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# Bridging the Gap from the Future: In Search of a Solution to the Taiwan-PRC Rivalry

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Yoshihisa Amae\*

*University of Hawaii at Manoa, U.S.A.*

*This paper utilizes three methodologies of future studies - analysis of emerging issues, four alternative futures, and preferred futures - to examine the present problem between Taiwan and the PRC as well as to search for a solution toward peaceful coexistence. The author argues that the status quo is becoming volatile as nationalism grows stronger on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan needs transformation from the status quo in order to survive as well as to thrive in the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** China-Taiwan relations, scenario development, emerging issues analysis, geo-politics.

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*"[T]here are no past possibilities, and there are no future facts."*

*Robert Brumbaugh*

*Professor of Philosophy at Yale University<sup>1</sup>*

*"My feeling as a human being makes me concern about Taiwan's future."*

*Shiba Ryotaro*

*Japanese writer<sup>2</sup>*

*"Boqi Taiwan, Tingjin Dalu [Stand up Taiwan, Advance to the Mainland]"*

*Li Ao*

*2000 Taiwan presidential candidate from the New Party<sup>3</sup>*

## **Introduction**

In his interview with the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's senior minister, boldly suggested that the United States should convince the "Taiwanese" that unification with "China" is inevitable rather than encouraging them to think of itself as a separate country.<sup>4</sup> Lee asked, "Clearly, the U.S. can choose to fight and probably can defend Taiwan for another 10 to 20 years. But how much longer? Are the Americans prepared to pay the price that the mainland [China] is ready to pay?" (Lee Kuan Yew 2000: 18)

It is not too much to say that Taiwan's very survival as a *de facto* sovereign state has been dependent on U.S. support. Had it not been for President Harry Truman's decision to dispatch the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait in defense of the island at the break of the Korean War in June 1950, Taiwan would have been absorbed by the Chinese Communists half a century ago. Since then, despite the vicissitude, the United States has been generally committed to the defense of Taiwan through generous military as well as economic aid and arms sales. Through the U.S. support, Taiwan not only has survived three Strait Crises - in 1954, 1958, and most recently in 1996 - but also has become economically prosperous, politically independent, and socially pluralistic. The question is how much longer will this last?

The U.S. commitment to Taiwan's defense should by no means taken as guaranteed. The Taiwan Relations Act of 1979 (TRA), mandated by the U.S. Congress, clearly indicates that America's commitment to Taiwan's defense is an option, not an obligation.<sup>5</sup> Will the United States come in the defense of Taiwan if the island were to be attacked by the

People's Republic of China (PRC)? Experts have used all kind of data to support their arguments, but nobody really knows how the United States would react.<sup>6</sup> But we are fairly certain that: 1) it will be difficult for the United States to sit idle when a liberal democracy is the prey of a communist aggressor; and, at the same time, 2) it becomes more and more difficult for the United States to intervene militarily as the PRC grows stronger militarily as well as economically. Therefore, it is imperative to ponder the following question: How could Taiwan survive in the future when the PRC continues to emerge as a major military and economic power?

The objective of this paper is to search for a solution to the conflict between the PRC and Taiwan by using methodologies of future studies. They include analysis of emerging issues, scenarios of four alternative futures, and preferred futures. First, I will focus on the issue of "Taiwanization" and analyze how this growing trend has affected Taiwan's relationship with the PRC, and how it will affect the bilateral relationship in the future. Secondly, I will delineate four "possible" future scenarios between the PRC and Taiwan. These would help us image possible - and not necessary "preferred" - developments across the Taiwan Strait and their consequences. Thirdly, I will examine preferred futures for both people in Taiwan and those in mainland China respectively. This exercise will help us understand the points of conflict as well as the reasons why each side prefers certain future. Lastly, I will suggest a solution to the conflict between the PRC and Taiwan by seeking a middle ground between their respective preferred futures, which can be called "harmonious" preferred future.

Why bother with the future of Taiwan? What is the significance of examining the future relationship between Taiwan and the PRC? In my opinion, future studies is an underestimated, yet a powerful, tool of social science. In general, social scientists look for future hints in past experiences. They use historical facts and figures - quantitative as well as qualitative data - to explain the present situation as well as to anticipate the future. Their approach is to find social trends and extrapolate them for use in the future. My application of emerging trend analysis of "Taiwanization" in this paper follows this pattern. However, the significance of future studies differs from such explanation and prediction. Instead, its explanatory power lies not in the "probability" but in the "possibility" - if not "preferability" - of the future. This methodology is based on a belief in transformation rather than continuation. The core of future studies' methodology lies in the uncertainty, the possibility, and the unpredictability of the

futures. Nobody knows for sure what will happen in the future. Therefore, as long as the argument is logical, it could be cogent, or at least irrefutable. The solution to the present deadlock in the relationship between Taiwan and the PRC may lie in the future.

### *Democratization, Taiwanization, and the Changing Nature of Conflict Across the Strait*

The political strife between Taiwan and mainland China is not a new phenomenon. The history of the cross-strait conflict at least dates back to 1949 when the Nationalists (or KMT) were defeated by the Communists in mainland China and withdrew to the island of Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> The separation between Taiwan and mainland China was consolidated with the commencement of the cold war in Asia after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and remains so to date.

The nature of the conflict originated in a civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists and what they represented: the Republic of China (ROC) and the PRC respectively. It was a conflict over legitimacy: both governments claimed to be the sole legitimate government of China. The two governments competed over a sphere of influence in the international arena. Initially, the cold war environment favored the ROC. Being the ally of the United States, the ROC remained in the United Nations and most western countries chose Taipei over Beijing as the sole legitimate government of China. However, the tide began to shift in the late 1960s due to a relative decline of US power as a result of its failure in the Vietnam War and the emerging conflict between the Soviet Union and the PRC. Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing in July 1971 and the announcement of President Nixon's forthcoming visit to China were a great blow to Taipei as it caused a landslide for countries of the western bloc to normalize diplomatic ties with Beijing at the expense of Taipei. In due course, the PRC was admitted to join the United Nations in October 1971, compelling Taipei to leave the institution.

The isolation in the international arena, especially the loss of diplomatic ties with the United States in January 1979, greatly undermined the political legitimacy of the Nationalist leaders in Taipei. This compelled President Chiang Ching-kuo to yield higher positions in the party and the central government to the Taiwanese elites. Previously, these positions were monopolized by a small number of mainland elites and political participation of the Taiwanese people was limited at the local

level. In 1984, President Chiang appointed Lee Teng-hui, a native of Taiwan, as his vice president. Chiang also promoted democratization in the island. His decision to lift the martial law in 1987 allowed people in Taiwan to form political parties. As a result, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which was established in 1986, became a legitimate opposition party. The advancement of Taiwanese clout in the KMT and democratization of the political system made further progress under the leadership of Lee Teng-hui, who assumed the presidency after the death of President Chiang in 1988. In May 1991, President Lee abolished the Temporary Provisions effective during the period of communist rebellion, which had allowed the ROC presidents to exercise extra-constitutional authority since 1948. It opened up a venue for further democratic reforms, allowing the government to replace aged mainland legislators with Taiwanese representatives through popular elections. The government enacted direct election of the President as well as mayors of major cities such as Taipei and Kaoshiung. In March 1996, Lee Teng-hui was elected by the voters of Taiwan in the first direct presidential election in the history of the island. The defeat of the KMT and the election of Chen Shui-bian and the DPP in March 2000 marked a new height of Taiwanization in Taiwanese politics.<sup>8</sup> As Taiwanese leaders became the mainstream in the KMT and the legislature in the 1990s, the trend of Taiwanization spilled over to the societal level. In 1997, the school history textbook was revised. The new textbook titled "Renshi Taiwan (Acknowledge Taiwan)" focuses on the indigenous history of the island, including positive accounts of the Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the Taiwanese language (Tai-yu or Minnan hao) - once banned - is now taught in schools and openly spoken in public spaces.

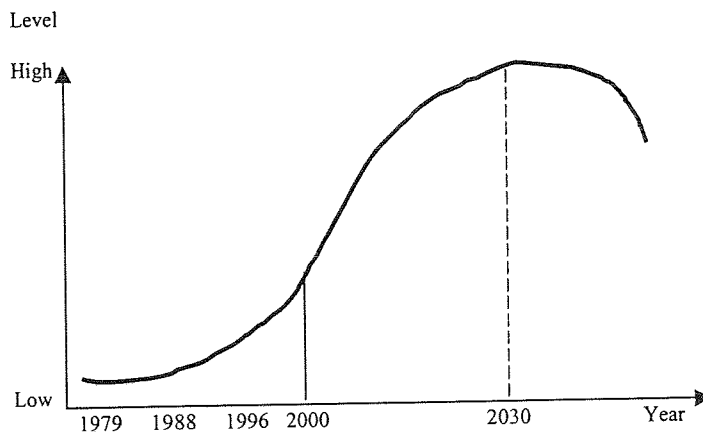
Democratization inevitably brought about Taiwanization of the island as the Taiwanese people, who comprise the majority in the island, began to govern themselves. This trend changed the nature of the conflict between Taiwan and the PRC. The difference between the two parties was no longer over the issue of who represents "China" but that of what is Taiwan. Taipei recognized the jurisdiction of the Chinese mainland by the PRC after the abolition of the Temporary Provisions in 1991, and claimed that the "Republic of China on Taiwan" to be an equal entity to the PRC. In July 1999, President Lee stated his "two states theory," in which he claimed that the relationship between Taiwan and the PRC is on a state-to-state basis. Beijing protested his remark as creating "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan," which was contrary to PRC's as-

sertion that there is only one China. However, the fiction of "one China" further deteriorated in March 2000, when Chen Shui-bian of the DPP won the presidency. Although President Chen avowed not to declare independence as long as the PRC has no intention to use military force against Taiwan, he refused to accept the concept of "one China" as a given fact or prerequisite for cross-strait negotiation.

### *Taiwanization as an Emerging Issue*

An emerging issues analysis focuses on a nascent trend, projects its growth trajectory and discusses its effects to the society based on an assumption that all trends tend to follow a S-curve pattern (Graham 1977: 6). The approach is intended to identify issues at their earliest emergence before they turn into a powerful trend.

Figure 1: Emerging Issue Analysis: "Taiwanization" since 1979



To be exact, Taiwanization, as examined earlier, is not an emerging issue. It is rather an issue which has "emerged" since the late 1970s (See Figure 1). However, I argue that the trend has not fully developed yet. The trend of Taiwanization grew rapidly in the late 1990s and is expected to grow stronger in the future. For example, a public opinion survey shows how the people in Taiwan identify themselves has changed significantly within the past decade (See Figure 2). The figures show that while the number of people who identify themselves as "Taiwanese" has increased

from 16.7 percent in 1992 to 42.5 percent in 2000, the number of those who identify themselves as “Chinese” has decreased from 44.0 percent in 1992 to 13.6 percent in 2000. This trend seems to be growing steadily. My assessment is that the apex of Taiwanization will naturally come around the year 2030 when the first-generation mainlander population dies off and children who studied under the new history textbook reach their prime. However, the peak of Taiwanization may come earlier if the PRC attempts to force the Taiwanese population into unification.

Figure 2: How People in Taiwan Identify Themselves



Source: Modified version of the public opinion survey conducted by Mainland Affairs Council  
[http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/POS/890908/p8905e\\_1.htm](http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/POS/890908/p8905e_1.htm)




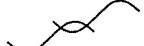
The continued growth of Taiwanization will likely aggravate the cross-strait relationship since the PRC insists Taiwan to be an inseparable part of China. The growing trend of Taiwanization and demand for self-determination and international recognition seem inevitable and irreversible, however.

### *Four Alternative Futures*

The exercise of exploring alternative futures helps us broaden our views about the futures. It allows us to envision several future possibilities (among many others), instead of predicting the future or forecasting a probable one.

I have developed four alternative futures on cross-strait relations based on the possible trajectories of the Taiwanization trend. They are: 1) continued growth; 2) collapse; 3) static relationship; and 4) transformation (See Figure 3).<sup>10</sup>

Figure 3: Alternative Futures across the Taiwan Strait

Alternatives	Continued Growth I	Collapse II	Static Relationship III	Transformation IV
Main Factor	Taiwanization			
Trajectories of the Factor				
Future relationship between Taiwan and mainland China	<p>"Tinderbox"</p> <p>Growing demand of self-determination increases tension across the Taiwan Strait. Security dilemma escalates arms race between Taiwan and the PRC.</p>	<p>"Land of Terror"</p> <p>The PRC attempts to unite Taiwan by force. War devastates the regional economy. Doomed scenario not only for Taiwan and the PRC but the whole Asia-Pacific region.</p>	<p>"Status quo"</p> <p>Both the Taiwanese and Chinese manage to control their nationalistic sentiment. Economic interdependence between Taiwan and the PRC with government control.</p>	<p>"Zhonghua Community"</p> <p>Taiwan exists independent and sovereign with other nations of the former PRC. These nations are politically independent but culturally share the Chinese-ness.</p>

In the second scenario, after years of unsuccessful negotiations, Beijing decides to use force to achieve unification. The fourth generation communist leaders have relatively weak leadership. They prefer to take a conciliatory stance on the Taiwan issue but are unable to control the hawkish military leaders and jingoistic populace, eventually yielding to their demand of military takeover of the island. Washington uses all diplomatic means to discourage Beijing but fails to prevent it. The U.S. President and his staffs decide not to intervene militarily because they deem the costs to be too high.<sup>11</sup> After several days of combats Taipei surrenders. The war destroys large parts in Taiwan and some Southern coastal area of China. The war forces many political figures into exile to foreign countries from where they deploy anti-Beijing campaign. Few also go underground and commit themselves to guerilla warfare with support from overseas independent activists. Taiwan becomes a land of terror.

In the third scenario, the status-quo is maintained despite the chronic political disputes over "one China" principle. Both Beijing and Taipei are able to mitigate local jingoism, thanks to the economic growth they enjoy

from mutual trade. The Taiwanese people are divided on issues such as identity and the future status of the island. As a result, the government takes no radical moves. Taiwan is still internationally isolated but few are concerned with the nation's official title or the width of its breathing space in the international arena. Due to steady economic growth, the Beijing leaders retain strong political power. They still insist on "one China" principle and refuse to renounce the use of force as an option. However, Beijing is reluctant to do anything that could hinder its economic prosperity.

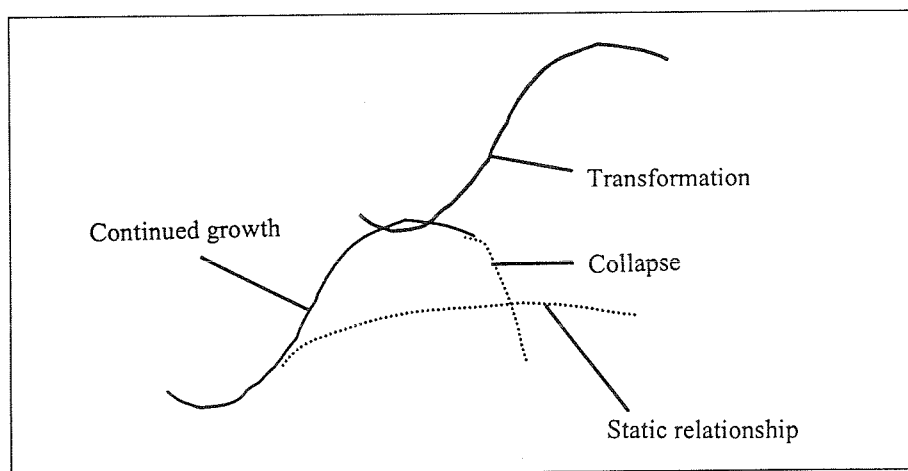
In the fourth scenario, Taiwan coexists peacefully with other democratic nations - formerly known as the PRC - under the form of a confederation such as the European Union. These nations are politically independent but culturally unitary under a Chinese-ness ("wenhua tongyuan zhengzhi duoyuan"<sup>12</sup>). These "Chinese (Zhonghua)" nations are economically well-integrated. Moreover, these nations adopt an universal currency, allow citizens to travel freely among each other's territory, and exercise collective security against foreign threats. The Taiwanization movement loses its momentum and direction as the mainland Chinese became benevolent after coming to understand and respect the unique historical development of Taiwan. The Taiwanese begins to cultivate a stronger sense of Chinese community ("zhonghua quan" or "zhonghua gongdongti") which they share commonly with the mainland Chinese. Once political rivalries now perceive each other as tongbao (brothers).

I prefer the fourth transformational scenario because I believe that the continued growth of Taiwanization is vulnerable to a military conflict and an eventual collapse (see Figure 4). Neither Taiwan nor the PRC is a winner in such scenario. Nor do I think that a static relationship is feasible despite the burgeoning economic interdependence across the Taiwan Strait. The economic interdependence has continued for over a decade since the late 1980s. However, it did not diminish the yearning for Taiwanization. The Taiwanese identity is much stronger today than a decade ago. The mutual suspicion and distrust across the strait seem to have contributed to enhance nationalism on each side.

While a scenario of transformation is preferable, it is not easy since both Taipei and Beijing believe that they will likely to achieve their respective goals - independence and unification - without major risks. They also do not see the vulnerability of the status-quo. People on each side are becoming more nationalistic and such trend is likely to continue in the near future. Both Taipei and Beijing have reasons to welcome such popular trend in their respective countries. Taipei seems to recognize that

building a Taiwanese identity through democratization and Taiwanization is the best defense against any threats to its national sovereignty. As for the PRC, the Communist leaders depends on nationalism as a new source of political legitimacy and national unity in lieu of communism (Ji 1999: 92). The political leaders in Beijing seem to be using the Taiwan issue as a scapegoat to divert the public's attention away from domestic problems such as growing unemployment and widening economic disparity.

Figure 4: Transformational Scenario



### *Contending Preferred Futures*

"Preferred" futures are different from "possible" and "probable" futures. They are *what you want, not what you think might happen*. As James Dator puts it, all futures are personal (Dator 1998: 304). People have different images on how they want their futures to be like, as do the Taiwanese and the Chinese. While there are various images of preferred futures,<sup>13</sup> in this section, I will first focus on what is believed to be the popular views in the PRC and Taiwan and then seek a common preferred future between mainland China and Taiwan.

#### *Taiwan's Preferred Future*

Taking public opinion surveys on its relationship with the PRC is a popular exercise in Taiwan. In a survey in which the respondents were asked, "which one of the given options do they prefer regarding Taiwan's relationship with the mainland," the responses were as following:

Figure 5: Preferred Relationship with the PRC

	Options	%
1	Unification as soon as possible	3.0
2	Independence as soon as possible	5.6
3	Maintaining the status quo, with unification in the future	21.4
4	Maintaining the status quo, with independence in the future	12.2
5	Maintaining the status quo, postponing the decision until situation clears up	37.5
6	Maintaining the status quo forever	16.7
7	Don't know / No opinion	3.6

(As of March 2001)

Source: Data from the public opinion survey conducted by the Mainland Affairs Council

< [http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/POS/9003/9003e\\_1.gif](http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/POS/9003/9003e_1.gif) > .

The survey clearly shows that neither extreme options - independence (5.6 percent) or unification (3.0 percent) - are preferred for the time being. Nearly 88 percent of the respondents preferred the status quo, that is *a de facto* independence from mainland China. Although the survey does not directly ask on their preferred future, there are sufficient hints to speculate it. First of all, there is no single predominant view on the cross-strait relationship: 21.4 percent replied unification in the future; 12.2 percent responded independence in the future; and 16.7 percent said status quo forever. Secondly, the data implies that many people do not have a clear view - whether preferred one or not - of the future as 37.5 percent of the respondents answered that maintaining the status quo and postponing the decision until situation clears up is their preferable choice, as well as 3.6 percent said they don't know. Thirdly, it can be inferred that majority of the Taiwanese people prefer "independence," that is to have their own republic - the Republic of Taiwan, free, sovereign, and independent on their own. However, their real preference is not reflected in the survey because most people in Taiwan fear war with the PRC as a consequence of declaring independence. The responses given in the above survey are restraint by their perception - almost accepted as "reality" - that the PRC will attack Taiwan if it declares independence. The preferred future in this survey is, therefore, that with constraint. If given a "veil of ignorance," majority of the people in Taiwan should support *de jure* independence.

Why do people in Taiwan prefer "independence" from mainland China? The main reason seems to lie in their image of Beijing authority. Their image is associated with the Beijing governments' crackdown of the Tiananmen demonstrators in June 1989 and continuing oppressions on human rights activists and Falun Gong practitioners. These events led to highly negative images. With these images, it is rather rational for

people in Taiwan to refuse unification until a society which guarantees their freedom and basic human rights emerges in mainland China.

### *PRC's Preferred Future*

Since there are no nationwide public opinion surveys in the PRC, it is hard to know what sort of future the Chinese people prefer in their relationship with Taiwan. However, it is fair to assume that the majority of the people in the mainland prefer - if not believe in - an eventual unification between China and Taiwan. They consider Taiwan as a renegade province which separated from the mainland since 1949. Many Chinese prefer a peaceful unification, however, it seems that they even support the government to use force if necessary.

The reason why the Chinese people think the way they do is greatly due to their national education. In a rigid society like China where freedom of speech and accessibility of information are restricted, government propaganda is powerful. Through national education, the Chinese people tend to believe that: 1) Taiwan is an inalienable territory of China, which was "stolen" by Japan and later rebelled against the mainland by the KMT bandits; and 2) accomplishing "national unification" and overcoming the past humiliation are indomitable national goals. Such myths are reinforced by the Chinese media which constantly treat Taiwan as a province of China - not an independent sovereign state - and are reluctant to report views that are favorable to Taiwan. The government even takes legal actions against citizens who challenge these myths. For example, it has been reported that it is illegal in the PRC to support Taiwan independence on the internet. (Rennie 2000) Moreover, many Chinese intellectuals tend to believe that the United States is selling weapons to Taiwan because it wants to weaken the PRC in order to split Taiwan from the mainland. The Chinese are sensitive to the word "split" - "*fenlie*" - and seem to believe that the bigger the territory the better the nation.

### *Toward a Harmonious Preferred Future*

The preferred future of Taiwan and that of the PRC are incompatible. Future studies encourages students to create futures that are preferable, but what if two visions collide? "All futures are personal," as some futurists say. However, if there is no consensus on its direction, how are we supposed to create a preferred future? There may be different views of the future at the beginning of the day, but at the end of the day, only one survives. Is future another battleground of power politics, in which im-

ages of the futures compete for influence? Or are preferred futures only imaginary and not a matter of realization? In my opinion, futures studies should be more than just envisioning the future but constructing it. In doing so, futures ought not to be merely personal, but also logical, convincing, and appealing to others. The beauty of future studies lies in its approach: to put yourself in a desirable future and think what you can do to achieve it or to put yourself in an undesirable future and think how to avoid it. Such an approach emancipate us from the yoke of past experiences and present "reality" and allows us to think creatively as well as independently.

#### *A Harmonious Preferred Future*

All futures are personal at the level of imagination. However, when it comes to implementation, they are inevitably inter-personal. Therefore, preferred futures that are practical ought to be more or less compromising.

In this session, I will search for a "harmonious" preferred future - a preferred future, that is acceptable to the parties concerned - for both Taiwan and the PRC. A harmonious preferred future requires both parties to be rational thinkers: that is, to be able to calculate the costs, benefits, and risks and wish to avoid the worst scenario.

Figure 6: Cross Strait Dilemma

		<u>PRC</u>	
		Force Unification	
		Yes	No
<u>Taiwan</u>	Yes	I - 10, - 10	II 10, 0
	No	III 0, 10	IV 5, 5

Declare (*de jure*)  
Independence

In Figure 6, II (independence) and III (unification) are the most favorable choice - preferred future - to Taiwan and the PRC respectively. At the same time, Taiwan's independence is a less favorable choice for the PRC. Likewise, for Taiwan, its unification with the PRC is less favored. Therefore, a move toward either *de jure* independence or forced unification by force is likely to put Taiwan and the PRC into a worst scenario of war (I). As a result, it is rational for both Taipei and Beijing to stick to the status quo (IV) unless there are changes to the payoffs.

However, nationalism in both sides of the Taiwan Strait (as the arrow indicates) seems to be leading both people into a dangerous path of destruction (from IV to I). War may occur due to misperception and miscalculation, especially when the two lack proper channels of communication.<sup>14</sup> In order to avoid a military conflict in the Taiwan Strait, it is important to come up with a harmonious preferred future for both Taiwan and the PRC that would replace the volatile status quo.

While both the Taiwanese and Chinese wish to achieve their own preferred future, there is a consensus that most of them do not favor so if it means war and destruction of their peace and prosperity. This is the bottom line as well as the common ground in their future relationship. From a purely economic perspective, the relationship between Taiwan and the PRC is a positive sum: Taiwan has the capital and technology, whereas the mainland China has the labor and market. The geographic proximity is advantageous to their trade and business. In addition, culturally they are more or less homogeneous. Mandarin - the standard Chinese language - is a commonly used in Taiwan and the PRC, and they share similar cultural values. The key to success for Taiwan and the PRC in the future is how to prevent political agenda from escalating into a situation that could jeopardize the common goal of peace and prosperity.

The obstacle for political dialogue between Taipei and Beijing lies in disagreement over what is called the principle of "one China." Beijing claims that the PRC and Taiwan are both parts of "one China" and requires Taipei to accept this condition as a prerequisite for future negotiations. However, Taipei only acknowledges that "one China" would be realized only in the future and denies "one China" as a prerequisite. Taipei argues that the concept of "one China" is an issue to be discussed.

The issue of "one China" is difficult for Beijing to compromise, as the issue relates to the fundamental question of legitimacy and territorial integrity of the PRC. However, Beijing needs to understand that blackmailing the people in Taiwan is counterproductive to achieving unification. Such action will only alienate the democratic people of Taiwan.<sup>15</sup> Taiwan

is a liberal democracy, in which its leaders are elected by the voters through free and fair elections. The democratic system makes the leaders difficult to implement policies that are highly unpopular with the electorates.<sup>16</sup> If the public opposition against unification with mainland China remains high, it is unlikely for leaders in Taiwan - no matter how pro-unification the person is - to implement policies against the popular will. On the other hand, if a large majority of the people in Taiwan prefer unification with the PRC, there is not much the leaders can do no matter how they themselves are for independence. Therefore, if serious about unification, Beijing needs to woo the people in Taiwan, not threaten them. As long as Beijing adheres to a wrong strategy, Taipei has little to worry about its political legitimacy.

*One China: From "Zhongguo" to "Zhonghua"*

How people in Taiwan identify themselves is quite complicated. Many have conflicting emotions about being "Chinese" or "Taiwanese." In fact, many recognize themselves as both "Chinese" and "Taiwanese."<sup>17</sup> At the same time, a great deal of Taiwanese feel challenged, if not offended, when they are called "Chinese." The issue of identity is sensitive among people in Taiwan and it plays an important role in politics.<sup>18</sup>

While the issue of "one China" principle is controversial among the people in Taiwan, most agree that Taiwan and the mainland China are culturally as well as ethnically homogeneous.<sup>19</sup> There are two different ways to describe China in the Chinese language: "*Zhongguo*" and "*Zhonghua*." *Zhongguo* literally means middle kingdom. It usually associates with political entities such as the ROC and the PRC.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the word *Zhonghua* has cultural and ethnic connotation. The word is often used in reference to its culture - *Zhonghua wenhua* - or its ethnicity - *Zhonghua minzu*. Most people in Taiwan - except for the aborigines - acknowledge that they are ethnically Chinese whose descendents came to the island in the last four or five hundred years.

Having examined various factors both in Taiwan and the PRC, I propose a harmonious preferred future across the Taiwan Strait to be as following. In a short term (3-5 years), that is intensive economic interdependence and political dialogues between Taiwan and the PRC under the framework of "one China" which is free, democratic and prosperous. Beijing will be content that Taiwan has agreed on "one China" principle (Beijing leaders would not disagree that the PRC is "free," "democratic," and "prosperous") and its leaders will save face vis-a-vis their people. At the same time, such framework would be acceptable to Taipei, which in-

sists on "future one China," since "one China" that is free, democratic and prosperous does not exist yet in the eyes of people in China. In a long-term (20-30 years), I envision no one "China." *Zhongguo* - China as a single sovereign political entity - would only exist in the history books or as a forgotten dream of Chinese leaders in the past. Taiwan would coexist with other Chinese nations which exist autonomously within the territory of what is the former PRC. China and Chinese remain as ethnical/cultural boundaries - *Zhonghua* - not as a political entity or citizenship - *Zhongguo*.

### *Breaking the Images*

China - both the PRC and the ROC - has been a trauma for the Taiwanese people. The people in Taiwan have to decide how to deal with China both at the national and individual level: at the national level that is the relationship between Taiwan and the PRC, and at the individual level that is an issue of identity. The PRC is an archenemy which threatens the *raison d'être* of Taiwan. Beijing attempts to suffocate Taiwan diplomatically by claiming that the island is an inseparable part of China, and thus should not be recognized as an sovereign nation in the international community. The PRC even threatens to use force if Taiwan declares independence from China. Despite this harassment, I argue that, Taiwan has no choice to shy away from the PRC but to face it. Taiwan, enjoys its own sovereignty just like any other nation-states. However, it still cannot choose to change its national title or the constitution, not to mention a declaration of independence, due to its unique circumstance. Moreover, economically Taiwan needs mainland China to continue its growth and maintain its international competitiveness in the 21st century. Statistics show that mainland China as a market contributed almost 2 percent in Taiwan's annual economic growth of 6.25 percent in 1995 (Zhang & Jia 1995). Taiwan's economic dependence on the mainland market is increasing despite the government's "No haste, be patient" policy.

Taiwan should search to play a leading role in helping mainland China develop and transform itself. Taiwan has an opportunity to influence the younger generation in mainland China by helping them improve their living standards. People in Taiwan should strive to make the mainland Chinese think that they want to become like them - free and prosperous. Such Chinese will be less jingoistic than poor and frustrated ones. It is in the best interest of Taiwan to break the negative images of its citizens toward the PRC, thus shifting paradigm in its relationship with the mainland.

The other China - the ROC - has not been a pleasant memory for many Taiwanese as well. The Taiwanese people had greatly suffered from the authoritarian rule by the Nationalists since the end of World War II. In the tragic incident of February 28, 1947, it is estimated that 28,000 Taiwanese were massacred at the hands of the KMT government. Moreover, the Taiwanese were politically oppressed under nearly three decades of the martial law. Especially, from the late 1940s to early 1950s, close to 10,000 people were persecuted with the allegation of "communist instigation." This period is inscribed in the Taiwanese people's memory as "white terror." Although the full story of these incidents are not yet widely known in Taiwan, especially to the young generation, these experiences are hard to forgive, let alone forget, for the victims. These experiences deeply divided the nation and have attributed by some Taiwanese to the demand for independence.

The Taiwanese people, not only had inherited the Chinese civil war, but also suffered a great deal from it. Their resentment toward the Chinese is not difficult to understand. However, these feelings should not be inherited by the future generations. The Taiwanese people should consider the election of Chen Shui-bian and the peaceful ousting of the KMT as their victory over oppression and terror. Taiwan is now governed by a Taiwanese leader from a native Taiwanese party. The victory of Chen and the accomplishment of the first peaceful transition of power is not only the Taiwanese history but also in the Chinese history should be marked as a beginning of a new era.

### ***Conclusion: Farewell Nationalism***

Independence desired by Taiwan and unification advocated by the mainland China have both become a long-cherished goal without much consideration to its consequences. The Taiwanese people need to ask themselves: "independence, then what?" Would independence that drastically change their life from how it is now? Unlikely. With all respect to Peng Mingmin - a spiritual leader of Taiwan independence movement - and martyrs of the independence movement, the sorrow of the Taiwanese is well understood, and like many others I am sympathetic. However, their dream of Taiwan independence should not be imposed on the future generation. People have their own given time to live. The younger Taiwanese should spend their time and energy in thinking how to peacefully coexist with the Chinese rather than seeking independence in vain.

The same question applies to the mainland Chinese: "unification, so what?" Would unification with Taiwan make their living standards dramatically better? Definitely not. Would the independence of Taiwan make their life any more miserable? Essentially, I do not think it matters much for the life of ordinary Chinese. In my opinion, spending millions of dollars for national defense at the expense of other social needs in preparation for a military takeover of Taiwan has more negative effects on the Chinese. It hinders the development of education and social welfare. Moreover, is territorial integrity that crucial to the Chinese people? To think that the bigger the territory, the better the nation, is a myth and anachronistic. Ultimately, if one asks ordinary Chinese citizens whether they prefer big but poor China, or small but rich China, I believe most people would choose the latter. The return of Hong Kong may have rejoiced the nation for several days but the event did not affect lives of most Chinese in any significant ways. In addition, if the Chinese themselves do not want to live under the communist rule, what makes them to think that the Taiwanese would want to?

Is it fruitless to even consider a possibility of both the Taiwanese and the Chinese becoming less nationalistic and seeking cooperation with each other? I do not think so. Can you imagine Tokyo threatening to use force if Okinawa, by their own will, decides to declare independence from Japan? Or consider Washington blackmailing Hawaii. Not likely. Also, one could easily think of how the South Koreans' image toward Kim Jong Il and the North Korean people, changed after the two Korean leaders embraced each other in June 2000 for the first time in history. Therefore, reconciliation between Taiwan and the PRC, therefore might not be far ahead. Remember, our future is full of possibilities.

### Notes

1. Robert S. Brumbaugh, quoted in Wendell Bell and James A. Mau eds., *The Sociology of the Future*, p. 9.
2. Ryotaro Shiba, "Basho no Kurushimi: Taiwanjin ni umarata Hiai" [Agony of Place: A Sorrow to be Born as Taiwanese]. *Shukan Asahi*, May 6-13, 1994, p. 42.
3. Li Ao's comment during the March 2000 Taiwan presidential election. Quoted in Yang Zhongmei, *Hitotsu no Chugoku Hitotsu no Taiwan: Jiang Zemin vs. Lee Teng-hui*, p. 202.

4. In his interview, Lee used the word "Taiwanese" to refer to the people in Taiwan and "China" in referring to the People's Republic of China (PRC). While this is a common practice, in this paper, I will use "Taiwan" (occasionally "Republic of China" or "ROC," which is the official title of the country) and the "PRC" in referring to the respective political entities. "Mainland China" is used in a geographical connotation and as a contrast to Taiwan. The word "China" in this paper does not mean the PRC, but either in referring to both political entities of the PRC and the ROC (*Zhongguo*) or used in a broader cultural, ethnical connotation (*Zhonghua*). While people who live in mainland China can be referred to as simply "Chinese," the Taiwan side is more complicated. Thus, it requires an explanation. In referring to the entire populace in Taiwan, I use the word, "people in Taiwan," which includes "Taiwanese" - people who had been living in the island prior to inflow of the Nationalists after the Japanese renounced sovereignty over the island in 1945 - and "mainlanders" - those who moved to the island with the Nationalists after 1945. In Chinese, the former group of people are called *Benshengren* ("people of the province"), in contrast to *Waishengren* ("people of other provinces"), the mainlanders. The island populace consists of 87 percent Taiwanese (including 2 percent aborigines) and 13 percent mainlanders. The distinction is complicated but necessary to clarify my viewpoints as well as to claim political neutrality.
5. Nowhere in this legislation does it specify that the United States will defend and resist any aggressions against Taiwan. The TRA only stipulates any efforts to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means a "grave concern" to the United States. Its language is very ambiguous.
6. When asked by the Chinese officials on how the United States would react to if the PRC attacks Taiwan, Joseph Nye, then assistant secretary for defense, answered "nobody knows" citing the US intervention in the Korean War in June 1950 despite its previous non-involvement policy. See Hickey, "The Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1996," p. 279.
7. I say "at least" since the history of the conflict can be traced back to end of the *Ming* Dynasty in the 17th century. General Zheng Chenggong of *Ming* fled to Taiwan to resist against the *Qing* Dynasty. Taiwan has often been a stronghold of anti-mainland force in the history. The pre-modern conflict across the strait, however, is out of the scope of this paper.
8. Taiwan has shifted from a mainlanders' rule (Chiangs of the KMT) to a semi-Taiwanese rule (Lee Teng-hui of the KMT), and then to a Taiwanese rule (Chen Shuibian of the DPP). However, the culmination of Taiwanization in Taiwan politics is not achieved yet since the DPP is a minority in the legislature. The election of the Legislative Yuan in December 2001 may further accelerate the Taiwanization process.
9. The new textbook emphasizes on the history, geography and culture of Taiwan unlike the old one, which covered the history of mainland China. The

native history of Taiwan has been marginalized under the authoritarian regime of the Chiangs. The school textbook, as a part of national education, is believed to have played an important role in how the people in Taiwan identify themselves.

10. The four alternative futures model is not my original. James Dator, in his explanation to social changes, named the four alternatives: "continued growth," "collapse," "conservative society," and "transformational society." See James Dator, "Alternative Futures & the Futures of Law."
11. One can draw many different scenarios depending on the U.S. reaction: 1) whether the United States intervenes or not; and 2) how it intervenes. I would not explore these here since that is not the main purpose of the paper. Moreover, regardless of the nature of U.S. involvement, this second scenario is a doomed one for Taiwan.
12. I am indebted to Daniel Kwok for this term.
13. I have collected preferred future views on Taiwan and China by whom I consider to be influential leaders in Taiwan. See Appendix.
14. All semi-official talks broke off in July 1999 when President Lee Teng-hui stated his "two states theory." While there are private level contacts as well as contacts among political parties between Taiwan and mainland China, there are no official channels between Taipei and Beijing.
15. For example, when Beijing conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait during the 1996 presidential election, people who support independence (including both immediate and gradual) increased from 12.9 percent to 20.5 percent within three months. Also, when Beijing deployed criticism against President Lee Teng-hui after he announced "special state-to-state relations" in July 1999, supporters of independence soared from 17.3 percent to 28.1 percent within four months. <[www.mac.gov.tw/gb/mlpolicy/pos/p8903c\\_2.htm](http://www.mac.gov.tw/gb/mlpolicy/pos/p8903c_2.htm)>. In another survey, 76.5 percent of the respondents answered that the Beijing authorities are "unfriendly (*fei youhao de*)" to Taiwan. *Chuka Shubo*, June 15, 2000, p. 11.
16. According to a recent poll, 78.8 percent of the respondents oppose unification with the mainland China under the "one country, two systems" formula. <[www.mac.gov.tw/gb/mlpolicy/pos/890302/8903\\_7.gif](http://www.mac.gov.tw/gb/mlpolicy/pos/890302/8903_7.gif)>.
17. See Figure 2.
18. For example, it is almost a prerequisite for political candidates in Taiwan to use the Taiwanese language during the campaign in order to be elected. While there are numerous examples of ethnic politics in Taiwan, I would not discuss them here.
19. Even President Chen Shuibian of the DPP acknowledges this fact. In his 2001 New Year's eve address, Chen said, "I have always felt that the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait came from the same family . . ." See Chen, "Bridging the New Century."
20. Peng Mingmin argues that "*Zhongguo*" is not a national title but rather something like a champion flag for conquerors of the land. Each political entities in

the past had their own national title. According to Peng, the idea, that "Zhongguo" is a country, which has existed since several thousands years ago, is a product of the Chinese nationalism in the late *Qing* era. See Peng, *Taiwan no Hoteki Chii*, pp. 34-36.

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## Appendix: Images of Preferred Futures for Taiwan

Chen Shui-bian (President of the ROC)	<p>"Green Silicon Island"</p> <p>"As for future human life, I have an ideal of 'Green Valley,' in which humans can enjoy both the beautiful nature and the convenient technologies. I do not think that two are mutually exclusive and the present reality of high-industrialization and environmental destruction is an error of human developmental history. But, we should be able to overcome this situation. Such day is soon to come. It is possible for Taiwan to become a pioneer in realizing such future. . . . Taiwan is blessed with an opportunity to contribute to modernization of China, and will help it accelerate in joining the club of advanced countries. I wish to build friendship by sincerity, ease the risk of confrontation, and create a new phrase of peace in the cross-strait relationship. Whether we can realize this win-win situation is crucial to the success of our 'Green Silicon Island' plan. (Excerpt from his autobiography, <i>Taiwan no Ko</i>).</p>
Lee Teng-hui (Former President of the ROC)	<p>"China—Seven Autonomous Regions"</p> <p>" . . . Taiwan has a future only if exists, and Asia's future is tied to the continued existence of Taiwan. One could say that as long as Taiwan exists, its future will blossom, and its presence will help secure the future of Asia. . . . Taiwan's present status may well be defined as the Republic of China on Taiwan; it expresses our national identity and asserts our sovereignty and independence as a state. There are many who argue for 'Republic of Taiwan,' but I think it is not the time to do so, nor is it necessary to do so to begin with. It will make our identity ambiguous and Taiwan's sovereignty and independence will be in danger. . . . As long as mainland China maintains its hegemonic stance, peace will probably not come to Asia. The idea of a hegemonic, nationalistic "Greater China" is unquestionably a threat to mainland China's neighbors. . . . Ideally, Asia would be rather stable if Taiwan establishes its own identity as Taiwan, Tibet as Tibet, Xinjiang as Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia as Inner Mongolia, and the Tungpei [Northern China] as the Tungpei. China should better break from the vast "Greater China," divide into perhaps seven regions to compete among themselves." (Excerpt from his autobiography, <i>Taiwan no Shucho</i>.)</p>
Peng Mingmin (National Policy Advisor to the President, Former DPP Presidential Candidate in 1996)	<p>"They [Chinese] must stop vilifying as traitors to those who desire self-determination and understand that one can be proud of his Chinese heritage and still choose not to be subject to government by China. The real issue is not independence for Formosa but self-determination for the people there. And the Formosan people want to live in the most friendly association with the Chinese people and would spare no effort to establish the closest economic, commercial, cultural and even political ties with China." (Excerpt from "Formosa's Future," <i>New York Times</i> October 27, 1971, p. 47).</p>
Lee Yuan-Tze (1986 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry)	<p>"Taiwan in a Global Village"</p> <p>"Whether that is cross-strait affairs or domestic affairs, when every difficulties require efforts from the people, the proposed ones are often not ways for an ideal society. Moreover, nationalism is not an imperial sword for solution. . . . Envisioning the future, in the process of economic internationalization, many economic activities are not limited within their boundaries. People in Taiwan can make a step forward before other people, create villagers of the global village, hold great ideals, desire to make Taiwan the most ideal place on earth, and earnestly make a contribution to the world." (Excerpt from Chen Jianzhong, "Minzu Zhuyi bushi Jiejie Wenti Shangfang Baojian [Nationalism is not an Imperial Sword to Resolve the Problem]" <i>Ziyou Shibao</i>, April 16, 1995)</p>

