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## TAIWAN'S CAMPAIGN FOR UNITED NATIONS PARTICIPATION

### Introduction

In terms of population, territory, government, foreign relations, economic development, and democratization, and under international law, Taiwan has every right to become a member of the United Nations.

Since 1993, Taipei has indicated its desire and taken the appropriate actions to join the United Nations, but Beijing has consistently blocked the campaign. After President George W. Bush was inaugurated in January 2001, Taipei was able to improve relations with the United States and gained more support for joining such international organizations as the World Health Organization (WHO). Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) initiated several reforms and broadened the traditional concept of diplomacy.

The Chen government has expanded “people’s diplomacy”, which uses individuals other than professional diplomats to implement foreign policy. People’s diplomacy provides a three-dimensional approach consisting of democracy-based diplomacy, civilian-based diplomacy, and public opinion-based diplomacy<sup>1</sup>.

Taipei emphasizes participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and expanding the number of groups involved in foreign affairs to promote the people’s diplomacy. Compared to the former government, the current government has amplified human rights diplomacy. The Chen government decided to establish a National Human Rights Commission, not only to further improve human rights in Taiwan, but also to participate in international human rights organizations and human rights treaties.

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<sup>1</sup> Hung-mao Tien, *Foreign Policy report to the Legislative Yuan*, cited in: <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/emofa/policymofa900115.htm>.

## Taiwan's UN Campaign

The Republic of China (Taiwan) was expelled from the United Nations in 1971, and it took more than 20 years for Taipei to initiate efforts to re-join the UN. In 1993, Jason Hu, former director-general of the Government Information Office, argued that there are ten reasons that Taiwan and the UN need each other. For example, the UN cannot afford to ignore Taiwan's democratic and economic achievements, while Taiwan wants to regain its rightful international status, so it can contribute to the international community. Taipei adamantly asserts that the PRC does not and cannot represent Taiwan in the UN<sup>2</sup>.

Taipei's campaign for UN membership includes economic benefits, international status, national security, and domestic political support. As Dennis Hickey stated, "no other foreign policy issue has captured the imagination of the island's voters like the popular movement to gain re-admission to the United Nations"<sup>3</sup>. In 1997 Taiwan public opinion poll proved that almost 92 percent of people supported membership in the United Nations, and 80 percent of respondents believed that the PRC was the major obstacle to Taiwan's campaign<sup>4</sup>.

However, Beijing regards Taipei's UN campaign as "a maneuver to create two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" and "an attempt to split state sovereignty, which is devoid of any legal or practical basis". Beijing also warns the international community to "adhere to the purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and related UN resolutions, abide by norms governing international relations", and "never, in any form, support Taiwan's joining the UN or other international organizations whose membership is confined to sovereign states"<sup>5</sup>.

Even after several years of frustration in Taiwan's UN campaign, 34 percent of people think that the government should be more active in its UN bid (see Table 1).

Table 1. Taiwanese People's Expectations of their Government Policy in its UN Campaign

	May 2002	November 2001	June 2001	July 2000
Accelerate	33.7%	41.7%	37.0%	46.3%
Decelerate	23.8%	16.6%	19.9%	21.8%
Suspend	21.7%	22.0%	23.2%	17.6%

Source: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC <http://www.mofa.gov.tw>.

<sup>2</sup> *21 Million Chinese in Taiwan Have to Be represented in UN*, "The United Nations Association of the Republic of China Newsletter" 1993, vol. 48, No. 9 (September 30), pp. 4-7.

<sup>3</sup> D. Van Vranken Hickey, *Coming in from the Cold: Taiwan's Return to International Organizations*, "Issues & Studies" 1994, vol. 30, No. 10 (October), pp. 98-102; V. Wei-cheng Wang, *How Can Taiwan Enter the United Nations? History, Issues, and Approaches*, "Issues & Studies" 1994, vol. 30, No. 10 (October), pp. 121-124.

<sup>4</sup> B. J. Dickson, *The Republic of China on Taiwan's Pragmatic Diplomacy*, [in:] *Taiwan's National Security: Dilemmas and Opportunities*, eds. A. C. Tan, S. Chan and C. J. J. J. Ashgate 2001, p. 99.

<sup>5</sup> *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China*, "Beijing Review" 1993, vol. 36, No. 36 (September 6-12), pp. VII-VIII; *The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue*, "Beijing Review" 2000, vol. 43, No. 10 (March 16), p. 23.

In order to focus international attention on Taiwan's exclusion from the UN, Taipei has repeatedly offered financial aid for UN-sponsored projects. In 1991, Taipei offered financial assistance to countries affected by the Persian Gulf War, including Turkey and Egypt, but the aid was refused as a result of pressure from Beijing.

As Lien Chan, former Prime Minister and Vice President of the ROC, once noted, even Taiwan's humanitarian assistance to refugees has been required to "go through various subterfuges, instead of the front door of international organizations"<sup>6</sup>. In 1995, Taipei offered US \$1 billion in financial assistance to developing countries, if it were admitted to the UN<sup>7</sup>. In 1999, Taipei again offered \$300 million in aid for Kosovo's recovery program<sup>8</sup>. Taipei maintains a foreign assistance program for allies, which consistently advocate Taiwan's membership in the UN.



<sup>6</sup> L. Chan, *The Republic of China on Taiwan Belongs to the United Nations*, "Orbis" 1993, vol. 37, No. 4 (Fall), p. 635.

<sup>7</sup> *Lienhebao*, "United Daily News" 1995, June 27; D. Van Vranken Hickey, *Taiwan's Security in the Changing International System*, Boulder 1997, p. 122.

<sup>8</sup> L. Teng-hui, *Understanding Taiwan: Bridging the Perception Gap*, "Foreign Affairs" 1999, Vol. 78, No. 6 (November/December), p. 10.

National security may be the most important element in Taiwan's UN campaign, considering the UN Security Council Resolution 678 authorizing necessary means to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait. It might be difficult for the UN to send troops to intervene in a conflict involving Taiwan, but it would be possible for the UN to discuss the issue, or pass some non-binding resolutions deploring Chinese aggression actions against Taiwan. Therefore, membership in the UN and an Asia-Pacific regional security organization to guarantee Taiwan's security was an early goal of Lee Teng-hui's presidency.

Under pressure from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and some liberal KMT legislators, the former government set up the UN Participation Decision-making Group under the Executive Yuan (February 1993) and a cross-party UN Participation Committee (June 1993). The government deliberately avoided using the term such as a "re-entry" into the UN, which might imply substituting the People's Republic of China (PRC) or "joining" the UN as a new member and which might be interpreted as a move toward Taiwan independence. The government cautiously choose the term "participation" and reserved broader flexibility on any UN arrangements. The government also decided to use the name "ROC [Republic of China] on Taiwan" for its participation in the UN and set a priority of joining the UN specialized agencies rather than the UN itself.

From the very beginning, Taipei has not challenged the PRC's UN membership<sup>9</sup>. In the mid-1990s, the government emphasized that Taiwan's participation in the UN followed the practice of parallel representation of such divided nations as Korea, which obtained separate representation in the UN in 1991. In addition to applying the principle of universality, Taipei argued that both sides of the Taiwan Strait are equal political entities and should participate in international organizations on the basis of parity.

The government also explicitly stated that its UN participation would not hinder, but actually might help, peaceful reunification of Taiwan with China<sup>10</sup>. After the missile crisis of 1995-1996, Taipei no longer indicated that its UN campaign might facilitate reunification. In the December 1996, the cross-party National Development Conference reached a consensus stating that UN participation should be regarded as Taiwan's long-term goal. This indicated that, although Taipei's UN campaign had been relegated from an immediate to a long-term project, it was certainly not terminated.

In 1992, one year before Taipei formally initiated its UN campaign, the foreign ministers of Belize, Honduras and Costa Rica; and the Presidents of Panama, Nicaragua and Latvia brought up the principle of universality and Taiwan's exclusion at the UN General Assembly meeting<sup>11</sup>. From 1993 to 1996, Taipei asked its allies to request the United Nations to set up an ad hoc committee to study how Taiwan was being deprived of its rights to participate in the United Nations.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10; Lien, *The Republic of China Belongs in the United Nations*, *Ibidem*, p. 636.

<sup>10</sup> *The Republic of China Yearbook 1995*, Taipei 1995, p. 173.

<sup>11</sup> *United Nations Should Re-admit the Republic of China*, "The United Nations Association of the Republic of China Newsletter" 1992, vol. 47, No. 10 (October 31), p. 5.

UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 stated:

“Recalling the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, “Considering the restoration of the lawful rights of the People’s Republic of China is essential both for the protection of the Charter of the United Nations and for the cause that the United Nations must serve under the Charter, “Recognizing that the representatives of the Government of the People’s Republic of China are the only lawful representatives of China to the United Nations and that the People’s Republic of China is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, “Decides to restore all its rights to the People’s Republic of China and to recognize the representatives of its Government as the only legitimate representatives of China to the United Nations, and to expel forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it”.

In 1997 and 1998, Taipei requested a review and then the revocation of Resolution 2758<sup>12</sup>. This measure was regarded as a provocation in challenging the PRC’s representation in the UN and later was dropped. Taipei also discontinued the parallel representation model, provided by East and West Germany and North and South Korea, to avoid a “one-China” trap and eventual unification.

From 1999 to 2001, countries recognizing the ROC (Taiwan) consistently called upon the United Nations “to establish a working group of the General Assembly with the mandate of examining thoroughly the exceptional international situation pertaining to the Republic of China on Taiwan with a view to ensuring that its twenty-three million people participate in the United Nations and its related agencies and thereby contribute to the international community”<sup>13</sup>. In August 2002, these countries simply called upon the UN members “to take appropriate measures” in order “to recognize the right of the 23 million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan to representation in the United Nations system”<sup>14</sup>.

A major difficulty for Taiwan’s participation in the UN arises in the General Committee, which sets agenda for the annual UN General Assembly meeting. Due to the limited number of countries (currently 27) that recognize the ROC on Taiwan, the PRC has easily been able to block discussion of Taiwan’s participation at General Committee debates, even before the issue can reach the General Assembly. Beijing has enjoyed at least a two to one superiority at the General Committee debates (see Table 2). However, Taipei has been able to prolong the issue of its participation in the General Assembly floor debates. The presidents, prime ministers, or foreign ministers of Taiwan’s diplomatic partners continue to voice support for Taipei’s membership in the General Assembly.

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<sup>12</sup> *Why the UN Resolution No. 2758 in 1971 Should Be Reexamined Today*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC 1995 (July), pp. 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> „Need to Examine the Exceptional International Situation Pertaining to the Republic of China on Taiwan, to Ensure that the Fundamental Right of Its Twenty-three Million People Participate in the Work and Activities of the United Nations is Fully Respected”, United Nations General Assembly, A/56/193, August 8, 2001, cited in: <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/emofa/org/un/90/A56193.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> „Question of the representation of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the United Nations”, United Nations General Assembly, A/57/191, August 8, 2002, cited in: [http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/org/un/91/A57191\\_EN.pdf](http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/org/un/91/A57191_EN.pdf).

Table 2. Countries Supporting and Opposing Taiwan's Participation in the UN at the General Committee Debates

YEAR	SUPPORTING	OPPOSING
1993	3	11
1994	7	18
1995	12	29
1996	17	36
1997	15	32
1998	16	40
1999	20	47
2000	19	47
2001	24	67

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC.

President Chen Shui-bian did not mention Taiwan's goal of joining the UN in his inaugural address, but did emphasize Taiwan's participation in non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The government continues to push Taiwan's UN campaign, but realizes the difficulties and challenges that Taiwan faces. President Chen once pointed out that Taiwan is more qualified for membership in the UN than the majority of the organization's 160-plus members<sup>15</sup>.

In contrast to the previous government position that Taiwan's participation might promote "the eventual unification of China", the government now states that Taiwan's participation would help to build lasting peace in the Taiwan Strait. The UN and the international community could "call for a peaceful resolution of differences between the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China", and "pay close attention to the situation" in the Taiwan Strait<sup>16</sup>.

However, President Chen did not change Taipei's tactic by applying for new membership under Article 4 of the UN Charter, as advised by Lung-chu Chen, a prominent UN expert and presidential advisor. Even with the threat of Beijing's apparent veto over Taiwan's admission, Chen argued that "Taiwan should simultaneously apply for membership in the United Nations and in other relevant international governmental organizations", because:

"By applying for new UN membership, Taiwan will clearly demonstrate its basic national character as a sovereign, independent state and assert emphatically the fundamental dignity and human rights of people of Taiwan. It would help to

<sup>15</sup> C. Shui-bian, *An Opening remark on Taiwan's Participation in the United Nations*, June 2001, cited in: <http://www.president.gov.tw/php-bin/prez/showspeak.php4>; C. Lung-chu, *Taiwan and the UN Need Each Other*, "Taiwan News" 2000, September 24, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> „Need to Examine the Exceptional International Situation Pertaining to the Republic of China on Taiwan, to Ensure that the Fundamental Right of Its Twenty-three Million People Participate in the Work and Activities of the United Nations is Fully Respected", United Nations General Assembly, A/56/193, August 8, 2001, cited in: <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/emofa/org/un/90/A56193.htm>. Cf. L. Chan, *Let the Cry for Justice Spread Far and Wide*, [in:] *Quiet Revolutions on Taiwan, Republic of China*, ed. J. C. Hu, Taipei 1994, pp. 279-280.

mobilize the efforts and resources of all Taiwanese, both at home and abroad, toward developing Taiwan's international and security position and playing greater roles in international area"<sup>17</sup>.

Admission of a new member into the UN will be "effected by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council". The PRC will certainly veto Taiwan's membership in the UN, but Taiwan might have the alternative of observer status, as suggested by international law or international politics experts such as Louis B. Sohn and John Bolton<sup>18</sup>. They believe this approach is less provocative to the PRC and not contradictory to Taiwan's goal of joining the UN. With observer status, Taiwan could participate in UN economic, social, cultural, and educational activities, etc.

According to the UN Legal Committee, a country that is already a member of a UN specialized agency or a member of the UN International Court of Justice and is widely recognized by the international community can apply for observer status with the Secretary General. If that country's status is disputable, the Secretary General will refer the case to the General Assembly.

Divided nations, such as North and South Korea and East and West Germany, were observers before becoming full members. The Holy See and Switzerland (before September 2002), are non-member states that have permanent observer missions at UN headquarters. Even the Palestine Liberation Organization, which receives a standing invitation to participate as an observer in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly, maintains a permanent observer mission at UN headquarters<sup>19</sup>.

Taipei sincerely hopes that the US could assist Taiwan's UN bid. Former President Lee Teng-hui believed that Taiwan's participation in international organizations "would be to American advantage"<sup>20</sup>. However, Taiwan's UN campaign suffered a serious blow when President Clinton made his "three nos" statement in which he said that the US would not support Taiwan's membership in the UN or any international organizations that require statehood.

In 1999 and 2000, the US, France, and the United Kingdom did not support Taiwan's UN membership in the General Committee meeting of the UN. While the United Kingdom praised Taiwan's democratization and peaceful change of government, London was not willing to support Taiwan, because a majority of states opposed Taiwan's UN membership<sup>21</sup>. The current government has tried to persuade permanent members of the UN Security Council to avoid speaking publicly against Taiwan's membership.

France, China, and many other countries argued that UN general Assembly Resolution 2758 settled the issue of Taiwan's participation in the UN. However,

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<sup>17</sup> Lung-chu Chen, *Prospects for Taiwan's Membership in the United Nations*, [in:] *Taiwan's Expanding Role in the International Arena*, ed. M. H. Yang, New York 1997, pp. 7-8.

<sup>18</sup> L. B. Sohn, *Taiwan's Option of Becoming a Permanent Observer*, [in:] *The International Status of Taiwan in the New World Order: Legal and Political Consideration*, ed. J.-M. Henckaerts, London 1996, pp. 165-166.

<sup>19</sup> "Permanent Missions to the United Nations" 2002, No. 287 (January), pp. 279-282.

<sup>20</sup> L. Teng-hui, *The Road to Democracy: Taiwan's Pursuit of Identity*, Tokyo 1999, p. 134.

<sup>21</sup> Press release, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC 2001, No. 136, September 15.

the resolution only expelled “forthwith the representatives of Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations and in all the organizations related to it”.

However, the resolution “failed to address the issue of legitimate representation for the people of Taiwan in the United Nations”, Taipei notes that the resolution “did not decide that Taiwan is a part of the People’s Republic of China, and did not confer on the People’s republic of China the right to represent the Republic of China on Taiwan or the Taiwanese people in the United Nations and all related organizations”<sup>22</sup>.

Although the US executive branch has failed to support Taiwan’s membership in the UN, the US Congress has adopted an opposite position. Since 1993, the Congress has passed resolutions supporting Taiwan’s UN bid almost every year. For example, the House and the Senate adopted House Concurrent Resolution 390 in October 2000, which states: “Taiwan and its 23 million people deserve appropriate meaningful participation in the United Nations and other international organizations such as the World Health Organization”.

Congress also urged the US government to “fulfill the commitment it made in the 1994 Taiwan Policy Review to more actively support Taiwan’s participation in appropriate international organizations”<sup>23</sup>. Even with the lukewarm attitude from the US government, Taipei hopes that “the United States will help to make it possible for Taiwan to join... the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other international organization that do not require United Nations membership as a prerequisite for entry”<sup>24</sup>.

The European Parliament has also adopted similar to those by the US Congress. In 1996, the European Parliament adopted a resolution supporting Taiwan and requested the UN to create a task force to study the feasibility of Taiwan’s participation in UN-affiliated organizations. In addition to initiatives taken by the US and the European Parliament, countries neighboring Taiwan have not passed similar measures.

Taiwan has established its short-range, intermediate, and long-range goals for its UN campaign. Through education and public relation efforts, Taiwan can justify its UN efforts by reducing domestic opposition and winning more international support. Taiwan trains more experts in international affairs and multilateral diplomacy. Reducing domestic differences on such issues as name and method of UN participation should be completed before a unified public diplomacy effort can be initiated. While participating in the UN is important to the national interest, it has not overshadowed other more important national objectives, such as maintaining strong and amicable relationships with Japan, the US, and the European Union.

Taiwan’s UN effort has successfully mobilized those countries that maintain full diplomatic relations with Taiwan and has strengthened bilateral relation-

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<sup>22</sup> „Explanatory Memorandum of Taiwan’s Participation in the United Nations”, cited in: <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/emofa/org/un/90/A56193.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> “Congressional Record” 2000, October 3, pp. H8726-8728.

<sup>24</sup> Lee, *The Road to Democracy...*, p. 134.



ships. Taipei's newly drafted International Cooperation and Development Law facilitates development assistance to help other developing countries reduce poverty<sup>25</sup>. In addition to humanitarian assistance, Taiwan also provides aid to those countries, which support Taipei's UN bid. Discontinuing Taipei's UN campaign for the sake of improving cross-strait relations amounts to wishful thinking. Finding ways to channel NGO's access is a new direction for Taipei to develop Taiwan's links with the UN.

### Taiwan's Participation in Other International Organizations

Partly because of Taiwan's difficulties in joining intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and partly because of its diversifying civil society, Taiwan's participation in international NGOs is constantly expanding. Compared with the former government, the current government emphasizes the importance of participating in NGOs and is increasing the number of groups involved in people's diplomacy. Before the NGO Affairs Committee was established at MOFA in October 2000, Taiwan's membership in NGOs was 917 in 1997, and 943 in 1998 and 1999. NGO participation increased to 983 in 2000 and to 1059 by the end of 2001<sup>26</sup>. In terms of categories of NGOs, Taiwan is most active in medicine and hygiene, and this might explain why the health and medical community has so encouraged the government to join WHO.

NGO participation has been the main thrust of the people's diplomacy. MOFA offers seminars and courses for non-career NGO staff to train more people to become involved in foreign affairs and has established a volunteer non-career Foreign Service mechanism. The NGO Affairs Committee encourages Taiwan NGOs to engage in more international activities and to increase interactions with NGOs affiliated with the UN and its specialized agencies<sup>27</sup>.

Currently, Taiwan maintains membership in 17 IGOs and observer status in several IGOs, such as the Inter-American Development Bank, the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, the Central American Parliament, and the system of Integration in Central America. Among these, Taiwan is still protesting the change of its official name to "Taipei, China" in the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and regrets that its president and prime minister could not be allowed to participate in the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting.

President Chen Shui-bian indicated his strong desire to attend the APEC summit in Shanghai in October 2001, as a good opportunity to resume Taiwan-Mainland dialogue. Instead of designating Koo Chen-fu, who had participated in

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<sup>25</sup> Hung-mao Tien, *Human Rights: The Future of Taiwan's Diplomacy*, cited in: <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/emofa/20010102.html>.

<sup>26</sup> *ROC Foreign Affairs Almanac 1997*, p. 869; *ROC Foreign Affairs Almanac 1998*, p. 642; *ROC Foreign Affairs Almanac 1999*, p. 752; *ROC Foreign Affairs Almanac 2000*, pp. 689-692; E. Chien, *A Foreign Policy Report*, March 6, 2002, cited in: <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/policy/mofa2110306.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> Maysing Yang and B. Tedards, *The Role and Importance of NGOs in Taiwan Diplomacy*, cited in: <http://dsis.org.tw/peaceforum/papers/2000-09/TF0009001e.htm>.

place of Lee Teng-hui in 1995, 1996, and 1997, as his special envoy to attend the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, he asked former vice president Lee Yuan-tsu to attend the meeting. This designated representative was rejected by Beijing, which declined to issue Lee a letter of invitation. Taipei later declined to designate a replacement and for the first time boycotted the informal leaders' meeting in Shanghai.

Twelve years after filling its application, Taiwan became the 144th member of the WTO in January 2002. The WTO offer Beijing and Taipei the opportunity to end the current political stalemate. President Chen and President Bush have urged cooperation under the framework of the WTO, but Beijing is wary of using this forum to conduct economic dialogue with Taiwan<sup>28</sup>. However, Taiwan, as the 14th largest trading economy, could use the WTO as a legitimate channel to increase contacts with other WTO members, even though a great majority of them do not maintain formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Taipei also intends to negotiate free-trade agreements with Japan, the US, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, the Philippines, and the countries of Central America, to avoid further economic absorption of Taiwan by the PRC<sup>29</sup>.

Since becoming a WTO member, Taipei has increased its efforts to join the WHO, which states in its constitution that health is a fundamental right of all peoples. Taipei made its first application in 1997. Beginning in 2002, Taiwan applied for WHO membership as "a public health entity" rather than a sovereign state to avoid possible violation of the WHO constitution<sup>30</sup>. usual, the US Congress provided key support for Taiwan's membership in the WHO, even though the PRC generated strong opposition.

One of latest US congressional actions was HR 2739, which was later signed into law as Public Law 107 – 158 by President Bush on April 4, 2002. The Bush administration has modified former president Clinton's lukewarm position by publicly supporting Taiwan's bid for observer status in the World Health Assembly<sup>31</sup>. In addition, the European Parliament endorsed Taiwan's participation in the WHA as an observer on March 14, 2002<sup>32</sup>. Belatedly, on May 14, 2002, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasudo Fukuda declared his support for Taiwan's WHO observer status and the improvement of Taiwan's standard of health care, because Taiwan is geographically close to Japan<sup>33</sup>.

For the first time, the government has decided to adopt the status of "public health entity" to break the deadlock for WHO entry. To justify this compromise,

<sup>28</sup> E. Chien, *Beijing's Participation in the WTO and its Implications for Washington-Beijing-Taipei Trilateral Relations*, cited in: <http://www.mofa.gov.tw/newmofa/MajorSpeeches/chien910401.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> B. M. Decker, *Defending Taiwan*, „Asian Journal“ 2002, May 22, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Expanding WHO Participation to Taiwan: The New Concept of Public Health Entity*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC 2002, April, p. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *President Bush Signs WHO Bill into Law*, April 4, 2002, cited in: <http://www.fapa.org/who/WHO2002/Bushsign0405.html>.

<sup>32</sup> *Expanding WHO Participation to Taiwan: The New Concept of Public Health Entity...*, p. 11.

<sup>33</sup> M. Chu, *US Expresses Support for Observer Bid*, "Taipei Times" 2002, May 15, p. 1; *Fukuda: Taiwan Should Gain WHO Entry*, "Yomiuri Shimbun" 2002, May 15; see also: *Press Release*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC 2002, No. 130, May 14.

MOFA cites examples of other organizations that have accepted Taiwan for membership. For example, Taiwan is a customs territory in the WTO, an economic entity in APEC, a sports organization in the International Olympic Committee, and a fishing entity in the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission and the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna<sup>34</sup>. The question remains whether it is a necessary compromise to emerge from international isolation or an acceptable degradation of Taiwan's international legal status.

Taiwan's membership in the WTO is accepted and welcome by the international community because of Taiwan's economic power. For many countries, Taiwan's inclusion in a lower-profile functional organization, such as the WHO, is not indispensable. While power politics is important and different charters may contain different membership requirements, it is still hardly justifiable to exclude Taiwan from the WHO or other UN specialized agencies if Taiwan is eligible for the WTO.

The motive for Taiwan's observer status in the WHO is simplified, because the WHO is the only UN specialized agency that is ruled by a simple majority. Gaining membership in the WHO might advance Taiwan's membership in the UN.

Taiwan is not only diplomatically isolated in worldwide international organizations, but also in Asia-Pacific regional organizations. For many years, Taiwan has complained about the unfairness of exclusion from the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Taiwan's absence has kept the Taiwan issue from being considered in this forum, which ironically is the major multilateral forum designed for Asia-Pacific security.

Despite Taiwan's investments in Southeast Asia, its employment of over 300,000 workers from the area, its economic strength, and its geographical location, Taiwan has not yet been allowed to join ASEAN as a member or observer. It is also absent from the Asia-Europe meeting (ASEM), which is a mechanism for organizing civil society dialogue between the two regions, even though the European Parliament passed a resolution encouraging EU members to invite Taiwan to participate in ASEM. The EU is also considering establishing a representative office in Taiwan by the end of 2002; however, Taipei hopes that the EU can also invite Taiwan to the "alternate ASEM" meetings.

While China exerts its influence by sponsoring or initiating track one and track two forums, Taiwan finds its international status further challenged. Taiwan's economic influence in Southeast Asia is being eroded by the PRC, as Beijing emerges from receiver to donor of international assistance. Beijing has gained much influence in Southeast Asia by initiating a China-ASEAN free trade area arrangement by 2010 and upholding the spirit of Asian consciousness through the Baoao Asia Forum on Hainan Island. Although Taiwan has offered Taipei as the headquarters for such regional organizations as training and sharing information on small and medium enterprises, it is still difficult to offset the emerging China-centered regional order.

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<sup>34</sup> *Expanding WHO Participation to Taiwan: The New Concept of Public Health Entity...*, pp. 7-9.

Taipei's participation in APEC and the WTO was achieved despite extensive conflict between Taipei and Beijing, with the US as the major actuator. Some argue that the easiest way for Taipei to join international organizations is through Beijing. The PRC has adamantly opposed Taiwan's UN membership, but was forced to compromise with those organizations in which Taipei's participation is important to regional or global economics. Taipei's participation in international organizations that extend beyond economics has become a great challenge for Taiwan, whose leaders wish to prioritize UN membership but hesitate to denigrate Taiwan's international legal status in order to win Beijing's approval of such a flexible arrangement as "one country, two seats" in the UN.

## Conclusion

By becoming a UN member, Taiwan would not only earn due respect and an equal right of participation, but also would demonstrate that its dispute with the PRC is not merely a matter of Chinese domestic affairs. The issue of Taiwan's participation in the UN should be treated separately and distinctly from that of the future status of the relationship between Taiwan and the PRC. By allowing Taiwan to have more international latitude, Beijing might find that amity rather than enmity manifests from a realistic policy.

President Bush's expanded arms sales to Taiwan and candid remarks on using whatever it takes to help Taiwan defend itself have become a new deterrence against military misadventures by Beijing. The PRC is concerned that US policy will send a wrong signal to Taiwan independence elements, and Hu Jintao's trip to the US, in part, indicated Beijing's displeasure over recent developments.

Taiwan is worried that China increasing deployment of missiles opposite the island, might complicate the will of US intervention, even in an unprovoked attack. President Chen does not equate US support with support for Taiwan independence, but he does want to remind the international community that Taiwan is not a part of the PRC. Even in the Shanghai Communiqué between the US and the PRC of February 28, 1972, the US side did not specifically state that it recognizes that Taiwan is a part of China.

Taiwan's campaign for participation in the UN has continued since Chen Shui-bian took office in May 2000. Attention has nevertheless been shifted to participation in the WHO and other functional organizations, and Taiwan has become more flexible in its approach to memberships in certain IGOs, but this does not mean that it has cleared all the obstacles presented by Beijing.

President Chen Shui-bian differs from his predecessors because the DPP is of more Taiwan-oriented and more reflective of a "Taiwanese" identity. This explains why President Chen emphasizes people's diplomacy and liberally uses "Taiwan" as the national designation for Taipei's participation in international organizations.