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Mr. Clinton's chance

Welcome a free and independent Taiwan

Barring unforeseen events, in June 1998 US President Clinton will travel to China. This will be a major opportunity for Mr. Clinton to show statesmanship by urging the Chinese to welcome Taiwan as a free, democratic and independent neighbor.

Like Martin Luther King, we Taiwanese have a dream that the principles of freedom, democracy and self-determination are finally being adhered to, and that our nation is accepted by the international community as a full and equal member.

We have a dream, that the Chinese stop perpetuating the hostility and rivalry dating from the Chinese Civil War with the Kuomintang. That peace and stability settles across the Taiwan Straits, and that Taiwan and China can live next to each other as two friendly neighboring nations.

Mr. Clinton needs to extricate the United States from the muddled swamp of three decades of the Kissingeresque creatively ambiguous "One China" policy, and move unambiguously to a new and clear policy which celebrates the achievement of democracy by the people of Taiwan, and welcomes them as a new nation in the international community.



Mr. Clinton in Africa: when will he visit Taiwan?

Until now, Mr. Clinton has attempted to expedite relations with China at the expense of Taiwan's future, and has perpetuated the anachronistic "One China" policy: in October 1997, during the visit of Chinese president Jiang Zemin he stated his "...continuing support for our one China policy, which has allowed democracy to flourish in Taiwan....The Taiwan question can only be settled by the Chinese themselves peacefully."

This statement displays a fundamental lack of understanding of the basis issue: saying that the Taiwan question can only be solved "by the Chinese themselves" is as much a misnomer as saying that the question of the United States should be resolved by the British themselves. The majority of the people in Taiwan consider themselves Taiwanese, just like Americans consider themselves Americans and not British.

In addition: our democracy was the result of the hard work of the Taiwanese people, and didn't have anything to do with the "One China" policy. If anything, democracy in Taiwan came about in spite of the "One China" policy.

A U.S. policy that would attempt to preclude Taiwan's road to independence and its full membership in the international community represent the worst kind of meddling in Taiwan's future. We reject such a policy out of hand. It disregards the basic principles of self-determination and democracy which are enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and which constitute (we presume !!) the basis for U.S. foreign policy.

We urge Mr. Clinton strongly to make it crystal clear that the United States supports that:

1. The people of Taiwan have the ***right to determine their own future*** under the principle of self-determination as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,
2. The Peoples Republic of China should ***accept Taiwan as a friendly neighboring state***, and
3. The international community, and in particular those nations which adhere to democratic principles, will ***accept Taiwan as a full and equal member in the international family of nations***, including the UN.

Such a new policy would enhance peace and stability in East Asia, because it would finally end the decades-old hostility between the Kuomintang authorities on Taiwan and the Communists in the PRC.

While we are not against a dialogue between China and Taiwan, we believe that such a dialogue can only be held 1) if the Beijing leaders show some readiness to accept Taiwan as a friendly neighboring state, and 2) if there is a broad consensus on Taiwan on the future of the island.

Such a consensus can only be achieved if the people on the island can express themselves freely and openly on the issue of their future without any Chinese threats and interference, with missiles or otherwise.

Mayor Chen comes to Washington

From 17-19 March 1998, Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian visited Washington, meeting with members of Congress, US government officials, representatives from various think-tanks and the press.

He emphasized during the visit that the people of Taiwan have the right to determine their own future, and urged the United States to continue its support of the newly democratic island, certainly if China again threatens to attack Taiwan.

The first mayor of Taipei from the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) to visit Washington, Mr. Chen also said in his speeches that the Taiwan issue is not an internal problem — as the PRC usually claims — but an international issue with important ramifications for stability in East Asia.

Mayor Chen, widely regarded as a potential DPP candidate for the 2000 presidential election, pointed out that the people of a democratic country are entitled to decide on their own the future of their country and to choose their way of life. “I think any country which deems Taiwan as part of the People’s Republic of China has not listened to the voice of the people of Taiwan,” he observed.

Noting that the United States is a nation which holds democratic principles high, Mayor Chen said he is convinced that it will respect and accept any decision reached by the people of other countries through democratic procedures. The charismatic mayor further said he doesn’t think it is in the US interest if China uses military force to attack Taiwan again and disrupt stability in East Asia.

Mr. Chen also rejected the views of former US Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Nye, who advocated in a recent article in the Washington Post that the United States should somehow make a three-way deal in which Taiwan would give up its independence in exchange for some vague Chinese promises to leave Taiwan some international breathing space.

Photo: Eric Chen

US government officials and former officials — most recently Mr. Anthony Lake during a visit to Taiwan — emphasized that Mr. Nye's opinions do not reflect US government policy.



Attentive audience in Washington, listening to mayor Chen

Mr. Chen said he was aware of Nye's viewpoints, but was assured that Nye's article only reflects his personal opinion and doesn't represent the official US policy. "During my talks with many American scholars, experts and politicians, I have never heard opinions similar to Nye's," Chen said. He added that the proposals conflicted both with the basic principles of human rights and self-determination, as well as with the "six assurances" the United States gave to Taiwan in 1982 when Washington signed the so-called "August 17" joint communiqué with China.

Those six assurances include promises that the United States will neither set a deadline for arms sales to Taiwan nor consult in advance with Beijing on such deals with Taiwan; it will not act as a go-between for the two sides of the Taiwan Strait; it will not revise the Taiwan Relations Act; it will not change its stance on the issue concerning Taiwan's sovereignty; and it will not pressure Taiwan to negotiate with mainland China.

Asked about whether he thinks Washington has set any limits or conditions on its commitment to Taiwan's security, Chen said that to his knowledge, the US stance on the 1982 "six assurances" has remained unchanged.

Chen also said the DPP hopes that the United States will upgrade cooperation with Taiwan in satellite defense systems. On economic relations across the Taiwan Strait, Chen said if the DPP comes to power, it will consider levying a “national security tax” on Taiwan companies which have invested in mainland China and that the tax rate will depend on Beijing’s attitude toward Taipei. “We’ll also push enterprises controlled by the ruling Kuomintang to privatize and adopt measures to reduce our trade surplus with the United States if our party takes the helm,” he added.

During his visit, Mayor Chen attended a Heritage Foundation-sponsored lunch meeting where he exchanged views with several American China hands and close aides of some US congressional members on Taiwan’s latest political developments and cross-strait relations. He also paid a visit to the Atlantic Council, also a private think tank.

After visiting Washington DC, Mayor Chen went to New York, when he met with mayor Giuliani, and had interviews with both Newsweek and the New York Times editorial board.

In his interview with **Newsweek**, published in the International edition of 22 March 1998, Mr. Chen emphasized that the people of Taiwan want to determine their own future, and do not want to be ruled by the Chinese Communists. He rejected the Hong Kong “One Country, two Systems” approach as a model for Taiwan. He also stated that China was not sincere in pushing for “political talks”, calling it “lip service.”

“Nay” to Mr. Nye

On March 8th 1998, the Washington Post published an article by Joseph Nye, titled “A Taiwan deal.” The article prompted a wave of letters criticizing Mr. Nye’s views as uninformed, short-sighted, and outright dangerous. One was our own letter to the editor, which was published under the title “Taiwan's coming independence” in the **Washington Post** on 19 March 1998. Below, we reprint two other commentaries.

At around the same time as the appearance of Mr. Nye’s article, former national Security adviser Anthony Lake visited Taiwan, and expressed a more balanced and reassuring view. Below we summarize a number of excerpts from Mr. Lake’s statements.

The view from Massachusetts

By Chioumin H. Lee. *Mr. Lee is a first-generation Taiwanese-American, who came to the United States in 1968.*

"Underlying Joseph Nye's arguments in his three-part package— A Taiwan Deal [The **Washington Post**, Sunday, March 8, 1998] is the implicit assumption that China can be trusted; and the US has the ability to make China behave the way it desires.

The Post subsequently reported that just weeks after Chinese President Chiang Zemin pledged during his US visit last October in a written assurance to halt any assistance to Iran's nuclear programs, the National Security Agency discovered that China had reneged on its words; shortly afterward, the US asked China to stop the violation.

The day following The Posts revelation, Iran announced that China has not discontinued their cooperation. This episode exposes the treacherous and perfidious nature of Chinese government. China is not a country the US can do business with.

Nye's theory of dynamic status quo is, at best, the epitome of oxymoronicism. On how to settle the Taiwan question, the US-China talks have always revolved around the principle of peaceful resolution. As clearly demonstrated in the Warsaw ambassadorial Talks, three US-China Communiques, and Taiwan Relation Act, the US has consistently upheld the peaceful resolution principle, while China has most adamantly refused to renounce the use of force.

If the US continues to subscribe without any reservation to China's mantra that there is only one China; acknowledges China's claim that Taiwan is part of China, and simultaneously, insists on China giving up the use of force, the US will pursue a set of two contradictory, mutually exclusive goals.

The current Asian economic turmoil shows that democratic, open and transparent government can best ensure an environment conducive for stability and sustained growth. Taiwan is among the few nations that remain left relatively unscathed by the turmoil. Unfortunately, Nye misconstrues the efforts of Taiwan's elected leaders to build a more democratic society and a more liberalizing market economy as introducing a new element of instability to Asia. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Due to the hegemonism and expansionism inherent in its foreign policy and its monomaniacal obsession with Taiwan, China is most inclined to create new dangers

in the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea. What is more, overwhelmingly beset by a host of serious domestic problems such as overpopulation, energy shortage, banking insolvency and economic mismanagement, bloated bureaucracy, rampant unemployment, and ethnic strife, China is sitting on a live volcano. It is not too far-fetched to think that these problems, if unchecked, can result in widespread social unrest and chaos, and lead to the final collapse of Chinese Communist government.

Who could anticipate the disintegration and demise of the Soviet Union in such a swift and unforeseen fashion? Nye fails to see that China, next to Indonesia, is a real source of instability in Asia today. No, Taiwan is not the culprit.

While the jury is still out regarding China's experiment on Hong Kong under the formula of one country, two systems, Nye proposes to broaden the experiment to Taiwan under the formula one country, three systems. The flaw with Nye's scheme is it prejudices the Hong Kong experiment, leaving little margin for error. If the measures, taken since China's takeover by Tung Chee-hwa, Beijing installed Governor, to restrict Hong Kong's press freedom and to manipulate its upcoming legislative elections, are an indication of China's sincerity to honor its promise, the picture is not bright.

Again, whether Hong Kong or Taiwan can keep their different political, economic and social system unchanged for decades entirely hinges on the wiles and whims of Beijing's ruling elite. And China's record in Tibet is depressingly appalling: after the liberation, China pledged to give Tibet high-degree autonomy indefinitely; then, the Peoples Liberation Army invaded Tibet in 1959, killing 85 thousand Tibetans in the Lhasa Uprising.

Citing the experience of the former Yugoslavia as an example of a lofty idea like human rights often leading to great disaster, Nye gives a poor analogy. Yugoslavia was a hodgepodge of nations with distinct races, languages, cultures, and religions; and these diverse groups have never stopped fighting each other for millennia, except the period when Marshall Tito unified the Balkan region after World War II.

But, Taiwan is not Yugoslavia. China and Taiwan, geographically separated by a formidable strait, are two totally different entities. Besides, Taiwan has not always been a part of China. In most of its 400 year-old history, including the period between 1945 and now, Taiwan has been beyond the jurisdiction of Chinese state or under the de facto control of China's central governments.

Moreover, it has a popularly elected president and a representative government. Its economy and finance are the envy of Asian countries. Its people enjoy a standard of living much higher than their counterpart in China. Above all, its people have a strong sense of national identity, and want no part with a regime based on dictatorship and Marxist Leninist ideology.

Finally, Nye's espousal of a three-part package is not only amoral, but immoral, trading away cold-heartedly the rights of the 21.5 million inhabitants in Taiwan with the words of the butchers of the Tiananmen Massacre. The proposed deal with China contravenes the principles of human rights and self-determination, codified in the Charter of the United Nations, and the moral precepts which constitute the core of American foreign policy.

In this age and time, Taiwan can not be considered a piece of property at the disposal of the superpowers against the wishes and welfare of Taiwan's people. Given the special characteristics of Taiwan's history and society as well as its political and economic system, they deserve better. They should not be deprived of their inalienable right to determine their own future. The fact we live in a Machiavellian world does not mean the leaders of Western civilization should stop promoting and striving for a better tomorrow, built on human rights, compassion, justice and peace."

The view from Pennsylvania

By Jay T. Loo. *Mr. Loo is a Taiwanese-American, who came to the United States in the 1950's. This letter was published in the Paris-based International Herald Tribune on 19 March 1998.*

"The ultimate aim of Mr. Nye's three-part package appears to be Taiwan's surrender to Chinese authoritarian rule. There are several problems with this proposal: after decades of struggle against the Kuomintang, the Taiwanese have finally won civil liberties. They will not readily give up their hard-won freedoms.

Most Taiwanese believe that China's territorial claim to Taiwan doesn't have any valid historical or legal basis. They believe that they alone have the right to determine their own future, without outside military or political pressure.

Suppose Taiwan forswears independence, as Mr. Nye suggests, and is attacked by China, say in the year 2007. Can Taipei then count on U.S. help? Will the United States

now commit itself unequivocally to the defense of Taiwan? Without such guarantee, it is difficult to see any merit in Mr. Nye's proposal from the Taiwan perspective.

If Taiwan falls into Chinese hands, the searlanes on both sides of the island will be controlled by China. The lifelines of Japan and Korea will be threatened. The credibility of the U.S.-Japan Security treaty will be severely damaged. The forward deployment strategy in east Asia could collapse, forcing the United States to retreat to Guam and Hawaii. peace and stability in Asia could be threatened.

The real danger to peace lies in the willingness of American business interests and their allies in government and academia to sacrifice the long-term national security of the United States and the freedom of Taiwan's 21.5 million people for short-term commercial profit."



Mr. Jay T. Loo

Anthony Lake: “Never at the expense of Taiwan”

Former United States National Security advisor Anthony Lake arrived in Taiwan in the beginning of March 1998 for a 5-day visit, during which he met with Taiwan political leaders.

On 5 March he gave a speech in Taipei, in which he emphasized that — while the United States would welcome talks between Taiwan and China — it was not trying to push Taiwan to the bargaining table. He also told the group of 300 Taiwan politicians and scholars that improvement in relations between the United States and Beijing “...will never be at the expense of Taiwan. Never. Period”.

Mr. Lake added Washington would not mediate or even exert pressure to start talks, as this risked raising suspicions of “western meddling” and did not ensure the best outcome. “An agreement reached by the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan themselves, freely and on the basis of their own calculations of their own interests, is far more likely to endure than one that results from outside pressure,” he said.

Lake said there was no subtle campaign by Washington to use former administration officials to pressure Taiwan into talks with Beijing. There have been several visits to the region recently by former high-ranking Washington officials. “A lot of speculation about track-two diplomacy is unwarranted,” he said.

Lake said Washington’s bottom line was that any deal be achieved peacefully, though it always felt that democracy offered the best solution anywhere on earth.

Lake praised Taiwan’s vibrant democracy for undermining those who felt so-called “Asian values” were inconsistent with democracy and said it offered lessons for Asian neighbors where, he argued, a lack of democracy had led to financial chaos. “Democracy, with its emphasis on transparency and rule of law, is the enemy of crony capitalism,” he said.

Lake, who served as President Bill Clinton’s national security advisor between 1993 and January 1997, was instrumental in mediating when in 1995 and 1996 Beijing launched six rounds of war games and missiles firings against Taiwan in the run-up to the nation’s first presidential election.

In response, Washington sent the biggest naval force the region had seen since the Vietnam war. “Our response, both public and private, was clear: Use of force against Taiwan, we said, would have grave consequences,” Lake said. “The dispatch of the two aircraft carrier groups to the area underlined our point.”

China’s military threat

Dangerous misperceptions

In a recent report for the US Defense Department’s Office of Net Assessment, titled “*Dangerous Chinese Misperceptions: the implications for DOD*”, Dr. Michael Pillsbury gives an analysis of Chinese military thinking, based on some 100 Chinese books and articles about military warfare, and 60 interviews with Chinese military officers, conducted during four visits to Beijing in 1995-96.

The principal finding of the report is that China’s military leaders hold a number of

dangerous misperceptions that may well cause serious political friction or even military conflict with the United States. The report groups the Chinese misperceptions in five areas:

1. Overestimating U.S. hostility to the PRC. Chinese authors seem obsessed with the notion that the US is actively trying to “subvert their government and dismember their nation.” Chinese military books even discuss the necessity of taking “preventive military action against a more powerful opponent.”



Chinese military exercises: attempting to intimidate the Taiwanese during elections in 1996

2. Overestimating U.S. military weaknesses; in particular after the Gulf War, a number of Chinese military analysts portrayed the U.S. as only barely defeating Saddam Hussein.
3. Overestimating the future rate of decline of the United States. According to the report, this misperception “...could generate an expectation of the U.S. compliance or surrender to firm Chinese demands, especially in a crisis over an issue of supreme importance to China like Taiwan’s political status.”
4. Underestimating the costs and risks of future wars involving China. The report states that in the view of prominent military leaders in China, warfare and the use of force are “...normal and legitimate ...to resolve international disputes.”
5. Underestimating the reactions of third countries to China. The report states that Chinese leaders do not understand the fears of its neighbors regarding its rise as a military power.

In each of the five areas, the author gives a number of illustrations and sources for his observations. He also describes five scenarios of conflicts which could erupt as a result of these misperceptions. One of these is a

“...pre-emptive strike by China against U.S. naval forces in the area of Taiwan in the

mistaken belief that the consequences of attacking U.S. forces in a limited fashion would not bring disastrous retaliation against China. Chinese publications have discussed pre-emptive surprise attacks on command centers as a key element of future warfare. U.S. concepts of rational deterrence tend to rule out this type of scenario as fundamentally “irrational” and therefore not worth preparing for.”

This book by Dr. Pillsbury is a “must-read” for those studying the East Asia in general, and developments surrounding Taiwan and China in particular.

Aircraft carrier casino ?

For several years, the hull of the Varyag, an incomplete aircraft carrier, has been lying in a dock in the Ukraine. Construction was stopped when the former Soviet Union fell apart in the late 1980s.

Also for several years, the Chinese navy has been attempting to obtain aircraft carrier technology, anxious to expand itself into a real blue-water navy with capabilities to surround and blockade Taiwan.

Eyebrows thus went up around the world when the Chong Lot Tourist and Amusement Agency in Macau recently won a tender for the aircraft carrier, and announced that it was planning to turn it into a casino.

It now turns out this is a farce: in an article in its April 9th 1998 issue, titled “Scrap value”, the **Far Eastern Economic Review** discloses that Chong Lot carries a non-existent address in Macau, and that according to Portuguese officials in Macau the company did not seek the requisite approvals to undertake any tourist business or open a hotel in the enclave.

The Review article also disclosed that three of the five directors of Chinluck Holding, the parent company of Chong Lot, are Chinese nationals from Shandong, which happens to be the home of the Chinese navy’s North sea fleet.

Heritage Foundation: Need for better military ties with Taiwan

At the end of March 1998, the Washington-DC based **Heritage Foundation** published an important Background paper by Richard D. Fisher jr. urging the U.S. Administration to improve its military ties with Taiwan.

The paper argues that the Clinton Administration's increasing military ties with China under the National Defense University's Capstone program, added to China's broad military modernization, assisted by access to foreign technology, and Washington's reluctance to maintain high-level military contacts with Taiwan is undermining the balance across the Taiwan Straits.

Thus, it causes Beijing to perceive that it can isolate Taiwan further from Washington and eventually use military force to coerce or subdue Taiwan. The paper describes how China has been building up its armed forces with the specific purpose of threatening and intimidating Taiwan, and how China is refusing to renounce the use of force in settling its dispute with Taiwan.

The paper also argues that the lack of high-level communications with Taiwan will handicap both the US and Taiwan in a possible future confrontation with China across the Taiwan Straits, since it may result in "friendly fire" incidents between the US and Taiwan in such a crisis.



China's purchases of Russian fighter aircraft and Kilo-class submarines: new threat to Taiwan

After an analysis of China's increasing military capabilities, the paper urges the United States to take the following steps in order to redress the shifting balance across the Taiwan Straits:

1. Reaffirm the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which remains the only law governing relations with Taiwan and China. It has as its most important elements: a) US relations with China are premised on the expectation that China will settle its differences with Taiwan peacefully; b) the US will continue to sell defensive arms to Taiwan; and c) the US will maintain the military capability to defend Taiwan.
2. Upgrade US military communications with Taiwan, both in terms of level of personnel involved, as well as in terms of security of voice and data links.
3. Urge Taiwan to improve its military deficiencies, in particular in the area of combined air, land, and sea operations.
4. Consider new weapon sales to Taiwan, in particular advanced targeting and missile defense systems, high-altitude unmanned reconnaissance aircraft, vertical take-off fighters and support aircraft, and modern conventional submarines. The paper argues that the US allows US shipyards to build and sell a European-designed conventional submarine to Taiwan. Taiwan presently has two aging US submarines, and two modern Dutch-built Zwaardvis-class submarines.
5. Last but not least, the paper argues that the US uses the expanding military dialogue with the Chinese PLA to impress upon it the importance of reducing military tension in the Taiwan Straits.

The paper is available from the Heritage Foundation, 214 Massachusetts Ave., N.E., Washington DC, 20002-4999, or can be read at its internet site: <http://www.heritage.org>

The DPP gears up for upcoming elections

Party primaries

On 29 March 1998, the DPP held its party primary to nominate candidates for the year-end election for the Legislative Yuan and mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung.

77 candidates were nominated for the Legislative Yuan seats. In Taipei county, former county magistrate You Ching was nominated, while in Taipei City, well-known DPP incumbents such as Shen Fu-hsiung, Yeh Chu-lan were on the list. But there were also surprises: former DPP chairman Shih Ming-teh did not receive enough votes for his nomination, because of widespread dissatisfaction within the DPP about his performance.

For the first time, DPP members cast their votes to elect candidates. However, the primary is only the first phase of the nomination process. The second phase is the rating each candidate receives in a public opinion poll to be conducted by the DPP in April.

In Kaohsiung, former Legislator Hsieh Chang-t'ing was nominated as the DPP candidate for the mayor position, which is presently the only big-city position still held by the Kuomintang. Mr. Hsieh has a good chance of winning, since within the Kuomintang disunity broke out about the party's candidacy.

Chen Shui-bian decides on Taipei Mayor

At the end of March 1998, Taipei mayor Chen Shui-bian announced his candidacy as incumbent for the Taipei mayor position. These elections are scheduled for the end of 1998, concurrent with elections for the Legislative Yuan. The Kuomintang is likely to run a strong challenger for the job. The two candidates mentioned most often are former justice minister Mr. Ma Ying-jeou, and present Taiwan "Provincial governor" James Soong, who is losing his job, because the Kuomintang and DPP agreed to phase out the provincial level of government.

However, Mr. Ma has stated several times that he does not want to be the KMT's candidate for the position, while Mr. Soong is unacceptable to President Lee Teng-hui because of his extremist pro-unification views.

Lin Yi-hsiung to run for Party Chairman

On 9 March 1998, Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian gave his endorsement to Mr. Lin Yi-hsiung for the position chairman of the Democratic Progressive Party. Elections for that position are coming up in May of this year, when the present chairman, Hsu Hsin-liang is ending his term.

Mr. Chen said that no-one can match Mr. Lin's qualifications, experience and sacrifice to the democratic movement on the island. He also praised Mr. Lin's high standards. He said he hoped the election for the chairmanship will provide the DPP with a good headstart for the upcoming elections for the Legislative Yuan at the end of 1998.

Mr. Chen also emphasized that Mr. Lin would be the best person to lead the DPP into the 21st century, and that under his leadership the DPP would have the best chance to become Taiwan's ruling party in the year 2000, when presidential elections will be held.



Mr. Lin Yi-hsiung

Mr. Lin is one of Taiwan's most prominent opposition figures. He became well-known in the late 1970s, when as a young lawyer he became member of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly, and was one of the first people to speak out against the Kuomintang's corruption and repression under its Martial Law, which wasn't lifted until 1987.

His life took a tragic turn in the aftermath of the Kaohsiung Incident of 1979, when he was arrested, and on 28 February 1980 — while he was in prison — his mother and twin-daughters were murdered in their home in downtown Taipei, while the house was under surveillance by the secret police. A third daughter was injured severely from knife stabbings, but survived. The Kuomintang authorities never solved the murder although there were strong indications of involvement by the secret police.

After "Kaohsiung", Mr. Lin was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment, but was released after four-and-a-half years due to strong international pressure. After his release he has

dedicated himself to improvement of Taiwan's social structure and enhancement of the Taiwanese cultural identity, instead of the Chinese identity, which has been emphasized by the mainlander-dominated Kuomintang authorities.

Press distortions

Misconceptions on the newswires

A number of major publications such as the Far Eastern Economic Review, The Economist, The Washington Post, and the New York Times have excellent reporters, who do a good job in writing about the sensitive issues surrounding Taiwan.

However, other publications sometimes sound like a worn-out record, repeating the same outdated refrains over and over again. Some of the newswire reports from Associated Press and Reuters also fall into this category.

Below, we give a number of examples, and hope it helps the newswire editors to update and modify the language used by their writers, so it reflects present-day realities and gives a more balanced view, instead of perpetuating anachronistic concepts dating from yester-year.

Case no. 1: March 19th 1998. Associated Press from Beijing: *“China has invited arch rival Taiwan’s top negotiator on reunification to visit but warned the island Thursday not to seek formal independence through a popular vote.”*

There are several problems with this one sentence:

- a. Taiwan is not China's rival, and hasn't been that for almost a decade. Since abandoning the “lifelong legislators” in 1992, and stating that the country covered only Taiwan and surrounding islands, the Kuomintang authorities in Taipei have not claimed sovereignty over China.
- b. Taiwan's negotiator is head of the Mainland Affairs Council, and is thus not the island's negotiator “on reunification”, which is a concept which is rejected by the majority of the people on the island.

Case no. 2: 13 January 1998, Reuters from Manila: *“In a move likely to infuriate China, the Philippines said on Tuesday that President Fidel Ramos had met Taiwan Premier Vincent Siew on possible help from Taipei to the beleaguered Southeast Asian economies.”*

This type of reporting is sensational and inflammatory: at that point China had not given any reaction yet. Such reports only lead to a self-fulfilling prophesy that China feels it has to react when it sees such reports in the media.

Case no. 3: news wires services also often use the phrase: *“China considers Taiwan as a “renegade province” and has threatened to use force if it declares independence.”*

If newswires use this sentence, they should be balanced and also mention that up to the end of World War II, Taiwan was Japanese territory, which was subsequently occupied by the losing side in China’s Civil War. Taiwan had no part in that Civil War.

Furthermore, if newswires mention what China considers Taiwan, they should also mention that an increasing majority of the people on the island view Taiwan as a free, democratic and independent nation, which deserves its full place among the members of the international community.

Report from Washington

Taiwan into the World Health Organization

by Coen Blaauw, *Formosan Association for Public Affairs*

Taiwan is a nation state whose population of 21.5 million people is greater than that of three-quarters of the member states in the World Health Organization (WHO). Still, due to China’s political pressure, Taiwan has been excluded from the WHO since 1972.

According to Chapter III of the WHO charter “Membership in the Organization shall be open to all States.” In the charter’s first chapter, the WHO set forth the objective of

attaining the highest possible level of health for all peoples. The “Health For All” renewal process, as initiated in 1995, emphasized that “Health For All” remains the central WHO vision in the 21st century.

The high frequency and rapidity of international travel and trade linked to growing interdependence for economic growth and resources increases the risk of the transmission of various infectious diseases to Taiwan such as AIDS and the Hong Kong bird flu. Taiwan’s direct and unobstructed participation in international health cooperation forums and programs is a therefore a necessity.

Good health is a basic right for every citizen of the world and access to the highest standards of health information and services is the first step in protecting that right. The denial of WHO membership to Taiwan is an unjustifiable violation of its people’s fundamental rights.

At the annual summit of the WHO - the “World Health Assembly”- in May 1997, Nicaragua put the issue of Taiwan’s WHO membership on the table. It was put on the agenda and after a brief debate brought up for a vote. While it was blocked at that time, the historic vote opened up a window of opportunity for Taiwan’s participation in international organizations.

Until now, the Clinton Administration has been reluctant to support Taiwan’s participation in international organizations, in spite of the State Department’s 1994 Taiwan Policy Review in which the Administration indicated that it would lend its support to Taiwan’s participation in international organizations.

During February and March 1998, the Congressional resolution in support of Taiwan’s WHO- membership, which was introduced in Mid-February by Representatives Sherrod Brown and Steve Chabot, moved forward (see *Taiwan Communiqué*, no. 79, pp. 19-20).

When introducing the bill, Congressman Brown stated:

“Sick children feel the same pain and shed the same tears, whether they live in Taipei, Los Angeles, Milan, or Nairobi. The stated and noble aim of the WHO is to help achieve the highest possible level of health for all peoples, but the 21 million people of Taiwan are currently barred from accessing the latest medical knowledge and techniques which the WHO could provide.

Moreover, Taiwan cannot contribute its own substantial health resources and expertise to furthering the goals of the WHO, as it did prior to 1972.” And “Taiwan and its children have much to gain from the WHO, as does the WHO from Taiwan. This issue is principally a matter of the basic human right to good health, and I encourage all my colleagues to support this resolution.”

It is expected that the Bill will be brought to the floor of the House of Representatives for a vote within the next few weeks, making it possible for the US delegation to vote “Yes” in Geneva in May.

Senate expresses concern about missile defense in East Asia

In a letter dated 3 April 1998, a number of prominent members of the U.S. Senate expressed their concern to President Clinton about hesitation on the part of the U.S. Administration to deploy theater missile defense systems in East Asia. Below follows the full text of the letter:

Dear Mr. President:

*We are concerned by recent press reports indicating the Administration is reviewing whether to deploy theater missile defenses in the Asia-Pacific region in light of concerns China has raised about such deployments. Specifically, on March 18 the **Dow Jones News Service** reported that due to a "surge in opposition" within the Administration, officials at the State and Defense Departments were reviewing a proposal to restrict the deployment of U.S. theater missile defenses in the region for fear such a move "could anger China." The article further noted that a final decision on the proposal would be made before your upcoming visit to China in June.*

U.S. forces and friends in the region face a growing missile threat from China and North Korea. China has embarked on a program to modernize its theater and strategic missile programs and Beijing has shown a willingness to use ballistic missiles to intimidate its neighbors. For example, during Taiwan's national legislative elections in 1995, China fired six M-9 ballistic missiles to an area about 100 miles north of the island. Less than a year later, on the eve of Taiwan's first democratic presidential election, China again launched M-9 missiles to areas within 30 miles north and south of the island, establishing a virtual blockade of Taiwan's two primary ports.

North Korea's missile program is also becoming more advanced. According to a recent Defense Department report, the North has deployed several hundred Scud missiles that are capable of reaching targets in South Korea. Press reports also indicate North Korea may have started to deploy the No Dong missile, which will have sufficient range to target nearly all of Japan, and is continuing to develop a longer-range ballistic missile that will be capable of reaching Alaska and Hawaii.

In the light of this growing threat, we urge you not to adopt any policies or to negotiate any agreements that would restrict the deployment of any U.S. theater missile defenses in the region. Such defenses are vitally needed to protect America's troops and interests in the region and should not be sacrificed in order to maintain good relations with China.

The South African connection

The nuclear plant caper

In addition to dropping the “ROC” for the PRC, in December 1997, South Africa was in the news in another matter relating to China: the sale of a plant producing zirconium tubing for nuclear reactors without the knowledge of top government or foreign affairs officials.

The caper came to light when South African immigration officials raided the Pelindaba nuclear complex near Pretoria, and found some 40 Chinese technicians without the proper permits dismantling the plant.

According to the US publication **Nuclear Fuel**, the affair raises serious questions of controls of nuclear technology both in South Africa and in China (Nuclear Fuel, 12 January 1998). The matter also raises questions, because it virtually coincides with the delivery by China of a similar zirconium tube factory to Iran. According to one State Department official questioned by Nuclear Fuel, the two projects are “not related”, but the publication quotes officials from other US agencies as being unconvinced.

Notes

No more “military instructors” on Taiwan campuses

At the end of March 1998, the Grand Justices in Taipei, Taiwan’s equivalent of the Supreme Court decided that a 40-year-old law requiring universities on the island to employ armed forces officers to lecture on military studies was unconstitutional. The Court gave the universities one year to phase out the program.

The military officers’ primary role was to monitor and quash political activities that deviated from the Kuomintang’s doctrines of “Three Peoples’ principles”, “Chinese identity” and “recovery of the mainland.”

For many years, students have demanded that the military officers be removed from campuses, saying they are an anachronism in the new democratic era. At this point, some 4,000 military lecturers still remain at universities on the island.

Corruption in Taiwan’s military

In the beginning of April 1998, Taiwan’s Defense Minister Chiang Chung-ling narrowly survived a vote of no-confidence in the legislature over a scandal involving Taiwan’s underworld and bid rigging for military construction projects. Kuomintang legislators were barely able to block a motion calling for Chiang’s resignation by a vote of 65-63. The vote was not binding because the legislature is only constitutionally entitled to pass a vote of no confidence against the prime minister.

But it would have been a major blow to Chiang’s credibility, and the attempt indicates growing disgust in the legislature over dirty dealings in the military. The opposition has already blocked the budget of the president’s office to force President Lee Teng-hui and Premier Vincent Siew to drop Chiang, a former commander-in-chief of the army who has been defense minister since 1994. A public opinion poll by Taiwan’s **China Times** last month gave Chiang a 34% approval rating, the lowest in the Cabinet.

Two officers, one a major general, were arrested last month on suspicion of taking kickbacks and leaking information concerning bids for a 420 million New Taiwan dollar (US\$1=NT\$31.992) contract to build steel-reinforced ammunition storage bunkers.

After losing the bid on 13 January 1998, two managers from the Sheng Pai Co. allegedly abducted the officers for several days and manhandled them for renegeing on a promise to let the company win. On Thursday police arrested a 30-year-old man described as a gang member on suspicion of intimidation and beating the two officers.

The incident triggered reports that Kuo Teng Co. won the bid by bribing officers more powerful than the two arrested.

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Taiwan on the Web

Many students and scholars already know the **Taiwan, Ilha Formosa** website at <http://www.taiwandc.org>, the website for Taiwan's history, present and future, which provides information on the island's history, dating back to the 1600s, news and current events, culture and folklore.

We have recently spruced up both the *News and Current Events* and the *History* pages, making them more easily accessible and readable. We hope our readers enjoy discovering new information about the island, its people and history.

We have recently also added a search engine to the site, making it easier for the readers to find the information they need. This search engine covers both the general **Taiwan, Ilha Formosa** section as well as the *Taiwan Communiqué* section, where we are gradually adding back issues.

These back issues are provided in downloadable Acrobat pdf-format, making them easy to read and store for future reference. They are an ideal source of information about Taiwan's recent history and its transition from a repressive and dictatorial regime under the Kuomintang to the present open and democratic system.



Taiwan's history on the Web

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