

# **The USA and the Taiwan Strait Conflict:**

## **Principal Cause and Main Beneficiary**

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*Sino-US relations together with US policy on Taiwan can be considered as a special case in the history of international relations. However, the US Taiwan policy exemplifies a common practice of American unilateral principles. On one hand, when WWII ended, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed that Japan should return Taiwan to China - one of the Allied Powers in the war. On the other hand, the US has been hindering Mainland China from obtaining the ruling power on Taiwan throughout history and obstructing the Mainland Chinese government's seat in the United Nations in every possible way. On one hand, the US acknowledges that there is only one China that includes both sides of the Taiwan Strait. On the other hand, the US passed the Taiwan Relations Act after it had established a formal diplomatic relationship with Mainland China, not fully accepting the fact that the communist government had continuously controlled the majority of Chinese and the mainland for such a long period of time, and ignoring China's sovereignty over Taiwan. On one hand, the US urges two sides of the Taiwan Strait over and over that reunification should be realized peacefully, avoiding armed conflict. On the other hand, the US continuously sells arms to Taiwan, and also carries on the military conferences and exercises with Taiwan. Many scholars in the field have interpreted the US Taiwan policy from perspectives of history, principles of national interests or national strategy, and theories of hegemony or balance of power, describing US Taiwan policy as "democratic", "moral and just" or "ambiguous" strategy. This article, based on the interpretation of the US attitudes towards and actions on Taiwan issue since WWII, the American way of its functioning in the world, and their beliefs and ideals from the perspectives of international law, logic and ideology, argues that US Taiwan policy is a typical practice of unilateralism supported by its own interests, ambition, and beliefs. The US is the principal cause and main beneficiary of the fait accompli of the Taiwan Strait.*

### **Introduction**

Chen Shui-bian often poses himself as a real Taiwanese, and claims that Taiwan belongs to local Taiwanese not the National Party ( KMT ) which fled into Taiwan after being defeated by the Communist Party ( CPC ). Last summer a Taiwanese businessman who has been working in Mainland China for quite a few years said to the author of this article that to Taiwanese, the US is their father, and Japan is their mother. It is not the purpose of this article to judge who is right, Chen Shui-bian or that Taiwanese businessman, or to argue whom Taiwan belongs to, local Taiwanese, National Party and other people from the Mainland, the US or Japan. The purpose of this article is to discuss why the PRC and Taiwan still cannot be reunified after being separated for more than half a century even though most of the world acknowledges that there is only one China and Taiwan is a part of it.

If there is only one China in the world and it is a commonly recognized fact, the Taiwan Strait issue, strictly speaking, should be a domestic issue between the PRC and Taiwan. If other players were not involved in the game, a unified China could have been formed either as a result of the Civil War between 1945 and 1949, or before the Korean War as many countries went through in history, or as a result of a peace talk like these between Western and Eastern Germany, or what may happen in the future between North and South Korea. However, the US has been involved in cross-Strait conflict as soon as it has occurred. Why is it that the US started meddling with this conflict at the end of the WWII, and is still meddling with this issue? Has America's involvement in the Taiwan Strait been argued in the Public International Law, or is it from America's good will for the best interests of Chinese cross the strait? Is US Taiwan policy democratic, moral and just, or hegemonic and overbearing? What if the US had never intervened in this affair?

### Literature Review

Many scholars in China, the US, Taiwan and other regions have made comments on cross-Strait issue, and have interpreted US Taiwan policy from perspectives of history, international law, principle of national interests, principle of national strategy, theory of balance of power, and theory of hegemony. In analyzing Bush's Taiwan policy in his first term, B. Li ( 2005 ) summarizes it as "One Core, and Two Basic Points". The core is American national interest; and two basic points are three documents of Sino-U.S. relations<sup>1</sup> and the Taiwan Relations Act<sup>2</sup>. The Taiwan Strait issue is the most sensitive one in Sino-US relations. It answers most important questions including why it took six years ( from 1972 to 1978 ) for the two countries to establish formal diplomacy ( B. Li, 1999 ). US-Taiwan policies have been under surveillance and restriction of Congress that represents groups of different interests including arms merchants, people with Cold War thoughts, and promoters of peace and democracy. To the best interests of the US, maintaining the fission of the Taiwan Strait, not only delays the formation of Economic Community of a Great China, but also provides the US the greatest economic benefits from both the PRC and Taiwan ( G. Li, 2000 ). S. Ding made a similar summary from his research on the US Taiwan policy ( 2004 ) that to maintain the present situation of "No Independence, No Reunification, No War and No Peace" in the Taiwan Strait is to the best interests of the US so that it can control Taiwan and lever Mainland China. The US can keep both its "unsinkable aircraft carrier" and important partner of anti-terrorism.

However, some scholars are inclined to believe that beside the national interests, there are other factors influencing America's decisions on Taiwan such as international duty and domestic politics of the

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<sup>1</sup> Three documents are "Shanghai Communiqué"( 1972 ), "Joint Communiqué" ( 1978 ), and "US-PRC Agreement 8/17" ( 1982 ).

<sup>2</sup> As U.S. Public Law 96-8 approved on April 10, 1979 by the 96<sup>th</sup> Congress "to help maintain peace, security, and stability in the Western Pacific and to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing the continuation of commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan, and for other purposes".

US( G. Li, 2000 ) Li listed four items under the international duty:

- 1 ) To acknowledge the PRC as the only valid government and keep unofficial relations with Taiwan;
- 2 ) To acknowledge the fact that both sides of the Taiwan Strait accept the statement of “one China, and Taiwan as a part of China”;
- 3 ) The future of Taiwan will be decided by Chinese of both sides, and peaceful resolution is what the US cares about; and
- 4 ) The US is not pursuing a long-term policy of selling arms to Taiwan. The technical function and quantity of arms sold to Taiwan will not exceed the amount of that when Sino-US relation were formally established ( \$ 0.8 billion between 1978 and 1979 ). The US promises to reduce that amount of arms sale gradually until a final solution occurs.

X. Li ( 2003 ) in his “Global strategy of the US and its Taiwan policy”, points out that America’s Taiwan policy serves its China policy, and its China policy serves its global policy-hegemony. Before the terrorist attack, the US regarded China as its main latent enemy so it used Taiwan as a tool of diversion to China. When anti-terrorism became America’s first priority, China’s support and cooperation exceeded Taiwan’s weight in the global strategy of the US. In other words, America’s policies towards China or Taiwan are the footnotes of its hegemony in the world. As the chief translator of Nixon and the minister of the US Embassy in China, Chas W. Freeman, is an important participant and witness of Sino-American relations. Freeman ( 2004 ) recommended a negotiation between the PRC and Taiwan under the principle of “one China”. In his speech at a meeting of the American-Chinese Friendship Association Freeman introduced the American audience to many facts of China’s most recent development he witnessed. He expressed the view that Washington opposes any kind of unilateral changes of the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, and the Chinese from both sides should avoid confrontation in their disputes. The US will not admit the independence of Taiwan without Beijing’s acknowledgement and the reunification without the support of the Taiwan people.

The most recent official and detailed interpretation of the US-Taiwan policy was made by the vice assistant Secretary of State, Thomas J. Christensen, on September 11, 2007 at the US-Taiwan Conference of National Defense Industry organized by the US-Taiwan Business Council ( Christensen, 2007 ). In the speech “A Strong and Moderate Taiwan” he explained America’s attention to Taiwan from perspectives of strategy, morality and justice, and law. Due to the role of being a pacific power with global interests and responsibilities, the US cares about the peace of Asia including the Taiwan Strait where the US has great and long-term interests. America’s attention to Taiwan is also because Taiwan has been a dear friend of the US for dozens of years and the US has had to follow its domestic law of Taiwan Relations Act to support Taiwan. However, Christensen did not explain why the US can violate the international law by following its domestic law.

There are some promoters of the “China Threat” theory in the US who hold an extreme view on the Taiwan Strait issue. They do not look at Taiwan as a piece of the territory of China, but “an operational

base for the Chinese military” ( Waldron, 2004 ). Waldron held that the unification of Taiwan and China would severely menace the national-security interests of every Asian state including America’s democratic friends and allies. The US should prevent Taiwan’s falling under Chinese control for justice, international legality, and security of the US and its friends. Under the cloud of “China Threat”, Fisher ( 2004 ) gave very specific military and diplomatic advice including military reforms in Taiwan and military budget in the US:

*The US should mount a concerted diplomatic campaign to convince allies like Japan and the Philippines that a PRC attack on Taiwan poses a direct threat to their national security, and thus, should work with the US to deter China.*

*The US should begin a public education campaign in Asia and Europe to highlight China’s threat to democratic Taiwan, making clear that if China chooses to wage war on Taiwan, it will also be declaring its long-term hostility to every other civilized democratic society.*

*The US should make clear that China does not have the right to settle its differences with Taiwan by War...And Washington should begin now to plan to lead a total global economic embargo against China whether it wins or loses a war against Taiwan.*

However, Mr. Fisher did not explain why the US should take the leadership for an imaginary enemy.

The former president of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew often makes comments on cross-Strait issues and discusses this matter with the leaders of Communist Party ( CCP ), National Party ( KMT ) and Democratic Progressive Party ( DPP in Taiwan ) as an old Chinese friend. He expressed the following opinions in recent talks: first, comparing with trade and exchange rate of RMB, Taiwan issue is far more important to Sino-US relations. Second, a stable cross-Strait situation is extremely important to a steady and peaceful Eastern Asia as well as Sino-American relations. Third, it is impossible that Taiwan can claim independence and join the UN as a sovereign state because: 1 ) both Bush and Fukuda, as the leaders of Taiwan’s closest allies, the US and Japan, announced that they do not support the independence of Taiwan; 2 ) none of the five permanent members of the UN will vote for Taiwan becoming a member; and 3 ) Taiwan is China’s most important national interest and China is prepared to do everything to stop Taiwan’s independence under the Anti-Secession Law. Fourth, China is happy to keep the present situation in the Taiwan Strait because Chinese understand that advanced technology is the key to a strong China, and Taiwan is in a bypass of its learning of American technology. Fifth, Taiwan should join the economic development of China, and enjoy the prosperity together with China ( the author summarized Lee’s talks to Taiwan’s leaders from Lee, 2006, 2007 & 2008 ).

Using critical constructivism as its central conceptual framework, in his most recently published book on this topic, Tunsjo ( 2008 ) connects the Taiwan issue with US identity by showing how US Taiwan policy is tied to the discursively constructed US identity as the leader in the battle against Communism and as the champion of promoting democracy and freedom worldwide. Tunsjo uses different terminologies than Chinese scholars to divide the status of Taiwan into four discourses that US Taiwan policies were based on: ‘determined’, ‘undetermined’, ‘independent’, and Taiwan as representing all of

China ( the 'red menace' discourse<sup>3</sup> ) when the US considered the Chinese government in Beijing as "a tool of Russian imperialism in China".

In terms of economic exchanges between China and Taiwan, it shows a totally different picture than the political tension between them ( Chen, 2003; Tung, 2003; Gu, 2005; Paradise, 2007; Tang, 2007 ). In his article, Paradise ( 2007 ) provides many numbers and facts on bolstering economic relations between Taiwan and Mainland China. In 2006, Mainland China was Taiwan's biggest export destination and biggest trading partner; Mainland China has been the top area for Taiwan's approved outward investment over the 16-year period; 4.4 million Taiwan tourists visited Mainland China, up from 3.7 million in 2002; mainlanders visiting Taiwan as tourists were 98,550 compared to 2,151 in 2002 and zero in 2001; the number of cross-strait graduate student exchanges was 535 compared to 248 in 2001, and the number of scholar exchanges was 526 versus 267; the number of ships traveling between Kinmen, Matsu and Mainland China on a round-trip basis has increased from 182 in 2001 to 4,460 in 2006.

According to the literature review, US-Taiwan policy has its basis in terms of global strategy, moral and justice, and law. It serves its global policy of hegemony because it is in the best interests of the US. Since China is a threat to democratic Taiwan, the US should be prepared and help Taiwan to be prepared for deterring a Chinese attack against Taiwan. Beside the commonly recognized fact that the US always pursues the power in the world, it is nothing wrong in protecting its national interests and its democratic friend. This article, however, is to analyze US Taiwan policy from perspectives of international law, logic and ideology of democracy.

### **International Law or Unilateralism**

International Law or Public International Law is sometimes called the "law of nations". It concerns the structure and conduct of states and intergovernmental organizations. There are mainly three forms of international law: treaty, international common law, and general law recognized by most countries like the Charter of the United Nations. The basic principles of international law are: sovereign equality among nations, mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, noninterference in each other's domestic affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence, peaceful solution to international disputes, interdicts to threaten with military force or/and use military force, national self-determination principle and so on. Under International Law, every country is equal. Domestic laws are subordinate to the International Law.

According to Wikipedia ( 2006 ), unilateralism is any doctrine or agenda that supports one-sided action. Such action may be in disregard for other parties, or as an expression of a commitment towards a direction which other parties may find agreeable. Unilateralism is coined to be an antonym for multilat-

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<sup>3</sup> The 'red menace' discourse identified self and other( s ) in terms of the evolving representation of Cold War international politics ( Tunsjo, 2008 ).

eralism that asserts the benefits of participation from as many parties as possible. The two terms together can refer to differences in a foreign policy approach to international problems. When agreement by multiple parties is absolutely required according to multilateralism, proponents of unilateralism prefer support to bilateral agreements between parties. The US foreign policy, beginning with Washington, has traditionally been driven by unilateralism according to historians and recent works cited in Wikipedia. US diplomacy with Taiwan and China and its dealing with the cross-Strait crisis is absolutely a practice of unilateralism.

Sino-U.S. relations including US-Taiwan relations can be divided into three periods in history: 1 ) 1913-1949; 2 ) 1949-1978; and 3 ) 1979-present. The nature of US-Taiwan relations in three periods have changed from US-China relation to US-Taiwan as a separate power of China, and then to US-Taiwan as a local government of China. The US changes its tendencies towards the two sides of the Taiwan Strait according to its needs. However, the principle of US-Taiwan policy never changes. Every diplomatic action involving the area the US took was unilateral under its manipulation. In February 1945, in order to persuade the Soviet Union to fight with Japan, the US divided the scope of interests in China with the Soviet Union, and the USSR promised to support Chiang Kai-shek instead of Mao Zedong. In April 1945, the US announced that it would “only cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek, not with the communist party”, and that the US would support Chiang Kai-shek to unify China with economic, military, and diplomacy. On December 15, 1945, President Truman announced that Chiang Kai-shek’s government was the only valid government in China, and thus encouraged Chiang Kai-shek to start the third Civil War with CPC ( Lv and Zhou, 2001 ). In 1950 the US formulated the “Seven Principles of Peace Treaty with Japan” without discussing it with the Soviet Union, Britain, or China. Due to the difference between the US and Britain on whether Beijing or Taiwan should represent China, China was excluded from the drawing of the treaty. The US ignored the agreements reached at Cairo and Potsdam conferences of returning Taiwan to China, and replaced them with a vague statement of “Japan giving up Taiwan and Penghu” without mentioning “returning to China”, and prepared for Truman’s statement of “Taiwan status undecided” ( Shi, 2005 ). Eisenhower criticized Truman’s Taiwan policy, and encouraged Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT to “take any actions towards the CPC according to their will”. On April 6, 1953, the Secretary of State Dulles told news reporters that the US is considering establishing the “Republic of Taiwan” ( Lv and Zhou, 2001 ). On December 2, 1954, the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty was signed between the US and Taiwan. Since then Taiwan has been under US military protection even after 1978 when the US was pursuing a formal relationship with the PRC. Three months after Sino-American diplomatic relations were established, the US passed the Taiwan Relations Act. According this domestic law, the US can continue selling Taiwan arms and interfering with China’s internal affairs ( Rao, 2003 ). In 1982, the Reagan government promised Chiang Jing-kuo, the President of Taiwan: no limits on time of America’s arms sale to Taiwan; no discussion with Beijing before selling arms to Taiwan; the US will not play a role of mediation between Beijing and Taiwan; the US will keep the promise made in Taiwan Relations Act; the US will recognize Taiwan’s sovereignty; and the US will not force Taiwan to enter into negotiations with China ( Liu, 2002 ). The Taiwan Relations Act is not an international law but a domestic law of the US. It certainly cannot be used as the guideline of a relation-

ship between one country and a region of another country. If the US truly respects the three bilateral treaties with China, it should not have signed such an act without including China or discussing it with China. Will the US accept a domestic law of another country on how to protect Hawaii or Alaska? The answer is definitely not.

There are numerous other examples of American practices of unilateralism. But why in dealing with China and Taiwan, the US has been exclusively practicing the principle of unilateralism? First, the US had a tradition of practicing unilateralism starting from its first President George Washington. In his famous and influential Farewell Address, Washington warned that the United States should “steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world”. Thus some historians of the US diplomacy have long argued that the US foreign policy, beginning with Washington, has traditionally been driven not by isolationism but by unilateralism ( Wikipedia, 2006 ). Second, the US never wanted to share the interests of the region with other powers especially Japan and Russia( including the former Soviet Union ). Japan had a profound influence on Taiwan over its fifty years rule there. Taiwanese had spoken Japanese for more than two generations. Japanese influences also covered the areas of economy, technology and culture. As close as US-Japan relations were in many areas, the US never let Japan get involved in the issue without approval of the US although cross-Strait is a critical area to Japan not only the closeness in geography, but also 70-80% of Japanese import of oil, raw materials and strategic resource has to go through the strait. The US also worries about the involvement of Russia, for Russia may support the reunification of China and Taiwan, and put more pressure on Taiwan’s claiming of independence. If Japan or Russia expresses an opinion favorable to China, the US would be at a disadvantage in pursuing its own interests. Third, it is true that the US does not want to see a war between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. But the last thing the US wants to see is Taiwan and the PRC reunified, working together towards the prosperity of Chinese on both sides and thus to form a Great China in the Western Pacific. This Great China will be a powerful confronter and competitor of the US in the world as well as in the region.

### **Peace of the Taiwan Strait or Hegemony of the US**

The Taiwan Strait is located at a key position of transportation between Pacific Ocean and Indian Ocean. It is the oil duct from Middle East to Eastern Asia. To China, the Taiwan Strait connects the South Sea, the North Sea, the Western Pacific Ocean, and the Indian Ocean. Three quarters of the navigation routes of China pass through the Strait. To the US, Taiwan was its front post against communism during the Cold War, a military point of descent in an area where otherwise the US would have no reason to be, an excuse for interfering the Western Pacific and a weight of manipulating Sino-U.S. relations. The ever-lasting cross-Strait crisis can provide the US with many opportunities to play certain roles under different circumstances in this strategic area.

US-Taiwan relations can be traced back to 1913 when the US announced its recognition of the Republic of China under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. However, the two countries almost had no dip-

lomatic contact until November 1943 when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek made joint war plans at the Cairo Conference, providing post-war conditions such as the restoration of lost Chinese territories, including Taiwan and Penghu ( US-China Relations ). Between the end of 1948 and the early 1949, the US tried to exercise an influence on Taiwan's independence by propping local interests groups who were against both CPC and KMT. After the Korean War started, Taiwan's strategic location became very important. In Early 1950, the US tried to persuade other countries to entrust Taiwan to the UN. In the same year, the US set up a military liaison office in Taiwan, and established a military assistance advisory group there in the following year. Taiwan has become an "un-sinkable aircraft carrier" of the US since then ( Lv and Zhou, 2001 ).

On one hand, the US urges two sides of cross-Strait repeatedly that reunification is to be realized peacefully, avoiding armed conflict. On the other hand, the US continuously sells arms to Taiwan, and also carries on the military conferences and exercises with Taiwan. Throughout history, the US has had six treaties on Taiwan issue with China or without China, and four of them are bilateral international treaties. It is understandable that the US signed the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan in 1954 when it acknowledged Taiwan as the legitimate government of China. However, it was against the international law that the US passed the Taiwan Relations Act ( 1979 ) and the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act ( 1999 ) after it had established a formal diplomatic relationship with Mainland China ( US-China Relations ). The US ignores the fundamental principle of Sino-American relations stated in all three bilateral treaties and keeps doing things against it. To the US, "One China" is a principle of words not a principle of action. While improving its relations with China, the US is constantly doing things to destroy this relationship. Among them, the most fatal one is its arms sale to Taiwan. But it is not because the US is so foolish as to make the same mistake repeatedly. It is rather a US strategy to keep its involvement in the Taiwan Strait. The US arms sale to Taiwan resumed a year after it started a formal relationship with China when the US announced its sale of \$ 280 million in defensive arms to Taiwan on Jan. 3, 1980. On Feb. 12, 1981, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission approved export of 3 reactors to Taiwan. In 1982 the US approved sale of additional F-5E fighter aircraft on Jan. 11, and sale of \$ 60 million in military spare parts to Taiwan on April 13. In order to remove this obstacle of a good Sino-American relationship, the two countries signed a third bilateral treaty - "US-PRC Agreement 8 / 17" in 1982 that the US promises not to exceed--and gradually to reduce--current levels of arms sales to Taiwan. However, a year latter the US announced plans to sell \$ 530 million in new arms to Taiwan on July 15, 1983 ( US-China Relations ).

During Bush's first four years in White house, Sino-American relations experienced a trend of "W" ( B. Li, 2005 ). In April 2001, the same month as airplane collision between China and the US happened in the South Sea, Bush's government sold Taiwan arms worth more than \$ 10 billion including Diesel-Powered Submarines, Anti-submarine Air Craft, and Destroyers. But five months later, Bush upgraded Sino-American relations from "strategy competitor" to "constructive cooperation" because the US needs China's help in fighting with terrorists. In the first half of 2004, the American government criticized China on the issue of human rights, praised Chen Shui-bian's inauguration speech on May 20, and car-



ried out a few military exercises around China. Nevertheless there is something approaching an American consensus that the rise of China presents the most important long-term challenge to America's currently pre-eminent wealth and power( Freeman, 2004 ). Whenever being felt China's challenge to its position of the world overlord, the US uses Taiwan as a diversion of China. Whenever China's support and cooperation are needed, the US will have a show of being harsh on Taiwan, and repeat its "One China" pledge. Two examples are the US's fight on terrorism and the North Korea Nuclear Crisis. If the US feels strongly about China without Taiwan as a challenge and "threat" to it, a reunified China with Taiwan will make the US feel more challenged and threatened.

The US arms sale to Taiwan is a double edged knife hurting both China and Taiwan, but it brings the US double benefits. On one hand, the US made Taiwan believe that it cannot survive without US arms as it was stated in the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act( 1999 )"such sales have helped Taiwan maintain its autonomy and freedom". Thus, Taiwan has no choice but to wait for American bestowment at its convenience. On the other hand, the US blames all its military business with Taiwan on China because China is a threat to Taiwan as well as the democratic world because China does not have an American type of democracy like Taiwan, and China has a bad record of human rights. The US also believes that only China can be the obstacle to its hegemony in Western Pacific region. The whole process becomes a vicious circle under the control of the US. By selling arms to Taiwan, it irritates China to build up more military and arms, and even to arrange missiles across the Strait. Thus Taiwan and its people panic more and have more reliance on the US' arms sales. The US can sell more arms to Taiwan, sometimes to both sides, for "good reasons". The US also can make believe that China is a threat to Taiwan and the region. So "China Threat" and arms sale to Taiwan are the two sides of one coin that serves the US' double benefits. By doing this, the US became the leverage of both sides of the Taiwan Strait, and American military merchants made profits as well. By doing this, the US is not preventing the war, but creating a crisis to slow down the reunification of Taiwan and China through sending the wrong signal to advocates of Taiwan independence that the US will be their strong military support. The US hegemony in this area can only last when the area is constantly under the threat of war that is not created by China but by the US. It is possible that when the US stops selling arms to Taiwan, China will remove its arms including missiles across the Strait. It is also possible that when the US stops military exercises with Taiwan or other countries in the area with China as an imaginary enemy, China will stop its military exercises in the Strait. If the US stops military interfering since it is not the litigant of the cross-Strait issue, and the US has much stronger military power than China as the whole world acknowledges, the possibility of peace in the Taiwan Strait would be much higher, or the process towards the peace in the region would be much faster. At least, it would be the way it was supposed to be, and it would be very different.

### **Advancing Democracy or Forcing American Ideology**

Cold War thinking and forcing democracy are the two ideological guidelines of the US dealings with China, Taiwan, and cross-Strait conflict. China-Taiwan issue is more complicated than other issues of territorial integrity because it was pulled into the Cold War as soon as it occurred. On March 12 1947,

in his State of the Union Address, Truman said that the US “shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes... The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms... If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world -- and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own nation”( Truman Doctrine, 1947 ). Although Truman did not mention the name of the Soviet Union, it was the target of his criticism. Historians often use it to mark the starting date of the Cold War. Due to the Cold War thinking, the US policy-making organs discussed US-Taiwan policy between the end of 1948 and spring of 1949, and reached a consistent statement that the basic goal of the US is to prevent Taiwan and Penghu fall in the hands of communist party. The most practical means to reach this goal was to separate those islands with Mainland China( Lv and Zhou, 2001 ). After the failure in helping Chiang Kai-shek to unify China, the US sent military advisors training KMT and equipped 45 divisions of KMT between the end of the WWII in Europe and June 1945( Lv and Zhou, 2001 ). In Feb. 1946, the US equipped eight and one-third divisions of KMT air force with 936 airplanes. The US also sent 300 naval personnel to help KMT's navy with 271 ships( Zhao, 2005 ). In the end of June that year, Chiang Kai-shek comprehensively started the civil war with the CPC, thus started the cross-Strait conflict. The cold war thinking occupied some American high officials even at the beginning of the century. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense, former ambassador in China and Nixon's interpreter Chas W. Freeman, is one of the nation's leading authorities on U.S.-China relations. In answering many Americans' questions of why the US wants to have a war with China because of China-Taiwan relations, Freeman explained: “As the century began, we Americans were still suffering from enemy deprivation syndrome -- the sick feeling of disorientation one feels when one has lost a powerful enemy and isn't quite sure how to justify continued high levels of defense spending. For a time, China seemed to be in line to fill in behind the late, unlamented USSR. But on September 11, 2001 America was cruelly assaulted by real, not imaginary enemies. Only the lunatic fringe and a few of its fellow travelers inside the Beltway now seek to appoint China as enemy-in-chief of the United States”( 2004 ).

Protecting democracy is constantly used by the US as its reason for involvement in cross-Strait conflicts. The US often tells Taiwan that Taiwanese are American's old friends and that Taiwan and the US belong to the same camp of democracy. Therefore, the US will always be there to protect its old friends and their democracy, whereas there are no democracy and human rights in the PRC. With China experiencing fast economic and military development, a non-democratic China is a threat to both democratic US and Taiwan.

The form of a regime or the way of governing a country has been a topic for philosophers and scholars since the Ancient Greek age especially during the Enlightenment Movement in the eighteenth century. Although few people still follow Montesquieu's determinism of geographical environment where the formation of a government is concerned, history and tradition, possibilities and timing, and even the size of a country are among the important facts to be considered. Democracy cannot be simply imported from outside to a country, especially to a big country like China. The former President of Sin-

gapore, Lee Kuan Yew holds that American democracy is not suitable in Asia. He expressed his opinion on democracy on September 15 at Hamburg Summit in Germany saying that a country cannot advance democracy only by depending on democratic elections. There are three other important factors: a legal system, honest and fair leaders, and an implemental anti-corruption law ( 2006 ). There are different forms of democratic government under different situations and within different contexts. The process of democratizing varies among countries. Democracy is the result of a long-term political reform and progression. It grows and develops within a society based on its political needs, social and ideological readiness. The ancient Greek Democracy and the ancient Roman Republic are different forms of democratic government as the results of many reforms through different means. With a foundation of basic democratic means in terms of people's interests being protected, ensuring basic needs of people's life such as food and clothing, and political stability of a country and harmony of the society are the utmost important responsibilities of a government, especially to China that has such a vast territory with 22% of world population.

The United States was established first as a government of confederation, and then as a federal republic under the influence of British Revolution and French Revolution. It was not until after 1870 that African Americans were theoretically equal before the law, racial equality has been, and continues to be, an elusive reality in American life. Women in the US did not have the right to vote until 1920 after they fought for women's suffrage for more than one and an half centuries. China had an extremely long period of feudalist society in which the emperor was above everybody under a heavenly god. It has been a centralized agricultural society with peasants as the majority of citizens, who had almost no education. Before the Open-door policy, China had been isolated from most of the democratic countries and their concepts. It is difficult for such a vast agricultural society with the vast majority of people knowing nothing about democracy to produce a democratic society overnight. Since the last thirty years, China has changed dramatically in its economic system, theory, and performance. Even in the political area, China has been gradually improving its policies and practices. The general secretary of CPC Hu Jin-tao has been advocating establishing a harmonious society. The Premier Wen Jia-bao also keep telling himself and his CPC colleagues and subordinates that the government is of the people, by the people and for the people. Nowadays, the top leaders of China are discussing what Hu Jin-tao recently suggested of turning the government into an organ of a service type to better serve its people. In leading the Chinese people in fighting with the historical cold weather and heavy snow storm recently, the CPC government showed its caring to the ordinary people and a strong leadership of fighting the natural disasters not inferior to its western counterparts. On Feb. 28, China, for the first time in history, published a white book on its legal system. The document has eight parts with 229 laws attached, explaining Chinese legal system including human rights. In the document China admits the imbalance between economic and political development. China also announced improving democracy at various levels of the government. The first priority of China is to keep political stability. China does not want to become the second Soviet Union to fall apart. The concept of unification has been deeply rooted in Chinese culture for thousands of years.

Freeman ( 2004 ) has been following the most recent development in China. His comments on China are very different from the mainstream of US media. According to him, China has articulated no ideologies of imperialism, colonialism, mercantilism, militarism, manifest destiny, territorial aggrandizement, or civilization mission. It has instead, stressed the equality of nations, the inviolability of national sovereignty, and the supremacy of the United Nations Charter. There has been no hint of a Chinese “Munroe Doctrine” for Asia; China has not sought to displace the US or US forces from the region or to fill the vacuum that US inattention has sometimes created. The Chinese did not take Hong Kong or Macao by force, though they could have. When they recovered these territories they were respectful of the status quo in them; they did not seek to impose their own system there, though they have been less hospitable to post-colonial democratic reforms than they should have been. Similarly, China has now settled all of its land borders with Russia, the newly independent Central Asian states, and Vietnam through negotiations in which China gave as much or more than it got. China says it is prepared to do the same for its maritime boundaries. All the evidence to date suggests that China is not a new power seeking to stake out an unprecedented status for itself at the expense of the existing regional or international order( Freeman, 2004 )

Democracy is more of an ideology than a form of government. It is an ideology of guiding people to treat other people well and as a country, to treat other countries equally. Moreover, democracy is more about ordinary people’s daily life than an ideology. It is applicable not only to domestic issues such as human rights of living and speaking without fear, but also to international issues such as national rights of sovereignty and noninterference from hegemony. Democracy is a principle of dealing with international affairs as well as dealing with domestic issues on every aspect of people’s life.

### **Resolution of the China-Taiwan Issue**

The China-Taiwan issue has been “a key de-stabilizing factor for East Asia and beyond” ( Gu, 2005 ) It is one of the great difficulties in international relations. However, no matter how difficult it is, there is a solution for it. Here are some hypotheses as to the best possible and rational resolutions in the future on the matter.

#### Chen( now Ma )as Taiwan’s Nixon

Professor Wang had a hypothesis that Chen Shui-bian could be Taiwan’s Nixon: “Just as the zealous anti-communist Nixon turned out to be the US leader to open the door to communist China, Chen also has the historic opportunity to become Taiwan’s Nixon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to ‘normalize’ the relations with China”. Wang also points out that when Mao shook hands with Nixon, the US still recognized Taiwan as the sole legitimate government of China( J. Wang, 2005 )

Many years have passed, but Chen did not grasp this historic moment. He probably will never have the moment any more. When Nixon and Mao had their historic meeting, their focus was on changing the

world pattern and combination. The Taiwan issue was not their main concern at that moment. However, it took six years before a formal relationship was established between China and the US. Without America's acknowledge of "One China", this relationship would have never built up. In Sino-US relations, "One China" can be agreed after the negotiation went on to a certain stage, whereas "One China" is the starting point of China-Taiwan negotiation. As long as Taiwan is willing to negotiate with Beijing under the principle of "One China", Beijing should be relatively flexible as expressed in its "Anti-Secession Law" that "After the country is reunified peacefully, Taiwan may practice systems different from those on the mainland and enjoy a high degree of autonomy" ( The National People's Congress of China, March 14, 2005 ). In terms of possible form of Chinese government after reunification, Gu's hypothesis is a federation ( 2005 )

#### Federation as the Win-win Solution

Economically, the relationship between Taiwan and China has been developing with a great speed. China is Taiwan's biggest trading partner as well as its top export market. According to Gu ( 2005 ), there were over 60 ,000 Taiwan enterprises investing in China. More that 1 million Taiwanese are living in China. Cross-Strait trade has created 1 million jobs in Taiwan. "In reality, better political ties are demanded for both sides to enjoy all the benefits from their huge economic cooperation". And Gu thinks that a federal system could be a highly feasible resolution. To China, a federal system would ensure China's sovereignty on Taiwan. To Taiwan, a federal system would keep its own government, military, judicial and other institutions.

There are two premises of a federation of Taiwan and China. First, China has expressed its flexibility on Taiwan's autonomy, but it has to be detailed in law. And China needs to make more sustained progress politically in order to transfer its role as the central authority within the federation. Second, Taiwan has to stop its hostility towards China ( with 1.3 billion Chinese ). Some of Taiwan's political leaders who care about their own power more than the interests of Taiwanese and Chinese discard the Chinese tradition of unification and strong identity. Chinese including those in other areas than Taiwan and China will have repugnance for Taiwan if Taiwan continues follow the American tone of so-called "protecting Democracy". In fact, Taiwan can play a very important role in China's political reform and share its experience with Beijing.

#### Taiwan's Introspection on its Views on CPC and China

In his book, the Taiwanese scholar Y. Chen ( 2003 ) made comments on Taiwan's democracy and CPC's developing socialism. There are some ideological obstacles on Taiwan side that need to be removed before the two sides could even start to negotiate. First, Taiwanese are Chinese. Chinese as a nation was formed from many ethnic groups through many dynasties in history. People of Han, people of Tang, Hua or Taiwanese are all Chinese. By denying being Chinese, the Taiwanese are denying their own history and ancestors. Second, Taiwan is part of China according to history and other views from

the world. China is a concept of culture and history as well as nationality. De-China or De-Republic of China is as the same as digging Taiwan's own roots. The fact that Taiwan belongs to China is common knowledge to most countries in the world. The Republic of China to Taiwan, according to Chen, is its patron god. Without the Republic of China, Taiwan might not even exist. Third, Taiwan's democracy is not perfect. It has some un-democratic factors. For example, when Li Deng-hui was the President, his party ( KMT ) controlled the whole politics in Taiwan. The political localization of Taiwan government is actually against the principle of democracy. Fourth, the CPC government has been changed greatly both in theories and in practices. So Taiwan should also change its view on CPC based on anti-communism. In short, Taiwan, according to Chen, should overcome its emotionalism and introspect its views on CPC and China.

#### Premises of the Resolution for Three Parties Involved

Three parties involved in the cross-Strait conflict are China, Taiwan, and the US. They have to stick to the following rules respectively in order to return rationality to find a solution fundamentally.

China: 1 )Under the principle of "One China" to follow the international law of peaceful solution to its dispute with Taiwan, and to promise not to threaten with military force or/and use military force; 2 ) To respect Taiwan's economic prosperity and political democracy and to ensure a high degree of autonomy of Taiwan in the future.

Taiwan: 1 )Under the principle of "One China" to follow the international law of respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity of China; 2 )To integrate a negotiation strategy of multi-party cooperation based on neither "anti-China populism" nor "mainland fever" but on the best interests of Taiwanese people.

The US: 1 )Under the principle of "One China" to follow the international law of noninterference in other's domestic affairs; 2 )to play a role of peace-keeping under the leadership of the UN in any crisis it may occur in the area of cross-Strait in the future.

#### Basic Rules and Steps

First, the Taiwan Strait issue should be dealt with without the shadow of Cold War thinking and hegemony; the US should follow those Sino-US treaties and stop any unilateral relations with Taiwan independent from China.

Second, the Taiwan Strait issue should be dealt with according to the basic principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations such as mutually respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity, and noninterference in each other's domestic affairs.

Third, the Taiwan Strait issue should be dealt with between China and Taiwan peacefully without any military threat and any third party.

Finally, the Taiwan Strait issue should be dealt with under the surveillance of the United Nation or a committee under the leadership of the UN that should include the countries in the area or of interests beside the US.

## Conclusion

The US-Taiwan policy is a choice between interests and sentiment. The US documents<sup>4</sup> show that the government had deep and thorough discussions before it decided on “One China” or “One China, One Taiwan”. In the end, the US believed that in its best interests, it should choose policies and attitudes that would provide the US with the most flexibility in the future. International duty had very little to do with what the US had done on this issue. Neither democratic ideology, nor friendship or morality is the principle guiding the US-Taiwan policy. It is the importance of Sino-US relations and American national interests that affect America’s attitudes toward Taiwan. However, domestic politics and national interests do not explain why the US acts the way it always does. Its way of thinking, beliefs, ideas, and its ambition to be the leader of the world are fundamental to understand the US attitude and action on Taiwan issue.

The final resolution of the Taiwan Strait depends on two conditions: first, that the US stops its military relations with Taiwan and stops its military deterrent in the Taiwan Strait. It is the issue of the PRC and Taiwan, but has always been under America’s interference since it started. The US is such an important variable influencing the past, present, and the future of the Taiwan Strait. Without the US playing any major role, the situation could be very different. It could be that the PRC had conquered Taiwan with arms in the early 1950s as a continuity of the Civil War, which is not unusual in world history, or through peace talks Taiwan became a part of China as Hong Kong with even more autonomy. With the involvement of the US, the PRC loses its negotiating power, and Taiwan tends to be unrealistic, with a fantasy of becoming an independent country. It is the UN’s responsibility to keep the peace in the area if China initiates an armed attack towards Taiwan. In the end, reunification of the PRC and Taiwan or co-existence of the PRC and an independent Taiwan should come out of the negotiation of both sides with respect to history, culture and the national feelings of all Chinese. It should also be a result of economic interdependence and political integration. Second, when China becomes stronger or when it is as strong as the US, it would be more difficult for the US to meddle in the cross-Strait issue, and Taiwan would be more willing to join the Mainland. When will this moment be? As former president of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew predicted recently (Feb. 2, 2008), China will reach the same level as the US in terms of GNP and technology 30-50 years later. Even by 2030, the strength of China will stop America’s interference with its domestic issue - the Taiwan issue.

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<sup>4</sup> S. Zhang & J. Zhou (2007), *Taiwan Issue in the Process of Sino-US Normalization: Documents of Nixon’s Diplomacy*, in D. Li (ed.), 2007.

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