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Taiwan : 4Fl., 5 Ching-tao East Rd., TAIPEI, Taiwan

Europe : P.O. Box 91542, 2509 EC THE HAGUE, The Netherlands

Canada : 3636 Steeles Avenue E., Suite 303A, MARKHAM, Ont. L3R 1K9

U.S.A. : P.O. Box 15182, CHEVY CHASE, MD 20825

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Towards a nuclear-free Taiwan

On 27 October 2000, the DPP-led government of President Chen Shui-bian announced its decision to halt construction of the island's Fourth Nuclear power plant. The plant, which is approximately one-third completed, is located in the coastal town of Kungliao, only some 24 miles from the Taipei metropolitan area.

The decision came after a four month reassessment process initiated by the newly-elected government right after its inauguration in May 2000. For more information about this process, and about the checkered history of Nuclear Four itself, read "*The meltdown of Nuclear Four*" on page 6.

While the reassessment process itself was thorough enough, the timing of the announcement of the decision was perhaps less than ideal: it came within an hour after President Chen had a long-awaited meeting with KMT-leader Lien Chan, who came in a distant third in the March 2000 presidential elections.

While the issue of the nuclear power plant did come up during Lien Chan's meeting with President Chen, Mr. Chen did not clearly indicate that his government had decided to cancel the project. An hour later, Prime Minister Chang Chun-hsiung made the announcement.

On Sunday, 12 November 2000, some 100,000 people participated in rallies in Taipei and Kaohsiung in support of President Chen's decision to cancel the nuclear power plant project.

Photo: Reuters



Young participant in the November 12th rally for a nuclear-free Taiwan

The KMT and PFP recall charade

The "crisis" erupted when Mr. Lien Chan went through the roof when he learned of Prime Minister Chang's announcement right after Lien's meeting with President Chen. Mr. Lien had been smarting ever since his defeat in March, but had finally been convinced to come to meet with the President after both his main rival Mr. James Soong of the People's First Party (PFP) and the leader of the New Party (NP) had met with the President during the previous week.

Mr. Lien Chan – feeling insulted by the timing of the decision – apparently decided to use the situation to try to unseat President Chen Shui-bian, and together with the pro-unificationist PFP and the tiny right-wing New Party started a drive to recall the President and Vice-President Annette Lü Hsiu-lien.

While together, the three parties have a majority in the Legislative Yuan (the KMT holds 115 seats, the PFP 17 seats and the New Party 9 seats), they form an uneasy alliance: both New Party and PFP broke away from the Kuomintang in bitter disputes with then-President Lee Teng-hui.

The reason that the KMT still holds this large number of seats is that the most recent elections for the Legislative Yuan were held in December 1998, when many KMT legislators rode to victory on the coattails of the popular former President Lee Teng-hui. If parliamentary elections were held today, the number of KMT seats would certainly nosedive, and both the ruling DPP and James Soong's People's First Party would significantly increase their numbers at the expense of the KMT.

That is also the prime reason why the Kuomintang made the rather outrageous decision to go straight for the recall procedure against the President, instead of opting for the more standard procedures open to the parliamentary opposition, such as a vote of no-confidence or a request to the Council of Grand Justices for an opinion. If they had gone for a vote of no-confidence in the Cabinet, then President Chen could dissolve the Legislative Yuan and call for new elections.

With their total of 141 out of 221 sitting legislators, the three opposition parties still are shy of the 2/3 majority (147) needed to recall the President. As of the time of this writing, the motion to recall had been introduced in the Legislative Yuan, but the three parties had not decided yet to move forward with a vote. The DPP was urging a number of independent legislators and Taiwanese "mainstream" members of the Kuomintang not to go along with the recall charade.

In the meantime, the Cabinet of Prime Minister Chang Chun-hsiung on 10 November 2000 formally requested the Council of Grand Justices, a body specifically set up to interpret constitutional matters, to pronounce itself on the constitutionality of the Cabinet's decision to cancel the project over the objections of the Kuomintang-dominated Legislative Yuan.

A manufactured "crisis"

That Taiwan has a possibility of recalling a sitting president is good, since it is part of the democratic structure of the nation. However, it should only be applied in case of gross negligence or misbehavior. The present case is one of differences in views and policy.

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The Kuomintang long pushed for construction of the Nuclear Four power plant in the belief this was essential for the country's power supply and economic development. However, in doing so, it ran roughshod over the democratic process, and totally neglected energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy sources. See our article "*The Meltdown of Nuclear Four*" on page 6.



The three opposition parties hatching their "One China" dragon

So when President Chen was elected in March 2000 it was clear from the beginning that it would be only a matter of time before the new government would terminate the project. It set a process of re-assessment in motion which laid the foundation for the decision to cancel the project (see below). Anyone who read the pronouncements of President Chen and other government officials could see the decision coming.

The "surprise" and "indignation" on the part of Messrs. Lien Chan and James Soong are thus a farce. The real reason for the recall procedure is that their mainlander-dominated parties still can't accept the fact that after being in power for 55 years, they've now lost power to the DPP, which is dominated by the native-Taiwanese (85% of the population) and which is Taiwan-oriented rather than focused on China.

A major underlying reason is thus that the three opposition parties are still in favor of the anachronistic concept of "unification" with China, while President Chen has stood his ground vis-à-vis China, and has emphasized that the Taiwanese themselves should make a free and democratic decision on their future.

The KMT's obstructionism

President Chen and his team have worked hard to make the transition as smooth as possible, and have been generally lauded for a cautious approach in both foreign and domestic policy: by all accounts, the economy is doing well (see the account "*A question of different perceptions*" by former US ambassador Nat Bellocchi on p. 15).

For sure, the stock market is down, some 40% from the levels of March 2000, when President Chen was elected. The KMT and some in the international press blame that on President Chen's government. However, Taiwan's stock market is not down more than any other stock markets internationally: the NASDAQ in New York is also down 38% from the level of March 2000. It would be farfetched to blame that on President Chen.

The Cross-Straits situation has been stabilized due to the prudent approach of President Chen. There doesn't seem to be much progress or dialogue, but that is not for lack of trying on the part of President Chen: he has held out olive branch after olive branch, only to have them rejected and slapped out of his hands by Beijing.

In the meantime, Mr. Lien Chan's Kuomintang and Mr. Soong's PFP have played a dirty game of obstructionism, both domestically and internationally. Domestically, they have done everything within their reach to block all and every measure the new government proposed in the Legislative Yuan.

In "interpellations", KMT legislators badgered Cabinet member in endless diatribes, primarily designed to embarrass the hapless Cabinet members, who have a legal obligation to sit through the full interpellation session. While in any democracy, no-one objects to a good debate on substantive issues, these exchanges did have no connection to any policy issues whatsoever.

A prime example was the July 2000 "interpellation" of the elderly former Prime Minister Tang Fei just a few weeks after he got out of the hospital. Instead of taking the high road of a real policy discussion, the mainly KMT legislators took the low road of hassling him with nonsensical questions. This was an embarrassment to Taiwan's democracy.

In the international arena, in particular the pro-unificationist New Party and the People's First Party have attempted to undermine President Chen's cautious approach. During the past months, legislators from those parties have flocked to Beijing in droves, and have met with high Chinese officials. It would be gullible to assume that the closed-door meetings dealt with mundane things like the weather. Did these New Party and People's First Party make any secret agreements with Beijing in order to undermine Taiwan's newfound democracy?

In all, it seems that the Kuomintang and the other two parties are attempting to "manufacture" a crisis in Taiwan in order to unseat President Chen and the DPP and regain the power they lost in the March 2000 elections. It would be a comic opera, if it didn't carry such high risks for Taiwan, its freedom, and its future.

*On this topic, we present our article, which was published in the **Taipei Times** of 4 November 2000.*

Taiwan's comic opera theater

By Mei-chin Chen, editor of Taiwan Communiqué

Like characters in traditional Taiwanese comic opera theater, several leading opposition figures are now jumping up and down to background music performed by clanging cymbals. What are they doing? They are expressing their "indignation" at the decision of the Chen Shui-bian administration to cancel the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant Project.

Chen and his team decided after ample consideration, as well as a recommendation by a committee established precisely for that purpose by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, that it was in the long-term interest of the nation to discontinue the ill-conceived Fourth Nuclear Power Plant and to redirect Taiwan's energy reliance toward energy efficiency, renewable energy and energy conservation.

The three latter terms are household terms in the West, and have been part of energy policy in the US and Europe. However, under the "guidance" of the KMT — yes, the party in which James Soong and Lien Chan held such high positions during the past two decades — Taiwan neglected these three policies and blindly steered ahead with the construction of the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant.

So, Messrs. Soong and Lien have no right to be "indignant." The Taiwanese people are the ones who should be indignant about being led into the dead end alley of nuclear power.

These two gentlemen bear the responsibility for perpetuating a nuclear power plant project against the advice of experts who have been saying since the early 1980s that locating such a plant in an earthquake-prone area near a major metropolis is irresponsible.

They should bear responsibility for blindly placing all their bets on one “nuclear power horse” instead of developing diversified energy sources, including energy generated by clean coal, natural gas turbines, and renewable energy sources. Soong and Lien would be wise to tone down their opposition, disappear into the woodwork and indeed express support for Chen Shui-bian’s redirection of energy reliance.

This new policy direction is built on the experience and technology developed in the US and Europe, and will in the long term lead to a stable and reliable energy supply on the island.

To turn this matter into a concocted “crisis” is reckless and irresponsible. Taiwan can’t afford such a crisis, certainly against the background that this will play China into the cards. Or do these gentlemen place their own political interests above Taiwan’s interest? Maybe they just can’t accept the fact that they lost the March 2000 presidential election?

It is time to stop the clanging of the cymbals, and to focus on building an efficient and renewable energy supply for Taiwan. Only then can Taiwan really be the beautiful island, *Ilha Formosa*.

*This article first appeared in the **Taipei Times** of November 4th 2000. Reprinted with permission.*

The meltdown of Nuclear Four

A thorough reassessment

The 27 October 2000 decision to cancel the Nuclear Four project came after a four month reassessment process initiated by the newly-elected government right after its inauguration in May 2000. During this process, a fifteen-member committee of experts — set up specifically for this re-evaluation — advised against continuation of the project by a vote of nine to six. The Ministry of Economic Affairs, led by Mr. Lin Hsin-

yi (himself a member of the KMT), adopted the conclusions of the committee of experts, and recommended cancellation to Prime Minister Tang Fei.

However, Mr. Tang Fei – under strong pressure from his old KMT colleagues – did not want to make the political decision to cancel the project, and eventually stepped down in the beginning of October 2000. His successor, former DPP legislator Mr. Chang Chun-hsiung, mulled over the issue a couple of weeks, and initially indicated the decision would be taken “by the end of the year.”

In the meantime, the KMT-controlled Legislative Yuan was increasing its pressure on the DPP-government by blocking any further discussion of the national budget for the coming year until a decision (to continue) had

been announced. After negotiations between the DPP and the opposition parties in the Legislative Yuan, it was decided that a decision would be forthcoming by November 15th.

However, by the last week of October, Prime Minister Chang apparently felt that any further postponement of the decision was not useful, and decided to go ahead and cancel the project. The Cabinet gave the following arguments for cancellation:

1. Canceling the project will not result in a shortage of electricity. Taiwan will have at least seven years to prepare of any shortfall.
2. The government is drawing up concrete and practical alternatives to the plant.
3. The problems of disposing nuclear waste are too difficult to overcome.
4. Any nuclear accident would be a huge crisis for Taiwan because of the island’s size.
5. The cost of abandoning the project is lower than the cost of completing it.



Copyright: Taipei Times

Former Prime Minister Tang Fei, steering Taiwan's anti-nuclear policy boat in reverse

6. Canceling the plant would be a step toward achieving the goals of sustainable development and making Taiwan a nuclear-free island.

A history of controversy

The controversial Nuclear Four power plant project has a checkered history: the idea of a fourth plant on the northeast shore, some 24 miles from Taipei, was first conceived in the early 1980s. Taiwan has three older plants, two in the south of the island, and one in the north. However, in 1988 (right after the lifting of martial law on the island) strong protests by environmentalists forced the Kuomintang authorities to shelve the Nuclear Four project.

The prime concern at that time was the safety of nuclear power: the Chernobyl accident in the Soviet Union, two years earlier, had prompted a worldwide debate about such plants. Taiwanese environmentalists pointed out that locating a nuclear plant in an earthquake-prone zone only 24 miles from a major metropolis was irresponsible, and proposed alternative sources of energy.

However, the Kuomintang authorities and Taipower decided in February 1989 to restart the project, citing shortage of power as the prime reason. In the meantime, they did little to enhance energy efficiency and energy conservation. From 1990 through 1996 the project was the subject of numerous seesaw movements and demonstrations, in particular by the inhabitants of Kungliao, the coastal town where the plant was to be located (see list of *Taiwan Communiqué* articles below). In July 1994, a referendum by local authorities in Taipei County showed 96% of the respondents to be against the plant.

In September 1994, former DPP chairman Lin Yi-hsiung organized a round-the-island march against the fourth nuclear power plant, while in May 1996, the Legislative Yuan actually voted down the budget for the plant. But in October 1996, the Kuomintang invoked a shadowy “national security” provision, by which they could pass the Plant’s budget by only a one-third majority vote of the Legislative Yuan.

On the next page, we present an overview of articles on this matter in previous issues of *Taiwan Communiqué*:

Issue no.	Date of event	Title of article
40:	23 April 1989	<i>Thousands protest against nuclear power plan.</i>
48:	November 1990	<i>A nuclear power plant near Taipei?</i>
50:	5 May 1991	<i>10,000 protest against nuclear power plant in Taipei.</i>
54:	February 1992	<i>Authorities push ahead with nuclear power plant.</i>
55:	26 April 1992	<i>Protest against 4th nuclear power plant.</i>
	5 May 1992	<i>Legislative Yuan discusses nuclear plant budget.</i>
59:	June 1993	<i>Nuclear power plant issue flares up again.</i>
60:	April 1994	<i>Alternatives to Fourth power plant proposed.</i>
61:	July 1994	<i>Referendum on 4th nuclear plant: 96% against.</i>
63:	July 1994	<i>Fourth nuclear plant budget rammed through the LY.</i>
	September 1994	<i>Lin Yi-hsiung on round-island march and hunger strike.</i>
	November 1994	<i>Does Taiwan need a fourth nuclear power plant ?</i>
71:	April 1996	<i>Lanyu aborigines protest nuclear waste.</i>
	May 1996	<i>Legislative Yuan votes down fourth nuclear plant.</i>
73:	October 1996	<i>KMT rams nuclear plant budget through LY, again.</i>

As indicated earlier, the Kuomintang authorities paid little attention to energy efficiency, energy conservation, and renewable energy. Due to the policies of the past five decades, the island has one of the world's worst records on energy efficiency.

According to a recent article in the **Wall Street Journal** (*Brinkmanship, Taiwan style*, by Prof. Shelly Rigger, 6 November 2000) its industries are extraordinarily wasteful energy users, while the state-run Taipower monopoly has emphasized large-scale, centralized power generation, at the expense of efficiency and reliability in the electricity supply.

In the article on the following page, which was published in the Taipei Times of 26 September 2000, we present the arguments in support of the shift initiated by the Chen Shui-bian Administration.

Towards renewable energy sources

By Mei-chin Chen, editor of Taiwan Communiqué

During the coming weeks, the already heated debate on the future of the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant project will in all likelihood become white hot. Let us hope this will lead to a meltdown of that ill-conceived project.

It is regrettable that during the past decade or more, the KMT has led Taiwan down the nuclear power path, while most other advanced nations around the world have reduced their dependence on nuclear power or even started to close down aging power plants.

One example is the Netherlands, which is about the same size as Taiwan, and also has a booming economy. It will close its last nuclear power plant between 2004 and 2007, and has dramatically shifted towards sustainable energy. In addition, it has emphasized energy efficiency and energy conservation, resulting in a reduction of total energy needs by about 20 percent, while maintaining strong growth in its economy. Taiwan can also do that: the new DPP government is in an excellent position to lead Taiwan into a new era of reduced dependence on nuclear power, and increased reliance on clean energy resources. Here are just some ideas:

We need to institute an aggressive energy conservation program. Presently, much energy is wasted through inefficiencies and the lack of energy-conservation awareness among the population. A simple thing like turning off the lights in a room when no one is in it is important. We need to teach ourselves and our children that energy conservation starts with one's own individual behavior.

We need to initiate a program to utilize alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, and energy-efficient technologies such as fuel cells.

In the US, President Clinton has started a so-called Million Solar Roof program, which aims to install solar panels on the roofs of a million homes throughout the US. With the abundance of sunshine in Taiwan, this could be a major source of energy. It is particularly attractive because it generates electricity in the day, a time when energy consumption in Taiwan peaks, due to use of air conditioning systems.

Along the coast, Taiwan has strong winds, which would be able to sustain many modern windmills of the type one sees in countries like Denmark and the Netherlands — world leaders in the generation of wind energy. Those countries would surely be more than

happy to share this technology, and to assist in the installation of windmills along Taiwan's coast.

Fuel cells are another new technology, which can radically reduce energy use. Instead of generating electricity through burning gas or oil — which is done in conventional power plants — fuel cell plants generate it through a chemical process with nearly twice the efficiency of the conventional combustion process. The same amount of gas or oil thus generates twice the electricity.

Photo: Reuters



Crowd and banners at 12 November 2000 rally against nuclear power in Taipei

An added advantage of these new technologies is that electricity can be generated in several separate locations, not in one central location. This makes electricity generation less vulnerable to breakdown due to failure of one central plant, which might, for instance, be targeted by Chinese missiles. Distributed power will thus increase the reliability of the electricity system as a whole.

It should be emphasized that alternative energy sources are part of the picture. We need to continue to employ conventional power generating technology, but even there we can gradually shift to advanced technologies, such as clean coal and advanced turbines. Many of these technologies are already available and applied in the US and Western Europe.

Taiwan certainly can turn this vision of clean and renewable energy into a new reality. Let's make it work.

*This article first appeared in the **Taipei Times** of 26 September 2000. Reprinted with permission.*

Change of guard at the White House

The disappointing Clinton years

When Mr. Clinton was elected President in 1992, the Taiwanese-American community had high hopes for the new Democratic administration: Taiwan had just gone through its first open election for all seats in the Legislative Yuan (before that, most seats were held by old mainlanders elected in China in 1947). The island nation was just taking its first feeble steps on the road towards full democracy.

For sure, we thought, this new and young Democratic American president would significantly improve relations with Taiwan and bring about a fundamental shift in Taiwan's relations with the international community. Hadn't he emphasized human rights in his campaign, and hadn't he lambasted the Administration of president George Bush Sr. for "coddling" the Chinese dictators?

Even officials within the new Clinton administration had high hopes, and in the beginning of 1993 they initiated the Taiwan Policy Review, which was intended to significantly upgrade relations between the US and Taiwan.

However, by 1994 it became clear that we were in for a disappointment: led by the late Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, the Administration became increasingly mesmerized by the "trade with China" hot air balloon. The Taiwan Policy Review turned out to be a dud, and the State Department was telling China on every occasion that Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui would not be allowed to enter the US to attend a function at his Alma Mater Cornell University.

In fact, the Taiwan Policy Review meant a step backwards: the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act emphasizes that *"Nothing in this Act may be construed as a basis for supporting the exclusion or expulsion of Taiwan from membership in any international financial institution or any other international organization"*, thus supporting Taiwan's membership in international organization without any pre-conditions.

However, in the 1994 Taiwan Policy Review, the Clinton Administration suddenly went on record as only supporting Taiwan's membership in international organizations, *that do **not** require statehood*, a distinction that was not made in the Taiwan Relations Act or in any other earlier policy statement.

While in 1995, after heavy pressure from Congress and the near-unanimous passage of two resolutions in the House and Senate, the Administration allowed President Lee to visit his Alma Mater Cornell, the half-hearted manner in which it was done was a signal to Beijing to increase the pressure on Taiwan. This it did: during the summer and fall of 1995, there were missile firings, military “exercises” and increasingly shrill warnings from Beijing against Taiwan. However, the Clinton Administration sat on its hands, and only vague mumblings came out of the State Department and White House.

It wasn't until early 1996, when a Chinese general uttered a threat to strike Los Angeles with a missile, that Mr. Clinton and his team woke up to the fact that China's threats were for real. In February 1996, when China was increasing its anti-Taiwan threats in the run-up to Taiwan's first democratic presidential elections, the US put two aircraft carrier battle groups into place.



Taiwan to Gore and Bush: *"Whoever wins, I hope he doesn't stab me in the back."*

The episode convinced China to tone down its warmongering, but behind the scenes the Communist leaders in Beijing turned up the pressure on Mr. Clinton to distance himself from the increasingly democratic Taiwan. They succeeded when Mr. Clinton, during his June 1998 trip to China, uttered his infamous “Three No's” thereby betraying freedom and democracy in Taiwan, and prompting the Congress to adopt near unanimous resolutions in the House (HR 301) and Senate (SR 107) condemning Mr. Clinton's statements and reaffirming American commitment to Taiwan.

Since the summer of 1998, several in the Administration, in particular Dr. Kurt Campbell at the DOD, and Dr. Richard Bush at the American Institute of Taiwan attempted to steer the Administration back on track by pushing for adequate weapon sales to the island, and by emphasizing that the future of Taiwan needs to be decided with the consent of the people in Taiwan. This latter principle was picked up by Mr. Clinton's use of *"assent of the people of Taiwan"* in speeches in early 2000.

If the Taiwanese and Taiwanese-Americans expected the Administration to change its policy after the victory of Chen Shui-bian in the March 2000 presidential elections, they were deeply disappointed: the overall attitude of the Administration is extremely stand-offish towards the new government, as exemplified by the shunning of President Chen and Vice-President Annette Lu during their transit stops in August and September 2000, and the restrictions imposed on them during those stops.

As we commented in our previous *Taiwan Communiqué* (no. 93): why is the democratically-elected leader of one of the most free and democratic nations in Asia shunned, and being treated like a pariah, while the leaders of a repressive, communist-led government in Beijing get a red carpet treatment in Washington?

The overall assessment of the Clinton years is thus that they were deeply disappointing to the newly-democratic Taiwan and to the Taiwanese-American community. The only rays of hope were a highly encouraging Congress, which showed strong bi-partisan support for Taiwan in critical situations, and the supportive positions taken by key individuals in the Administration, Messrs. Kurt Campbell and Richard Bush. However, these two were an exception rather than the rule in an Administration dominated by a White House and State Department pre-occupied with “engaging” communist China at the expense of democratic Taiwan.

A chance to remold Taiwan policy

When we write these lines, it is not clear yet who has won the American presidential elections. However, irrespective of the outcome, a new US administration does have an excellent opportunity to remold its policy towards Taiwan, redress the backward slide of the Clinton years, and set US policy firmly on a course that is consistent with the basic international principles of democracy and self-determination, as well as basic US values.

The first step should be to **move away from** Mr. Clinton’s “strategic ambiguity” (whatever that meant) and confusing “One China” concepts towards strategic clarity: it needs to be made clear that **any** attempt by China to resolve its differences with Taiwan by force is not acceptable to the United States.

The second step is a **renewed emphasis** on freedom, democracy and self-determination: if the United States wishes these principles to gain wider acceptance in East Asia, it needs to make crystal clear that the Taiwanese people have the right to determine their own future without any outside pressure or interference from China.

The third step is **normalization of relations** with Taiwan. As we have emphasized earlier: a peaceful resolution of the Cross Strait conflict is only possible if the United States and the rest of the international community end the unfair and unjust isolation of the island, and accept it as a full member of the international community. As long as Taiwan is isolated, it is pushed with its back against the wall by China, and any negotiations would lack a level playing field.

A new administration also needs to move away from the pervasive paranoia about Taiwan independence: the country is a free and independent nation already. The only question is how it should be recognized internationally: under the outdated and anachronistic “Republic of China” name, which evokes bitter memories of the Chinese Civil War between the Kuomintang and the Communists, or simply and straightforwardly as a new and democratic “Taiwan”, which lives in peace with all its neighbors, including China.

A question of different perceptions

By ambassador Nat Bellocchi, former chairman of the American Institute in Taiwan.

I remember writing not too long ago that America seemed almost paranoid about cross-strait relations. The least grumble out of Beijing seemed to throw some of our China watchers into a state of panic. Yet in Taiwan at that time, news was about what was going on in Taiwan, while cross-strait matters were largely left for dinner conversation. It seems to me, after my recent trip there, that the reverse is now true. America is more relaxed while Taiwan seems uptight. Another change is that not long ago it was Beijing hurling verbal attacks at Taiwan about its “one China” stance. Now it seems that the verbal attacks on this subject emanate from within Taiwan, not from Beijing.

This can be very confusing. Just imagine a foreigner, preparing to visit Taiwan, reads about the current events taking place there. In the Western newspapers and magazines he reads, he will learn that the economy there is doing quite well — 6.3 percent growth, record exports, record foreign exchange reserves and so on. The stock market is heading south, sharply, to be sure, but not as bad as some of the other countries in the region. On that score, Taiwan stands in about the middle.

On cross-strait relations, one reads that there is a sharp rise in outward investment to China. Large military exercises in the PRC were reported about a week before, but they

had been termed routine by both the Ministry of National Defense spokesman in Taipei and the government in Washington. Statements relative to cross-strait relations on both sides were equally routine. The positions on each side on “one China” and the 1992 consensus or spirit remained in stalemate. Stalemate means no progress, but also no deterioration. There was what could be called a normal level of tension between the two sides.

On arrival in Taiwan, however, after a couple of days reading the press and watching the news on TV, one would have to conclude that the situation was radically different than similar sources in Washington were reporting.

Lets start with the economy. Some were saying the “three links” should move forward, while others complained that business was hollowing out industry on Taiwan by moving to China. Some were debating that the nuclear power plant issue was not about economics but about ideology, and others the reverse. Complaints that government did not have any plans to show where it wanted the economy to go did not seem to be challenged. That the stock market was dropping precipitously because of a lack of confidence or mismanagement of the stabilization fund was only weakly challenged.



Ambassador Bellocchi

All of these problems, apparently, could also be attributed to the “high tensions” between the two sides of the Strait. In addition, critics claimed that government was rewriting history by not accepting the “92 consensus” (which is what the PRC was saying), while others were denying it. There were efforts on all sides to define the difference between “consensus” and “spirit.”

But an example of overkill on this issue came after watching the press conference on Oct. 14, when the premier announced the actions the administration would take to cope with the economic situation, and the inevitable instant analysis by experts that followed.

I kept hearing references to the impact these actions would have on cross-strait relations, which puzzled me. The meeting and the results were entirely domestic in purpose. Perhaps the media believes that giving any subject a cross-strait angle increases public attention. Even the week-old news about military exercises was resuscitated, almost neutralizing the impact of the economic meeting. Maybe that will become the normal practice — or people will get tired of the subject. Either way, it is not a good idea.

In Washington, though the elections, Korea, the Middle East, the World Series all monopolize the headlines in the media and the attention of government, there seems to be no change in how government views the situation in Taiwan.

I suppose, on the other hand, that China finds this behavior on Taiwan very comforting. They are not aware that a transition to a new government, as chaotic and debilitating as it may seem, is actually a strengthening of a democratic system. People unfamiliar with a bureaucracy are brought into government, and though mistakes are made, they soon become a bank of experience and knowledge. The number of people capable of governing the country is increased, and new ideas are given a chance.

Even where transitions to a new government has taken place many times over many years, the difficulties do not diminish by much. Each always seems somewhat unique. When the Clinton administration moved into government in early 1993, Taiwan would recognize some of the problems. I remember cartoons characterizing the new Clinton White House team as babies in diapers with policy portfolios, depicting the young and inexperienced team.

New appointees were also slow in getting into their new jobs. The new assistant secretary of state for East Asia, for example, didn't formally begin work until mid-year. It took even longer for plans on how to carry out the Clinton program were presented to Congress. There were many criticisms from the opposition, but Clinton was, and remains, an expert at using the "bully pulpit" (the president's access to the media to pressure the Congress), to gain support from the public and overcome his critics.

But Taiwan, turning over to a new government for the first time, does have some unique problems. One is the means of recruiting senior personnel of sufficient expertise to fill positions needing special knowledge. In Washington, many of this kind are found in think tanks. There are a great many throughout the country, usually near universities, and many in Washington.

Aside from the different perceptions of how the economy and cross-strait relations are progressing, the biggest surprise for me in my recent trip, was to find so many new think tanks in Taipei. It seems democracy has a natural self-correcting capability. The next time there is a transition to a new government, there will at least be more resources available to the winner.

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Report from Washington

Taiwan into the UN resolution passes Congress

On 19 October 2000, the US Senate passed by unanimous consent a resolution calling for meaningful representation for Taiwan in the United Nations and other international organizations. Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) introduced the resolution (H.Con.Res. 390) into the Senate.

“This is a victory for the people of Taiwan,” said Rep. Bob Schaffer (R-Colo.), original sponsor of the House resolution, upon learning of the Senate vote. He added that passing the widely supported resolution *“once again restates our support and our commitment to the progress of Taiwan’s democracy.”*

Schaffer, who along with 40 of his colleagues introduced the Resolution 390 on July 27, wrote a letter to Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) Wednesday, requesting the resolution be placed on the Senate calendar to ensure its timely passage.



Congressman Bob Schaffer (R-CO)

On Oct. 3, the House had passed the resolution by an overwhelming vote. *“Congressional support for Taiwan is solid. Taiwan has made enormous strides toward becoming a full democracy and it is unreasonable for the people of Taiwan to be excluded from full participation in international institutions due to threats from mainland China,”* said Schaffer.

The previous week, Schaffer and 10 other members of the House of Representatives also sent joint letters to Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Sen. Craig Thomas (R-Wyo.), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, urging the Senate to support Taiwan’s participation in the United Nations and other international bodies such as the World Health Organization.

Formosan Association for Public Affairs President Chen Wen-yen stated *“it is a major step in the quest of the 23 million people of Taiwan for full membership in international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization.”*

He added: *“The world should not forget that UN membership for Taiwan is not some lofty dream, but it is imperative to Taiwan’s national survival. Taiwan’s access to the UN Security Council, when China again starts to rattle its sabers, is not a luxury; it is a universal right! The rest of the world has that right, therefore Taiwan should have that right too.”*

Congress favors high level contacts with Taiwan

On 14 September 2000, a bi-partisan group of twenty-three Members of the U.S. House of Representatives led by Sam Gejdenson (D-CT) and Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) introduced a resolution seeking to end restrictions on high-level visits from Taiwan, and enable direct communications and meetings with elected and appointed top officials of the island nation, including its democratically-elected president.

The resolution concludes: *“... it is the sense of the Congress that (1) it is in the interest of the Congress and the executive branch of the United States to communicate directly with elected and appointed top officials of Taiwan, including its democratically elected president; and (2) the United States should revise, with a view toward reducing, restrictions on high-level visits by these officials of Taiwan to the United States.”*

The legislation was prompted by the restrictions imposed by the Clinton Administration on the transit visit of Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian in Los Angeles in August 2000, when the State Department did not allow President Chen to meet with US Congressmen. The members of Congress contrasted the treatment of the democratically-elected Chen with the red carpet treatment given to the Chinese dictators in Washington, and termed it an outrage.

On 28 September 2000, the Senate version of this resolution, S.C.R.-140, was introduced by Senators Trent Lott (R-AL) Jesse Helms (R-NC), Murkowski (R-AK), Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Mrs. Kay Hutchinson (R-TX), Bob Smith (R-NH), Mr. Robert Bennett (R-UT), and Tim Hutchinson (R-AR).

The President of the Washington-based **Formosan Association for Public Affairs** (FAPA), professor Wen-yen Chen, expressed the appreciation to the Congress on behalf of the Taiwanese-American community, and added a strong criticism of the Clinton Administration: *“We Taiwanese Americans are utterly dismayed and outraged about the way these democratically elected leaders of Taiwan are being treated by the Clinton Administration.”*

He added that in mid-September 2000, Taiwan's Vice-president Annette Lu, was being treated in a similarly outrageous fashion by the Clinton administration. She was barred from meeting with U.S. officials during transit stops in Los Angeles and Miami on her way to and from Central America.

Resolution on Taiwan self-determination introduced

On 27 October 2000, a bi-partisan group of members of the U.S. House of representatives introduced "Assent of the People of Taiwan" Resolution (H.Res. 659). The resolution was introduced by a bi-partisan group led by Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY), including prominent members such as Peter Deutsch (D-FL), Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), Pete Sessions (R-TX), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Robert Andrews (D-NJ), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Steve Chabot (R-OH), Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Howard Berman (D-CA), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Gary Ackerman (D-NY) and David Wu (D-OR). It expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the future of Taiwan should not only be resolved peacefully but also ***through a democratic mechanism and with the express consent of the people of Taiwan.***



Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY)

The resolution terms the right of self-determination as a fundamental right of all people, set forth in numerous United Nations instruments of which the United States is a signatory.

That right of the people of Taiwan to determine their own future was explicitly affirmed by President Clinton in two speeches done on 24 February 2000 and 8 March 2000, where he stated that "*We will... continue to make absolutely clear that the issue between Beijing and Taiwan must be resolved peacefully and with the **assent** of the people of Taiwan.*"

While Taiwan has expressed its willingness to re-open dialogues with China and has embraced peaceful means to solve the cross-Strait issue, China has continually refused

to renounce the use of force against Taiwan. This is the key obstacle to the cross-Strait stalemate.

Introducer Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY) stated: “*The right to self-determination is not a concept reserved strictly for Americans, but for all people around the world. This resolution reaffirms U.S. Congressional support for those who wish to secure these rights through peaceful negotiations and democratic mechanisms.*”

FAPA President Wen-yen Chen, Ph.D. said “*It is significant that Taiwan’s friends in Congress deemed it important to introduce this resolution on the very last day of the 106th Congress. The mere introduction of this resolution sends a clear signal to rest of the world and to Beijing in particular that it is the sense of Congress that the future of Taiwan must only be determined by the people of Taiwan, without any outside interference from China!*”

Notes

The visit of Mr. Lee Kuan-yew

In September 2000, former Singapore prime minister Lee Kuan Yew visited Taiwan and gave Taiwan and its leaders plenty of “advice” regarding relations with China. We took a look at Mr. Lee, his background and views. The article was published in the Taipei Times on 14 September 2000.

Lee was born into a wealthy Chinese family in Singapore in 1923. He studied law in England in the late 1940s and was admitted to the English bar in 1950. After his return from England he became a leader in nationalist political circles, and in 1954 formed the People’s Action Party. Lee was a member of the delegation that negotiated Singapore’s independence from the British in 1956-58. Following his party’s victory in the subsequent elections, he became prime minister in 1959, a post he held until 1990.

The fact that he led Singapore for more than 30 years presents two alternative propositions. First, the people of Singapore liked him so much that they elected him again and again; or second he was repressive and didn’t allow opposition to surface.

As anyone familiar with Singapore’s history will confirm, proposition number 2 is the correct one: for a while there was a mere one-man opposition in Singapore’s parliament, and Lee found it necessary to frame that person and imprison him.

Perhaps Lee's Singapore is thus not a great showcase for democracy. Lee coined a phrase for his approach: "Asian values," meaning that individual human rights are less important than the government deciding what is best for its people. Lee and other small-time dictators such as Hong Kong's Tung Chee-hwa and Malaysia's Dr Mahathir Mohamad have used the concept to justify the authoritarian state of affairs in their states.

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So, what kind of advice is Lee going to bring us? Presumably that unification with China is "inevitable," as he stated in an interview with the **Far Eastern Economic Review** on 8 June 2000. But, wait a minute, if "unification" is so good for Taiwan, why doesn't Singapore "unify" with China? Aren't they all Chinese? We haven't seen any indication that Lee intends Singapore to do that.



In the same interview, Lee stated that it is wrong for Taiwan to emphasize its own separate identity. Yet, isn't that what he has been doing in Singapore himself? Lee, isn't it a bit hypocritical to tell others they can't have their own identity, when you have been asserting Singapore's identity yourself all your life?

As Taiwanese we have the same right as all the peoples of the world to our own identity, culture, and history. We have the same right as all the peoples of the world to be accepted as full and equal members of the international community.

Lee would do best, therefore, to stay at home and mind his own business. We Taiwanese will determine our own future.

Mr. Lee Wen-ho's nuclear secrets

During the months of August through October 2000, the case of scientist Wen-ho Lee was extensively in the news again. Mr. Lee was eventually released in October when the judge in the case determined that the prosecution had presented inaccurate

information, and also had attempted to coerce Mr. Lee into a confession.

Mr. Lee had been indicted and imprisoned by the US authorities in December 1999 after much delay and foot-dragging, and was held for nine months, most of it in solitary confinement. He was charged with illegally removing nuclear secrets from his Los Alamos computers, when it became difficult to find direct evidence of the original suspicions that he had provided secrets on US nuclear weapons to China in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The defense and some Chinese-American and Asian-American organizations were trying to play the “race card” by charging that Mr. Lee was the victim of “ethnic profiling”, and was indicted simply because he was of oriental descent. We believe this charge is not right.

As Asian-Americans, we need to make it perfectly clear where our loyalties lie: with freedom and democracy, not with repressive regimes. While we cannot say yet whether Mr. Lee is guilty or not, we must point out there is ample evidence that Mr. Lee was playing with fire and that he knew it.

Some Taiwanese-Americans, who knew Mr. Lee and his wife when he was still working at the Idaho National Laboratory in the mid-1980s, say that he and his wife were overly eager to contact visiting Chinese delegations and “exchange views” with them. Lee and his wife also jumped at the opportunity to visit China in 1986 and 1988 at the invitation of the Chinese Institute of Applied Physics and Computational Mathematics, which is involved in the design and simulation of nuclear weapons.

According to the original 59 counts of the indictment, Mr. Lee transferred hundreds of files containing nuclear weapons secrets to unclassified computers and removable computer tapes. One government agent stated that, if printed out, the volume of material would make a stack of paper 134 feet tall. It would be gullible to assume Mr. Lee did this just to impress potential employers, as his defense attorneys were trying to imply.

If Mr. Lee truly wants to be considered an American citizen, he should be held accountable for his actions and not hide behind a “race card”. If he indeed contributed to an increase in China’s knowledge of miniaturized nuclear weapons, this is endangering the future of our home country Taiwan. We need to know what happened.

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