 Presidential elections. We will also present extensive links to other Taiwanese sources, such as student associations, and groups in Taiwan.
