



U.S.-Taiwan Relations: A Review and Outlook

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I'm delighted to be able to come to L.A. again to address the World Affairs Council in Southern California. This time I am in a new capacity as Taiwan's Representative in the United States or in diplomatic jargon Taiwan's Ambassador to the United States. Taiwan and the United States do not have any official relations with each other and therefore I can only bear the name "Taiwan Representative to the United States." Sometimes when I say Taiwan Representative to the United States it's still not good enough because the State Department always asks to read our full title—it's Representative of Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States—in short TECO. People sometimes misunderstand that I'm a sales representative from TECO, this company, but indeed I'm representing the Taiwan government in the United States.

I think the relations between Taiwan and the United States have come a long way. I think the current development of Taiwan, either economic aspect or security aspect, even the political aspects owe a tremendous amount to the United States. I have with me, today, a copy of the Taiwan Relations Act, a law of the United States passed by the Congress in 1979 when the official relations between Taiwan and the United States were severed. I'll just read several sentences for you:

To make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means. To consider any efforts to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargos, a threat to the peace and security of the western Pacific area and of great concern to the United States.

You can see Taiwan continues to survive under the Chinese threat and owes to a tremendous degree the safeguards of the United States government. Of course, many people in Taiwan cherish their democracy today and Taiwan's democracy also owes, to a tremendous degree U.S. support. I'll read another sentence to you from the Taiwan Relations Act.

Nothing contained in this Act shall contravene the interest of the United States in human rights, especially with respect to the human rights of all people approximately 18 million inhabitants of Taiwan. The preservation and enhancement of the human rights of all the people of Taiwan are hereby reaffirmed as objectives of the United States.

So, we have to say "Thank you, United States," because what we have today is because of U.S. support and we owe the United States what we have today. I think Taiwan people, including

those who have already taken longer residence in the United States and L.A., still remember the old days when they still lived under the authoritarian rule, the old days when Taiwan was still living in poverty and that the United States has helped us out and I think all of us understand that we need to say “Thank you, United States.”

Just recently there was a trade mission from Taiwan to procure agricultural products of the United States. I think the agricultural imports of Taiwan—about 95 percent of them are from the United States—and my mission is that that’s still not good enough because there’s still five percent room for improvement. We are trying to make it 100 percent to show that Taiwan stands alongside with the United States. I remember in 2001 and 2002 right before the war against Iraq broke out I wrote an article in one of the major newspapers in Taiwan supporting the U.S. effort in stamping out the elements that are not in line with freedom and democracy and that shows that Taiwan will stand alongside the United States even on security issues.

With all that being said, somehow, as Taiwan turned into a democracy, many people around the world started to question whether Taiwan is a loyal friend of the United States, they started to question whether Taiwan is making trouble for the United States while the United States is entangled with the conflict in Iraq, with problems associated with Iran, or the six-party talks.

I think those kinds of misunderstandings stem from the fact that Taiwan’s voice does not get heard by the international community very often. We used to have a large group of international media stationed in Taiwan so that Taiwan’s voice could be heard, but they gradually pulled out of Taiwan and are stationed in Beijing. Therefore, the only news that will probably get covered about Taiwan is whenever some legislators in Taiwan throw their shoes around, or enter into rugby matches, or when there’s an earthquake, or a major political protest. So the image of Taiwan around the world nowadays seems that Taiwan is a very unstable place. Taiwan is not a likeable place any more. But whoever has the chance to visit Taiwan and see Taiwan with their own eyes will find Taiwan very friendly, very loveable and very peaceful, and that’s the contrast between the image and reality.

I think if we try to dig deeper into that image of Taiwan today there’s something that people do not understand of what’s going on at this moment. I will try to show you some examples of what Taiwan has to go through, what Taiwan has to put up with, what China has been doing to Taiwan that prompt Taiwan reactions, and when Taiwan does those reactions then the people around the world start to question whether Taiwan is making trouble.

Let me read you some of the examples of what we have to go through. You know, our name is Taiwan and the formal official title is called Republic of China. I have in my hand the 2001 guidelines issued by the U.S State Department for all government agencies in the United States, including the local governments, how to describe Taiwan and I will read the exact wording: “The proper noun and adjective to refer to the island, the entities and its authorities are Taiwan.” So, the United States should call Taiwan, Taiwan. But whenever we try to call ourselves Taiwan somehow there seems to be something wrong. China is trying to change our name all over the world in every major international organization from Taiwan to something else, like Chinese-Taipei, Taiwan-China, Taipei-China, Taiwan, Province of China or Taiwan, Province of the People’s Republic of China. But when the Chinese does those nasty things to Taiwan nobody is making a fuss, nobody is raising their eye brows, nobody is saying anything to China, but when we say “enough, we want to be called Taiwan because our name is Taiwan,” many people question whether Taiwan is making trouble for the United States. Let me just give you some of these examples. In the World Fire fighters game held in February 2006, organizers under Chinese

pressure tried to change Taiwan's name into Taiwan-Taipei China. We protested but to no avail so we had to pull out of the games. The International Standards Organization tries to specify all kinds of standards for the international community. It did not agree to let Taiwan join as a member and under Chinese pressure it's been calling Taiwan, Taiwan, Province of China. I can continue to go down this list to show how far China is willing to go to change Taiwan's title, and nobody is saying anything. Most recently in some of these international organizations where Taiwan is participating or is trying to seek opportunities to participate, China attempts to squeeze Taiwan out or to prevent Taiwan from participating. In 2005 when the World Health Organization (WHO) was forming its annual assembly in Geneva the Chinese government signed a secret memorandum of understanding with the secretariat of the WHO. We still don't know the contents of that memo, but we got hold of a copy of the implementation of the memorandum. This implementation says that whenever the WHO wanted to invite Taiwan experts to participate in WHO related activities, it needed to submit the case to the Chinese mission in Geneva so that it called can send the case to Beijing for approval by the Chinese Ministry of Health. When the Chinese Ministry of Health approved those applications then Taiwan experts can be invited to participate in those events. If there's a disaster in Taiwan and the WHO decide that there's a need to send experts to Taiwan, the implementation says that it has to be determined by Beijing to see if that's a real disaster. If Beijing says that the WHO can send experts to help Taiwan, then the WHO Secretariat can send helpers to Taiwan. So, this is what Beijing is trying to do to Taiwan and I think because of that we still have difficulties in participating in some of the technical events. The WHO under the international health regulations or the Global Outbreak Alert System is not being as forthcoming as it should in helping Taiwan whenever there's a need. For example, the International of Health Regulations has already been implemented but Taiwan is still not a part of the International Health Regulations and Taiwan becomes a loop hole in the world's fight against contaminated diseases.

The World Health Organization is just not the only international organization where we continue to run into difficulties. There's another organization called OIE, the World Organization for Animal Health. China tried to push forward a resolution asking the OIE to treat Taiwan as part of China. We are an original member and we have been participating in it, but China has not been participating in a normal way and the condition for China to participate in the normal way, as China says, is for Taiwan be squeezed out or become part of China. The resolution China is trying to push through including statements like this: "Recognizing that there's only one China in the world Taiwan is an inalienable part of Chinese territory and the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal representative of the whole China." It goes on to change Taiwan's title into Taiwan-China to signify that Taiwan is part of China. The OIE almost let China have its way. The OIE secretariat is attempting to make a slight modification to the Chinese resolution only, to take away the "inalienable part of the Chinese territory." The rest is the same. Of course, if that resolution was adopted Taiwan had to protest or Taiwan had to withdraw from that organization because we are not part of the People's Republic of China. But luckily we let the United States understand that this is a drastic situation that we hoped that the United States would help us to ward off the Chinese pressure against the OIE. The United States did just that and we are able to retain our membership but under a couple of drastic conditions, we are Chinese-Taipei, not Taiwan anymore and we are a non-sovereign regional member, not a full member any more.

So this is what the Chinese are doing to Taiwan but the international community doesn't seem to understand when we try to respond by saying that we want to apply for membership in the World Health Organization, or in other international organizations, in the name of Taiwan as a member, the people say that if we did that, it would change of the status quo.

The most recent example would be is the International Olympic Committee of China. They wanted to pass the torch through Taiwan and, of course, we would welcome the torch if Taiwan is treated as a separate member of the International Olympic Committee, or if the International Olympic Committee would specify Taiwan. But guess what? Even the International Olympic Committee activities on the Chinese side would twist Taiwan's participation as such.

The most recent example is the United Nations. We tried to apply for membership because Taiwan is one of the only people that is still excluded from the United Nations. One of the reasons why we want to participate in the United Nations is because China has been trying to squeeze Taiwan out or prevent Taiwan from participating in international organizations and the United Nations is one of them. The Chinese government continues to try to implement things or push through resolutions or write in letters that Taiwan is really part of China. Recently there was a letter signed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to a country called Naun and it specified something that we are discussing. It said that there was a Resolution 2758 passed in 1971 to recognize the representatives of the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations. But the Secretary-General of the United Nations under China's pressure said that in light of the above, any instrument of accession from persons purporting to represent the People's Republic of China could not be received by the Secretary-General in this capacity as the depository of the state convention, because, in accordance with the resolution the United Nations conceded Taiwan for all purposes to be an integral part of the People's Republic of China. Well, is Taiwan is an integral part of the People's Republic of China? I can tell you "no. no way." Taiwan and China have been separated ever since 1949. In Taiwan we have a president which signifies sovereignty and we have a parliament which also signifies sovereignty, and the government exercises exclusive jurisdiction of the territory under its control, that's another symbol of sovereignty.

Beginning in 1991-1992, Taiwan's parliament becomes democratically elected and beginning 1996 Taiwan's presidency became democratically elected. So, if you put all this together, Taiwan is not part of the PRC and, therefore, what China has been doing to Taiwan on the international stage is a change of the status quo to try to put Taiwan under China's jurisdiction and, of course, that is not acceptable. I think all the people who love Taiwan, who cherish the relations between Taiwan and the United States, need to stand up and say to China that that is not in line with U.S. interests. Some people have questioned whether Taiwan's participation in the United Nations is in line with the UN policies. Let me tell you what—there was a 1994 Taiwan policy review conducted by the U.S. government and one of the points in the foreign policy review is that the U.S. believes it is clearly appropriate and it would support more actively Taiwan's membership in international organizations accepting non-states as members, and look for ways to have Taiwan's voice heard in organizations of states where Taiwan's membership is not possible. The UN is clearly one of those international organizations that has made it impossible for Taiwan to become a member. We hope that the U.S. government can follow the spirit and the words of the 1994 policy review by helping Taiwan's voice to be heard, and supporting Taiwan is becoming a member of the United Nations.

I think Taiwan's current development has come a long way. I still remember in the old days when we were under the authoritarian rule where we had to be fearful of some possible persecution for political dissent; we had the fear that once we said something wrong, we would be jailed without proper reasons. But we do not have that kind of fear any more. We can speak on any subject we want, we can believe in anything we want, and we can say anything we want. We even have free journalism in Taiwan, that is freer than any where else in the world and we are very proud that



Taiwan is already a free place, a democratic country. And because Taiwan is a democratic country it is going to be very difficult to tell the Taiwan people that, yes, you can do this but, no, you cannot do that. We have lived through those authoritarian days and we hope the the greatest democratic country of the world, the United States, can listen to the different voices in Taiwan and to think about the ways to help the Taiwanese to participate in international affairs, to participate in those international organizations where China has made it impossible for Taiwan to become a member.

Thank you very much.

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