



# TAIWAN COMMUNIQUÉ

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## Taiwan's Turning Point

### *Democracy at work*

The Presidential elections of 18 March 2000 are providing the people in Taiwan with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change the course of history of their country. The island has been in international limbo since Japan gave up sovereignty over its colony after the end of World War II.

Photo: Taiwan Communiqué

While virtually all other nations in Asia and Africa gained independence and international recognition, Taiwan was occupied by the losing side of the Chinese Civil War. Its people were subjected to some 38 years of martial law by the Chinese Nationalists who came over with Chiang Kai-shek, and were ruled by a government which kept up the pretense that it was going to "recover" China.

While in the 1980s and 1990s, the Taiwanese were able to transform the nation into a full-fledged democratic market economy, the political isolation and the second-class diplomatic status remained. While the Kuomintang under Lee Teng-



hui did play a role in the democratic transition, and attempted to gain international breathing space, it remained stuck in the “one China” and “eventual reunification” fiction of its repressive predecessor.

A victory of Chen Shui-bian and his Democratic Progressive Party – the party of the “tangwai” who set the island’s democratization process in motion in the early 1980s – will mean an end to the entrenched position the Kuomintang has held for the past 54+ years. It will be the first-ever transition of power to an opposition party in the history of the island, and will mean a further step towards full democracy, with full accountability and checks and balances in the political system on the island. The “black-gold” connection with the criminal underworld and “money politics” will be relegated to the past.

A victory for Mr. Chen will also mean a new slate in the discussion on Taiwan’s future. The new DPP government will not have the historical burden of having been involved in the Chinese Civil War. It will be able to speak on behalf of the Taiwanese people in a way the Kuomintang never could.

China may threaten Taiwan for some time to come – especially if Mr. Chen wins – but his election would provide the world the best chance for a resolution of the decades-old conflict. The US Administration, and other Western nations, should thus prepare themselves for a change of government in Taipei. A transition of power from a ruling party to an opposition party is often difficult enough under “normal” circumstances, let alone under the dark cloud of the China threats.

The society and political system on the island will never be quite the same. Taiwan will finally be able to be itself. It will be able to discover its own identity, history, and even geography. Finally, Taiwan can be Taiwan.

## *China’s unacceptable intimidation*

As the date of Taiwan’s second democratic presidential election approaches, the level of belligerence of China’s threats against Taiwan is increasing. In January 2000, a phalanx of Chinese government officials issued statements that Taiwan’s continued movement towards freedom and independence amounted to “playing with fire” and would have “unimaginable consequences.”

During February, the shrillness of the statements increased further, rising to a crescendo in the February 21<sup>st</sup> “White Paper”, in which China threatened that “foot-

dragging” and refusal to move towards “unification” would lead China to go to war (see article “White Paper, Dark Threats” on page 5).

Of course, these war threats come in the middle of an election campaign in which all candidates have bent over backwards to make statements which are friendly and even accommodating to China. It should thus be clear to any observer that it is China that is provocative.

The people of Taiwan should not let themselves be intimidated. This election is *the* opportunity for Taiwan to show China – and the rest of the world – that Taiwan is ready for full democracy and for full membership in the international community.

In a sense, the people of Taiwan are being intimidated from three sides: the primary and most obvious threat is of course from the side of China. Full democracy means that the people of Taiwan can elect their president without *any* outside interference or threat from China.

## *On whom do they want to be dependent?*

However, the intimidation comes also from two other directions: from inside Taiwan itself and from some quarters in the United States.

In Taiwan itself, the ruling Kuomintang and even more so the people associated with the New Party and independent candidate James Soong, have long employed the old and worn-out scare-tactic that “*independence means that China will attack.*” Such statements were designed to protect the powerbase of the mainlanders in the government, and to prevent the DPP from gaining broader support, but of course played into the cards of the Chinese Communists on the mainland.

Such mindless attacks on this issue against the DPP and its candidate Chen Shui-bian begs the question: “*if they don’t want to be independent, on whom do they want to be **dependent?***”

Another type of intimidation comes from those in the United States who argue that Taiwan should be prevented to move further in the direction of independence, or else the United States would withdraw its protection of the island as laid down in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. See the statements by Mr. Bradley, as quoted on page 9.

## *Who can be trusted?*

Full democracy means that the people of Taiwan should elect their president on the basis of the policies and programs proposed by the candidates, and *not* on the basis of the amount of money, either given during the years when the candidate was Governor of Taiwan, or given by the richest party on earth to elect its candidate.

Full democracy means that the people of Taiwan should measure up the candidates, and see if they can be trusted to protect the interests of Taiwan, and not sell-out the island to China.

While Mr. James Soong has said that the “ROC” has its own sovereignty, he is clearly the favorite of the repressive rulers in Beijing. This would not bode well for Taiwan interests.

Mr. Lien Chan carries with him the burden of the Kuomintang’s decades-old conflict with China. Officially, he adheres to the KMT’s present policies, but

has not fully embraced President Lee’s “state-to-state” position. Can he be trusted to insist on respect for Taiwan interests?

According to reports in Taiwan, Mr. Lien has mainly surrounded himself with old-style mainlanders. This is in contrast to President Lee Teng-hui, who had gradually increased the presence of native Taiwanese in the government. Mr. Lien must thus be expected to whittle away at Mr. Lee’s accomplishments.

The third candidate, the DPP’s Chen Shui-bian, is the only one who has a solid foundation in Taiwan itself. He is a lawyer, who at an early stage associated himself with the budding “*tangwai*” opposition in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At great personal risk – and cost — he stood at the cradle of Taiwan’s incredible transition from a repressive dictatorship under the Kuomintang to a free and open democracy at present. Mr. Chen has his roots in Taiwan, he can be trusted to stand up for Taiwan.



### **Six candidates for the presidency?**

# White paper, dark threats

On Monday, February 21<sup>st</sup> 2000 the Chinese Cabinet issued a new “white paper” in which it made renewed threats of war. To underscore the threats, Chinese President Jiang Zemin reportedly was visiting southern China, “...touring military bases that would contribute to any invasion force of the island.”

Ironically, the war threats came just a couple of days after the departure of a top-level American delegation from Beijing, which ended with the Americans saying that the bilateral relations between the US and China were getting “back on track.” The “white paper” is thus an in-your-face insult to the United States, which has been emphasizing a peaceful resolution to the differences between China and Taiwan.

The policy paper added yet another item to the long list of Taiwanese “provocations” which would lead to a war by China. In addition to the known items – such as if the people of Taiwan want to maintain their freedom and independence, and “foreign meddling” — the Chinese have now specified “foot-dragging” and refusal to move towards “unification” as a reason for military action.

To anyone not steeped in the muddled thinking of Beijing, this looks like a gun against the head of a democratic Taiwan: “*negotiate to surrender yourself, or else...*”. In fact, by saying “everything is negotiable under the one-China principle”, Beijing is essentially telling Taiwan there is nothing left to negotiate.

The Chinese threats and intimidation have four underlying reasons:

- 1) The Beijing authorities intend to intimidate the people of Taiwan, and prevent Mr. Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party from being elected;
- 2) The Beijing authorities are afraid that the democratic example of Taiwan will give its own population the idea that it could start clamoring for democracy too. This would undermine the position of power of the Communist Party;
- 3) The move is also aimed at the Clinton Administration, with the purpose of trying to scare the lame-duck presidency into increasing its pressure on Taiwan and to wring further concessions from the island, so as to whittle away Taiwan’s negotiating position before Mr. Clinton leaves office at the end of the year;

- 4) The authorities in Beijing play hardball in order to shore up their position in the perpetual internal power struggles in China. An excellent exposé on this point was given by Professor Arthur Waldron in his article “*Menacing Language*” in the **Washington Post** of Sunday, February 27, 2000.

## *The American reaction*

To its credit, the first reactions of the Clinton Administration were quite forceful. A White House spokesman said on 22 February 2000 that Washington “...*rejects any use of force or any threat of the use of force*” to resolve the differences between China and Taiwan.

The strongest reaction came on Tuesday, 22 February 2000, from the Pentagon, where undersecretary of defense Walter B. Slocombe –who had just returned from Beijing – warned China that it would face “*incalculable consequences*” if it followed through on the threats to use force against Taiwan.

In addition, the US admiral commanding the American Pacific forces, Admiral Dennis Blair, paid a visit to Beijing at the end of February 2000, and “made very clear” that China’s recent announcement about Taiwan was “not helpful,” both in its timing and its new threat of force. Admiral Blair also warned the Chinese that “any attempt to solve the issue of Taiwan by other than peaceful means would be viewed with grave concern.” He appealed for “patience and moderation,” US officials said.

Furthermore, on 24 February 2000, buried in a run-of-the-mill speech to the Washington Business Council, President Clinton himself even made an important policy statement. At the Park Hyatt presentation in Washington DC, he said: “*And we will continue to reject the use of force as a means to resolve the Taiwan question. We’ll also continue to make absolutely clear that the issues between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the assent of the people of Taiwan.*”

While the first part of the statement is not new, it is the first time that Mr. Clinton has formally and publicly stated that the people on the island have a say in their future. This is of course what the democratic movement in Taiwan has been all about, and Mr. Clinton is belatedly waking up to this point.

***Taiwan Communiqué comment:*** *We of course warmly welcome Mr. Clinton’s new-found awareness of this issue. However, more is needed. The United States needs to*

*return to the basic principle that the future of Taiwan is a matter for the Taiwanese to decide. This is **more** than saying that the issue of Taiwan's future must be resolved peacefully. This is also **more** than saying that the issues must be resolved "with the assent of the people of Taiwan."*

*This requires that the US – and other Western nations – state clearly that the people in Taiwan should be allowed to decide their own future. This puts the decision straight into the hands – and hearts and minds – of the people of Taiwan.*

## ***In the context of electoral politics?***

While Mr. Clinton's statement of February 24<sup>th</sup> should be applauded, what he said on the following day gives reason for deep concern. During a ceremony on the south lawn of the White House to introduce FY2001 budget initiative benefiting native Americans, Mr. Clinton stated that the renewed Chinese threats and saber rattling should be seen "...in the context of electoral politics playing out in Taiwan and not necessarily assume that some destructive action will follow, just as I saw the Taiwanese provocative comments in the context of Taiwanese elections."

Mr. Clinton apparently still isn't able to distinguish between the provocative belligerent bullying of the Chinese, and the views of the large majority of the people of Taiwan that they want to be accepted by the international community as a full and equal member. Taiwan's elections show that the island has made an incredible transition from a repressive dictatorship under the Chinese Nationalists of the KMT

to a fully democratic political system at present. The Clinton Administration should thus take account of this new reality, and adjust its policies away from the anachronistic "One China" fiction.



It seems that China's belligerence, and the fact that it is taking the US for a ride by issuing this policy paper right on the heels of the visit by Mr. Talbott, is in part due to the fact that the Clinton Administration has muddled the water by letting its position

on the China-Taiwan issue slide in the direction of China's position. The United States should reemphasize the principles of democracy and self-determination, and distance itself from the ambiguous "one China" concept, which is a relic of the Cold War.

As the Clinton Administration has rightly done, it should lean heavily on China – not only to refrain from any military exercises or threats against Taiwan during the coming weeks, but also to dismantle the 200 or so missiles which have been erected along the Chinese coast. It should even make dismantling of these missiles a pre-condition for any agreement of China's WTO accession. Free trade is dependent upon the absence of military threats, especially against small neighboring countries.

## *The Democratic candidates: confused*

The Taiwan/China issue also crept into the US presidential debates. The two Democratic Party candidates, Vice-President Al Gore and Senator Bill Bradley, did express concern about the China threats, but otherwise perpetuated the "strategic ambiguity" line of the Clinton Administration.

Incredibly, Mr. Bradley even went so far as to argue that Taiwan should be prevented to move further in the direction of independence, or else the United States would withdraw its protection of the island as laid down in the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979. This threat was made in his debate with Mr. Al Gore on 1 March 2000 in Los Angeles. Mr. Bradley stated: "*We should tell the Taiwanese that if they take steps toward independence that we would reconsider the Taiwan Relations Act.*"

Mr. Bradley added that the U.S. should maintain ambiguity in response to their very specific Chinese threats against Taiwan. He stated: "*We should tell the Chinese that if they move by force to overtake (sic) Taiwan that we have a responsibility under that act to take appropriate actions — the ambiguity that Al talks about.*"

During the debate, vice-president Gore did term the Chinese threats "troubling", but also perpetuated the Clinton Administration's vague ambiguity line, that fails to state clearly that the US will help defend Taiwan if China attacks the island. Mr. Gore even downplayed the Chinese threats by saying that they were made, because "...the election in Taiwan is just a short time away."

Curiously, Mr. Gore also said: "We immediately challenged [the Chinese White Paper]. We took them to task, and we do not accept their effort to change the description of what would justify force there."



**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** *Does Mr. Gore's statement mean that he accepts the "original" description of "what would justify force here"?*

*The people of Taiwan have worked long and hard to gain freedom and democracy. Why should they **not** be accepted as a full and equal member in the international community, if a country such as Tuvalu (pop. 10,000) can join the UN? Why would the people of the United States have a right to independence, and **not** the people in Taiwan? Just because there is a big Chinese bully out there?*

*Democracy means that Taiwan should be allowed to voice their desire to be accepted as a full and equal member of the international community. This is what democracy, self-determination and independence are all about. It would be a sad day, if the party in the US which calls itself the "Democratic Party" would betray those principles.*

*We would hope that the Democrats (and Republicans) do not accept **any** use of force by the Chinese against Taiwan.*

## ***The Republicans: just as confused***

Both Republican contenders for the Republican nomination for the US presidency, Messrs. George W. Bush and John McCain, have stated more forcefully that they would help defend Taiwan if the island were to be attacked by China.

Mr. Bush specifically rejected the old "strategic ambiguity" line, and said "...it's important for the Chinese to understand that if there is a military action, we will help Taiwan defend itself." He added: "it's important for the Chinese to recognize that our relationship is going to change from one of strategic partner to one of competitor, but competitors can find areas of agreement such as in trade."

Mr. McCain said during a debate in Los Angeles that he "...would push the development of sea-based missile defense systems from the U.S. standpoint so that, in case of tensions in the region, I could move those ships very close, but in international waters, and make it clear to the Chinese that the consequences of aggression against Taiwan far, far exceed anything they might gain from committing that aggression."

Still, the two Republican contenders continue to be confused on the issue of Taiwan's status. Both mentioned they had a "One China" policy, without specifying what this policy entailed, and how it differed from the "One China" pronouncements of the Communist rulers in Beijing.

In the Los Angeles debate, the confusion was quite apparent, when Mr. Bush stated: *“But when it comes to violating the One China Policy, the Chinese must hear loud and clear that we will help China – I mean Taiwan — defend itself.”*

Mr. McCain also criticized the Clinton administration on the issue of “strategic ambiguity”: *“But the person who destroyed the strategic ambiguity was President Clinton when he went to China and called Jiang Zemin and the Chinese his strategic partner. And he destroyed the delicate balance of ambiguity which is causing many of these problems now, which is again an example of the fecklessness of the Clinton foreign policy.”*

However, Mr. McCain also became confused when he added: *“I would tell the Taiwanese that they should observe the one-China policy, which calls for peaceful reunification.”*

**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** Certainly Mr. McCain wouldn't want to make the same mistake as Mr. Clinton, who – during his 1998

*trip to China – set of a ruckus when he said “peaceful reunification” when he meant to say “peaceful resolution”? It needs to be reemphasized time and again: the US policy is one of “peaceful resolution”. Any negotiations need to leave open all possible outcomes, including Taiwan independence. The term “unification” has not been -- and should never be -- part of the American lexicon.*

## Coverage in the news media

The renewed Chinese threats led to a large number of excellent articles and commentaries in many newspapers around the United States and other Western nations. Below we give a brief selection of these articles and some quotes.



“*China’s Threats*”, Editorial, **Washington Post**, 23 February 2000

This [Clinton Administration’s] policy [of “strategic ambiguity”] grows less tenable as Taiwan gets more and more democratic and China remains a dictatorship. Most Taiwanese understandably don’t want to be swallowed by a repressive state, and unlike in the past—when Taiwan was governed by dictators of its own—their views on independence shape national policy. Now China has further weakened the rationale for the U.S. policy of ambiguity.

“*Bullying Taiwan*”, Editorial, **International Herald Tribune**, 24 February 2000

[China’s new threats] could complicate administration efforts to win congressional support for China’s entry into the World Trade Organization, as its bullying posture calls into doubt its willingness to live by international rules. None of this deters the regime from making threats.

The administration has in the past bent pretty far to China’s wishes. The House was prompted to write the Taiwan bill in part because of President Bill Clinton’s public accession, in China, to Beijing’s three key demands regarding Taiwan’s status. The U.S. response to China’s latest challenge should be shaped, at a minimum, by the need not to say or do anything that China could present to the next administration as U.S. acquiescence in its new policy. Strategic ambiguity does, at times, have its uses, but this is a moment for strategic clarity.

“*China Turns the Screws*”, Editorial **Wall Street Journal** , 23 February 2000

The biggest danger now is that China will seek to play the Washington card again to force Taiwan to the negotiating table. The 1996 missile firings may have failed in the short term, but at least they have succeeded in persuading the Clinton Administration to send officials to Taipei to encourage President Lee to tone down the rhetoric. That in turn may have encouraged China’s leaders to think that if they keep up the threats the U.S. will enforce their ultimatums.

In order to dispel such notions, Washington must do more than just promise to never push Taiwan to negotiate under a threat of force. It must acknowledge that Taiwan is a mature democracy now, and any compromise on the issue of sovereignty will have to come from the Taiwanese people.

“... *Menacing Language ...*”, by Prof. Arthur Waldron,  
**Washington Post**, 27 February 2000

“The signs are that Jiang Zemin is having domestic political troubles and that the new hard line against the West is part of his survival strategy ... What can the rest of the world do? The error is to imagine that somehow we have caused or contributed to the crisis, an error to which the Clinton administration seems particularly prone ...

For instance, in the case of Taiwan — where Jiang dearly hopes for more concessions — the Clinton administration has regularly confused effect with cause, imagining that American or Taiwanese actions were somehow ‘provoking’ Beijing, when in fact China was raising the stakes for its own reasons.”

“*The Right Response*”, by George F. Will, **Washington Post**, 27 February 2000

...Congress should promptly respond to China’s strictures against the Taiwan [Security Enhancement] Act and theater missile defense by demonstrating to Beijing that the Clinton era of infinite U.S. pliability is finite.

“*He Who Raises Ante Doesn’t Always Win*”, by George Melloan,  
**Wall Street Journal**, 29 February 2000

True to form, Mr. Clinton seemed to be apologizing for the Chinese last week after they issued their Taiwan ukase. “You have to see it [the threat of an attack on Taiwan] in the context of electoral politics playing out in Taiwan and not necessarily assume some destructive action will follow,” the president told the press. Is this a president talking or a news analyst? Presidents usually respond to threats. What real assurance does Mr. Clinton have that China’s generals are not serious when they brandish their newly acquired Russian-made weapons in defiance of world opinion?

... With the Taiwanese people increasingly unwilling to turn back the clock to their 19th-century status as a Chinese province, China’s generals are growing more strident in their demands and threats. “Hong Kong, Macau and now Taiwan” is their mantra, as if China’s destiny demands that final conquest. But Hong Kong and Macau were leased territories and came back when the leases expired. Taiwan, by contrast, has been a political football, ceded to the Japanese

in 1895 and recovered in 1945 by Chiang Kai-shek, who fled to the island with his army after his defeat by the Communists in 1949. Now a free, democratic state, Taiwan is tired of irredentist claims.

*“Take Taiwan’s Case to the International Court of Justice”*, by Phyllis Hwang.  
**International Herald Tribune**, 1 March 2000

...Now that the people have finally established a democracy and reclaimed a voice in their government, the prospect of being reduced to a province in a totalitarian state holds little appeal. Far from hastening voluntary reunification, the recent threats of force from China will make it even less likely.

When Japan relinquished sovereignty over Taiwan, the Taiwanese people were never consulted about whether they wanted to become independent or to unify with China. Current international law requires that the people of Taiwan be allowed to express their preferences for the future of the island through a referendum conducted in an environment free of coercion.

Yet China has warned that “any attempt to separate Taiwan from China through so-called referendum would only lead the Taiwan people to disaster.”

Just because China holds a unique interpretation of international law does not mean that the world should accept it and let the people of Taiwan suffer. There is an established forum for resolving disputes of international law, the International Court of Justice, and there are mechanisms that could bring the case of Taiwan before this court.

*“Backing Taiwan to deter war in Asia”*, by James Hackett,  
**Washington Times**, 3 March 2000

...For at least the last five years, the communist leaders in Beijing have been talking like Hitler. In 1995 and 1996, they went beyond talk and launched ballistic missiles off the coast of Taiwan. They are modernizing their military with some of the best equipment made in Russia and now say they will use force to take Taiwan if it does not agree to their terms.

... Appeasing Hitler did not work, and appeasing the rulers in Beijing is not working either. It is time to strengthen defenses, both here [in Washington] and on Taiwan.

“*The Myth of ‘One China’*”, by William Shawcross,  
**Newsweek International**, March 6, 2000

The bizarre nature of the international system is rarely seen so clearly as in the case of Taiwan. States that are utterly insignificant or brutal are in the United Nations. Taiwan, which is neither, is not only excluded but has full diplomatic relations with few others because of Chinese threats.

... whoever wins the Taiwanese presidential election next month, the threat from China will remain paramount. Beijing’s belligerence makes the reunification it demands ever more unlikely. A sense of a New Taiwan with its own civic consciousness is emerging. The shibboleth of “one China” seems ever more archaic. In short, the external threat to Taiwan is growing as its internal system becomes more mature. That is why the Taiwan Strait remains one of the most dangerous places in Asia.

## ***The NYTimes gang that couldn’t shoot straight***

One newspaper that couldn’t get it straight was the **New York Times**. In two editorials on the issue it made several disturbing errors. In an editorial titled “*New Tension over Taiwan*” (NYT, 23 February 2000) it rightly emphasizes that China was wrong to threaten the use force against Taiwan, but then went on to say that “*Most of the world, and most Taiwanese, acknowledge the principle that Taiwan and the mainland are part of a single China that should ultimately be reunited.*”

This is pertinently incorrect. Yes, since the early 1970s, the world has recognized the government in Beijing as the government of China (as opposed to the refugee Nationalist regime of Chiang Kai-shek, which occupied Taiwan after World War II). But they have not taken a position on Taiwan’s status.

As the NYTimes editors should know by now, the United States and most other Western nations have only **acknowledged** China’s claim, but have not taken a position themselves. “Reunification” does not appear anywhere in US’ or other Western lexicon or policy documents. The US and other Western nations have only emphasized a peaceful **resolution** of conflict, and have not stated a preference for the eventual outcome.

In a second editorial titled “*Military rumblings over Taiwan*” (NYT, 3 March 2000) the editorial writers are rightly concerned about the crisis building in the Taiwan Strait, and urge China to modify its course, as “Beijing’s pressure approach to reunification is not productive.”

The problem with the New York Times statement is that it assumes “reunification” as the eventual outcome. A few lines further it even states that Taiwan “...has stepped away from provocative suggestions that its leaders were preparing for independence.”

Copyright: Taipei Times

**Communiqué comment:** *The New York Times insinuations that “independence” is somehow “provocative” are simply out of line. Since when is it a sin to want to be a free, democratic and independent nation? The leaders of Taiwan’s democratic opposition have stated that they are not afraid to negotiate with China,*



**Peaceful meal ?**

*but it should be a negotiation in which all options are open, certainly the one in which China and Taiwan live peacefully next to each other as friendly neighboring countries.*

*Suggesting that Taiwan should only negotiate “reunification” with China is ludicrous. It is like suggesting to the pre-WWII Jews that they should peacefully negotiate with Hitler Germany to transfer to Auschwitz. Taiwan was never part of the PRC in the first place, but was occupied by the losing side in a Chinese Civil War, in which we Taiwanese had no part. We don’t want the future of our country to be held hostage to that Civil War.*

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# The WTO / PNTR debate

## “Normal” trade for China?

On 4 March 2000, the **New York Times** reported that the Clinton Administration had decided to accelerate the schedule for Congressional approval of “permanent normal trade relations” (PNTR) for China. According to the report, Mr. Clinton would send

the bill to Congress as early as Wednesday, 8 March 2000 (**New York Times**, “*Clinton to send China trade bill to Congress soon*”).

The bill forms part of a package, agreed to by the United States and China in mid-November 1999, containing a number of market-opening measures China must take to gain American support for China’s entry into the WTO. In return, the Clinton Administration agreed it would push to end the annual Most Favored Nation (MFN) review.

**Taiwan Communiqué comment:** *While in the long run it would indeed be desirable to have China in the WTO, this is **not the right time to do it**. The US would be “rewarding” China in spite of its belligerent behavior against Taiwan, in spite of its continued repression in Tibet, and in spite of the continued gross violations of human rights in China itself.*

*Also, China is still a centrally-planned economy in which state-enterprises have a major role. The transition towards a true market economy will be accompanied by much instability. Its track record of keeping agreements is deplorable at best. Time and again, one sees that China violates the agreements it enters into, whether this is on the issue of piracy of CD’s and software, or export of rocket technology to countries such as Pakistan and North Korea.*

*The best strategy to try to influence China for the better is to make it crystal clear that it needs to amend its behavior before it can expect “normal” trade relations. As was stated so eloquently by US Congressman Sherrod Brown (D-OH) recently: “...we cannot afford to turn a blind eye to China’s intimidating tactics. China’s threat of military action against their democratic neighbor should send a message to every member of Congress. **We cannot afford to dole out increased privileges to a country that has no respect for the rule of law**”.*

## **..... normal relations for Taiwan**

It is ironic that Mr. Clinton is pushing so hard for “normal” trade relations for China, while he is still isolating democratic Taiwan in the international community. If there is a rational for trade relations with Communist China, shouldn’t there be a much stronger rational for normalizing relations with Taiwan?



As we have emphasized on these pages before (see “Normalize Taiwan Relations”, *Communiqué* no. 88, pp. 1-2), Taiwan’s isolation and the anachronistic “One China” policy are outdated left-overs from the Chinese Civil War and the Cold War, and have no place in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We thus suggest that Congress should link the PNTR vote to an agreement by the US Administration to grant *permanent normal diplomatic relations to Taiwan*.

There have been suggestions in Congress to tie the PNTR vote to a toning-down by China of its threats against Taiwan, or even to tie it to the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act passed overwhelmingly by the House in the beginning of February 2000, and now up for a vote in the Senate (see *Report from Washington* on pp. 21). Linking it to normalizing diplomatic relations with Taiwan would even be a much better, and forceful, signal.

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# Taiwan’s holocaust

## *2-28 Commemorations in Taiwan*

On 28 February 2000, Taiwan commemorated the 1947 massacre of native Taiwanese by Chiang Kai-shek’s Chinese Nationalist troops, who came over from China and brutally murdered as many as 28,000 to 30,000 Taiwanese, many of whom were leading members in the community or academia.

Thousands of Taipei’s inhabitants flocked to the newly-established 228 Memorial Museum, and hung paper lily flowers and yellow ribbons in the garden around the museum in memory of those who died.

Until just a few years ago, discussion of Taiwan’s equivalent of the Holocaust was prohibited by the Chinese Nationalist rulers. Only in 1997 did President Lee Teng-hui make a public apology to the victims’ families at the unveiling of the 2-28 monument.

We wish to ask US and European policymakers, legislators, and all citizens to be aware of this dark page in Taiwan’s history. Please take a moment and read the two following articles, which were published on 28 February 2000 in the **Taipei Times**. They present a clear understanding of Taiwan’s past, and its future.

## *228 and cross-strait relations*

*Taipei Times Editorial (reprinted with permission)*

Today is the 53rd anniversary of the 228 Incident – 228 massacre some might call it, though the actual massacres came later — when a ham-fisted attempt to confiscate smuggled cigarettes on Taipei’s Yenping North Road sparked an islandwide rebellion against KMT rule, which was suppressed with extreme brutality by soldiers rushed over from the mainland. Though estimates of how many people were killed vary between 10,000 and 30,000, perhaps much more important than the numbers is the fact that the suppression encompassed the liquidation of a generation of Taiwanese intellectuals and community leaders.

Copyright: Taiwan Communiqué

Those who read this newspaper via our Website, and might never have dwelled in Taiwan, would have difficulty understanding the trauma caused by the events of spring 1947. They might especially find it difficult to appreciate the legacy of bitter ethnic hostility between descendants of early immigrants to Taiwan — who now think of themselves as ethnic Taiwanese —



and the minority of “mainlander” carpetbaggers and, later, exiles who began arriving in 1945, that cleaves Taiwan society to this day. Yet they should. Because it has a direct impact on the state of cross-strait relations.

It’s not that easy, admittedly. Of all the world’s countries, Taiwan strikes outsiders as being among those with the least historical baggage. Yet this is due less to the absence of accurate accounts of its past than it is to the suppression of those accounts in the aftermath of the 228 Incident. The event simply has had no closure, partly because for 40 years mention of it was forbidden, on pain of torture and jail.

It wasn’t the excesses of the crushing of the rebellion that made 228 such an incendiary subject, though these, of course, were the origin of much of the ethnic hostility that exists to this day. Rather, it was the reason for the uprising. Following Taiwan’s

reversion to Chinese control at the end of WWII, it took the KMT authorities just 18 months to convince the people of Taiwan that their new masters were vastly inferior, more corrupt, more lawless, and more arbitrary, than their Japanese predecessors. But the KMT was not about to be reminded of this.

Taiwan is now a democracy, the KMT has been localized, the mainlanders' political hegemony is a thing of the past and Taiwan has become one of the most open and pluralistic societies in Asia.

Tragically, however, Taiwanese are as much prisoners of their past as anyone else. The lack of closure — still — on 228 convinces most of them that nothing is to be got from China but violence and terror. The last time Taiwan was “reunited with the motherland” the consequences were terrible. The regime which now covets Taiwan doesn't even pretend to share the values of Taiwan society and has only one clear argument for reunification — a gun to the head, as manifested in last week's now notorious white paper.

Days of remembrance usually have a moral point to them, something along the line of “never again.” And many Taiwanese see the best way of avoiding repetition of the events of 1947 is to keep intolerant Chinese governments at arm's length. Thus, those who talk of reunification as if it were viable as an option, even a mere consideration — Lien Chan, James Soong, US foreign policy mavens — have to counter a collective historical memory according to which Taiwan has already been there, done that, and bitterly rued the consequences.

## *Lessons for current politics*

*By Li Thian-hok Li, board member at large of FAPA and chair of the Diplomacy Committee of WUFI-USA. This article first appeared in the Taipei Times on February 28<sup>th</sup> 2000. Reprinted with permission.*

Today is the fifty-third anniversary of the 228 Incident. As we remember the events of March 1947 and pay homage to the many heroes and victims who sacrificed their lives, what lessons can we draw for today's Taiwan?

The spontaneous islandwide revolt against the corruption and incompetence of General Chen Yi and his cohorts was accompanied by an ardent desire for self-rule. Taiwanese leaders from all major cities set up a committee and worked hard to present Chen Yi with a series of proposals to eliminate government abuses and to institute local autonomy.

Playing for time, Chen Yi agreed to negotiate while he secretly called for reinforcements from China. On March 8, Chiang Kai-shek's troops arrived. What followed was a wanton massacre which included many community leaders.

Taiwan faces a similar situation today. China is anxious to acquire Taiwan as a strategic base to fulfill its expansionist ambitions in East Asia and beyond. For the next couple of years it cannot be sure of victory if it invades Taiwan. However, by 2005, according to the US Department of Defense, it will have the capability to overwhelm Taiwan's defenses. So Beijing is presenting "generous" terms under the "one country, two systems" scheme, while at the same time preparing for a massive, multi-pronged military assault against Taiwan.

So what policies do the three presidential candidates propose to cope with the looming conflict? They all seem to be proposing measures which are the exact opposite of the measures needed to protect Taiwan's security. Instead of informing the people of the stark dangers facing the country and uniting the people in a common resolve to defend Taiwan's freedom, we hear instead of unrestricted investment in the China market, establishment of the three links and dialogue on the ultimate status of Taiwan. The topic of unification is often raised, but that of independence is generally ignored.

Chances are China will invade once it is ready, regardless of the Taiwan government's China policy stance at the time. A war can be averted, of course, if the Taiwanese elect to capitulate first. However, there is no assurance that a massacre, perhaps on a scale far larger than that of 1947, can be avoided after the surrender. The Taiwanese will again find themselves at the mercy of a brutal conquering army from China.

To preserve their political and economic achievements, the Taiwanese will have to clearly demonstrate to the rest of the world their determination to maintain their democracy. Unilateral gestures of goodwill and deference to Chinese leaders in the face of continuing Chinese intransigence can only hurt the dignity and morale of the Taiwanese.

Taiwan is a thriving free market economy and a promising, emerging democracy. It is a de facto independent state with modern armed forces. For the first time in its 400 years of history, the Taiwanese have a realistic opportunity to be masters of their own destiny. To live with dignity and free from fear, the Taiwanese must be willing to fight for their hard-won freedom.

This generation of Taiwanese needs to rediscover the courage exhibited by the many heroes of the 228 incident.

## *New Zealander's 2-28 manuscript donated*

One of the highpoints of this year's commemoration was the visit to Taipei of Colin Shackleton, the son of a Allan Shackleton, a New Zealander who wrote a gripping account of the 2-28 events after serving on the island in 1947 as an United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation (UNRRA) officer. Mr. Shackleton donated his father's manuscript titled "Formosa Calling, an Eyewitness Account of Taiwan's 2-28 Incident", to the 228 Memorial Museum in Taipei.

"It's a great pleasure to donate this manuscript to the people of Taiwan. If my father were here today, I am sure he would be greatly honored," said 63-year-old Colin Shackleton at a ceremony held in the 228 Memorial Museum. Also donated to the museum were his father's photos taken during his stay in Taiwan from 1946 to 1947, and the typewriter he used to produce the manuscript.

The English-language edition of the book was published in 1998 by Taiwan Communiqué (see issues no. 79 p. 18 and no. 81 p. 23). It is available by sending \$US 15.— to our address in Chevy Chase, MD. Other countries add US\$ 3.—for airmail postage.

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## **Report from Washington**

### *Why the TSEA is needed*

On Tuesday, February 1st 2000, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act (TSEA) by an overwhelming majority of 341 to 70. The vote is a tribute to the farsightedness of the bipartisan majority in the House, and to the hard work of the Taiwanese-American community, in particular the Washington-based Formosan Association for Public Affairs.

The debate now shift to the Senate, where the Clinton Administration – and the Chinese – are expected to lobby hard against the bill. Mr. Clinton has already stated that the bill “*..is not in Taiwan's best interest*”, while the Chinese Foreign Ministry has called the bill “*...a serious encroachment on China's sovereignty [and] a gross interference in China's internal affairs.*”

If we may take the Chinese statement first: the statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry is a perfect example why the TSEA is needed: Contrary to the Chinese assertion, the fact is that China doesn't have any sovereignty over Taiwan, and that the China-Taiwan conflict is clearly an international question – and can in no way be termed an “internal” affair by China.

China needs to come to the realization that the Chinese Civil War ended 51 years ago. It also needs to see clearly that the majority of the people of Taiwan didn't have anything to do with that Civil War. There is now a new Taiwan – not the old “Republic of China” – which wants to be a full and equal member of the international community.



China also needs to come to the realization that the sovereignty over Taiwan belongs to the people of Taiwan, and that it is in China's own interest to come to a peaceful accommodation with Taiwan. Peaceful coexistence as two neighboring states is the only – and most obvious – solution to the decades-old conflict.

Going to Mr. Clinton's statement next: it seems Mr. Clinton still fails to understand the basic essence of the Taiwan-China issue. That is: in order to enhance democracy in a particular region of the world – in this case East Asia – it is essential to express support of a nation that attained democracy so recently, i.e. Taiwan.

Mr. Clinton and his advisors say they are concerned about “upsetting the delicate balance” created by their deliberately ambiguous “one China” policy. It must be obvious to any observer that the balance is being upset by the fact that China is aiming some 200 missiles at Taiwan, and is rapidly modernizing its armed forces with a focused aim of coercing Taiwan into submission in the next few years.

It must also be obvious that the “one China” concept was a creation of the Cold War, when there were two competing Chinese regimes, the Nationalists and the Communists, each claiming to be the legitimate rulers of China. Since then, Taiwan has

evolved into a thriving free market economy and multiparty democracy. It is thus time to discard the anachronistic “one China” concept, and move towards factual and realistic “One China, One Taiwan” principle.

Thus, why is the TSEA needed?

Firstly, because it states that “... *Any determination of the ultimate status of Taiwan must have the express consent of the people on Taiwan.*” While this may be obvious to anyone with any sense of democracy, Mr. Clinton has never been willing to make this statement (until just last week), has failed to endorse the principle of self-determination for the people of Taiwan, and has – instead – let himself be deluded by the Chinese into his “Three No’s,” thus encouraging Chinese adventurism.

Secondly, while United States’ policy is based on the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which has reasonably firm and clear provisions regarding Taiwan’s safety and security, the Clinton Administration has hemmed and hawed on much-needed weapon sales to Taiwan, such as submarines and Theatre Missile Defense.

Thirdly, if the United States needs to go to Taiwan’s aid in a crisis, a secure line of communications with Taiwan’s military is indispensable. So are closer military ties, so each side can become familiar with the other’s military doctrine, strategy and preparedness. The TSEA contains precisely such provisions, which will give substance to the American policy that any dispute between Taiwan and China must be resolved peacefully. Failure to establish the military links with Taiwan will invite PRC miscalculation.

In conclusion: the TSEA is a welcome supplement to the Taiwan Relations Act. It states more clearly than ever before that it is US policy that future status of Taiwan requires the democratically-expressed consent of the people of Taiwan, and it provides for much-needed military cooperation and coordination between Taiwan and the United States.

We urge the United States Senate to stand up for the principles of democracy, human rights, and self-determination, and support the people of Taiwan in their quest to have their nation be accepted by the international community as a full and equal member. This is the best guarantee for stability in East Asia. The TSEA is a welcome first step in this direction.

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