Taiwan Adrift?: Cross Strait Relations at its Crossroads[1]

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This paper examines the evolution of the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China as well as envisions its future. The author argues that the cross-strait relations is drifting toward a de facto "one China, one Taiwan" through the construction of a Taiwanese national identity. While the actors involved may prefer the maintenance of the status quo, nation-building in Taiwan is challenging the status quo and the peace and stability it provides. Based on this reasoning, the author proposes an alternative future of "Cross-Strait Chinese Community" for a sustainable peace in the Taiwan Strait. A paradigm shift on the issue of sovereignty is needed to bring about this transformation.

Keywords: cross-strait relations, political community building, national identity, sovereignty

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Introduction

What would the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China look like in 2025? Do you imagine a continuous separation of the island from mainland China? Will we still be hearing a same old slogan of "one China" and "national unification?" Will the Taiwan Strait still be one of the most militarized areas in the world while economic and social interactions expand among the people on both side of the Strait? Or do you see an island, once called "Formosa" - a beautiful island - devastated by war? There, the islanders, living under oppression, resist against the mainland regime via frequent bombings? Or do you envision a future, in which Taiwan and mainland China peacefully coexist as one political community, consisting one of the largest economies in the world?[2]

Examination of the future of cross - strait relations is important since peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is vital to security in the Asia-Pacific region. Taiwan Strait is the only flashpoint on the globe where a conflict can occur between the United States and the People's Republic of China. At the moment, however, there is little political turmoil that could trigger confrontation between the U.S. and China.

Since the election of Chen Shui - bian in March 2000, the political status in the Strait seems to be static. Chen and his administration refuse to accept that Taiwan is part of China while Beijing refuses to move forward in its relationship with Taipei unless it accepts the "one China" principle. The Chen administration argues that "one China" cannot be a condition but an issue to be discussed. As a result, there is no breakthrough to the stalemate. Concurrently, mainland China and Taiwan have been steadily integrating their economic activity and are expected to do so even more now that both China and Taiwan have joined the WTO.

How will the present political inaction and economic convergence between Taiwan and mainland China affect their future relations? Will the economic integration and social, cultural interactions across the Strait alleviate the political tension? Or will the political difference come to spoil the economic integration in the future?

While we may be able to anticipate the future through an analysis of the seeds and drivers of change, generally, we do not know the future until it arrives. More important than predicting the future - and the epistemological problems embedded in prediction itself - is envisioning desired futures, and taking steps to create them. While there are numerous approaches to the future - e.g. empirical-predictive, interpretive-cultural, and critical-poststructural - two are crucial. If the future is deemed pre-

determined and thus fixed, we can only predict it correctly or incorrectly. However, if future is viewed malleable by human beings among other agents, then it is not futile to engage in envisioning future since visions may affect the way future is made. Indeed, the image defines which futures we consider possible. Moreover, while there are competing images - and particular image of the future is colonized - among the essential tasks of creating alternative futures is to de - colonize the future.

This paper discusses the future of cross-strait relations. The future across the Taiwan Strait - like any other futures - depends on a combination of various factors. Those are: U.S. commitment to peace and stability in the Strait; cross-strait economic (inter)dependence; and nationalism both in Taiwan and mainland China. Also, political change in mainland China, if happens in the future, would have a large impact on cross-strait relations. How each factor relates one another and its outcome in a given world system is difficult to anticipate.

Therefore, in this paper, I will focus on what I consider to be the single crucial factor, which has shaped the relationship between Taiwan and China: Taiwanese nationalism. I argue that, from a future's perspective, cross-strait relation is at its crossroads at the beginning of this century. While the political deadlock continues in the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan is drifting away from mainland China through a constitution of its own national identity. This trend, which is called "Taiwanization," "localization" or "de-sinicization" is, to a certain extent, a natural cause of democratic consolidation. Free and fair elections and freedom of speech gave means to the Taiwanese people, who have been oppressed by the Kuomintang (KMT) since 1945, to reflect their voice in politics. Through democratization, the official Chinese nationalism has been replaced by a new Taiwanese nationalism vis-a-vis mainland China. At the international level, the domestic change in Taiwan is challenging the status quo. In this paper, I will first re-examine the present peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. What is the "status quo" and how sustainable is it? I will then suggest an alternative to cope with the difference that lies across the Taiwan Strait. I propose a need to create a community across the Taiwan Strait in order to make the present stability more sustainable.

Politics of the Status Quo

The status quo in the Taiwan Strait is supported, if not tacitly agreed, by the parties concerned in the region. A recent poll suggests that 82.5

percent of Taiwanese people prefer "status quo" for the time being as the island's relationship with mainland China.[3] At the governmental level, Beijing, Taipei, and Washington also seem to tolerate the status quo. However, each has different understandings and expectations as well as different reasons to tolerate the status quo. This makes the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and peace and stability it provides rather vulnerable. As much as we wish the status quo to be permanent, history shows that no status quo is everlasting. Lack of visions and fear and reluctance for change have lead us to unintended disaster. It is imperative for us, therefore, to think of an alternative to create a sustainable peace in the Taiwan Strait.

Prism of the Status Quo

The status quo in the Taiwan Strait makes prismatic reality. It is perceived differently by different sets of people. The people in Taiwan prefer the status quo, but that is different from saying that they do not want *de jure* independence of Taiwan. They desire to see Taiwan respected and treated as a sovereign nation in the international community. However, few support immediate independence since they believe that a declaration of independence would bring about a war with mainland China.

For the Taiwan government, the status quo means nothing but a continuous *de facto* independence of Taiwan from mainland China. The island has transformed itself into a liberal democracy with a free market economy. Through its successful economic development and democratization, Taiwan has won certain respect and sympathy in the international community. But, that is short of a formal diplomatic recognition. The Chen administration, nevertheless, seems to believe that it could become a *de facto* "Taiwanese" nation-state without formally declaring independence from China. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which used to claim Taiwan independence, now as a ruling party takes a stand that Taiwan is independent and sovereign as the Republic of China (ROC).

The victory of Chen Shui-bian in March 2000 presidential election changed the nature of cross-strait politics. Prior to Chen's victory, cross-strait relations and the issue of unification were viewed as an extension of the Chinese civil war (1946-50) between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). While both regimes insisted that they are the only legitimate government of China, they did not disagree that there is one China, of which Taiwan is part. Therefore, the difference was expected to be solved by negotiations between the KMT and the CCP. However, the victory of Chen Shui-bian and the DPP challenged,

if not changed, this structure. The dispute across the Taiwan Strait is no longer about "who rules China (including Taiwan)" but about "what is Taiwan" in its relationship to the PRC (Alagappa 2001: 30). The DPP is an indigenous political party of Taiwan, established in 1986. The party has no direct relationship with the Chinese civil war. For Chen and his party, unification is not a goal but an option to Taiwan.

Implications of the victory of Chen and the DPP for cross-strait relations, however, are not yet fully acknowledged by either the PRC or the international community. Beijing continues to demand acceptance of the idea of "one China" as a precondition for cross-strait political dialogue.[4] Beijing is not satisfied with the status quo. It is nothing but a *de facto* separation of Taiwan from mainland China from its standpoint. The Chinese leaders are frustrated with the fact that Taiwan continues to survive independently under the aegis of the United States. Since the early 1990s, Taiwan has become more assertive in the international community while it refuses to negotiate with Beijing on its terms. In February 2000, Beijing added "indefinite refusal of negotiations on unification" as a new condition, in which it would adopt drastic measures including the use of force against Taiwan.[5] As much as it is frustrated with the status quo, Beijing understands that an immediate unification is unlikely to happen and the use of force to accomplish its goal is not a viable option as long as the United States is committed to the defense of Taiwan. In addition, Beijing does not wish to aggravate its relationship with Taiwan to an extent which spoils its trade relations with the island and the world. Today, a stable economic growth is more pressing to the CCP's political legitimacy than unification with Taiwan. At the same time, Beijing may be starting to view the status quo to its advantage with its economy growing more than 7 percent of its GDP a year while Taiwan suffers an economic downturn. An exodus of Taiwanese capital and huge flow of Taiwanese investment to Shanghai and other cities in Southern China seem to have provided Beijing leaders an optimistic view that once the mainland becomes an economic powerhouse, people in Taiwan would favor unification.

For the United States and the international community, status quo in the Taiwan Strait is synonymous to relative peace and stability. They neither support independence nor unification but peaceful resolution of the dispute. The United States has an important role in the maintenance of the status quo. Under the provisions of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) of 1979, the United States has provided weapons of defensive characteristics to Taiwan. At the same time, it has remained ambiguous on when, and under what

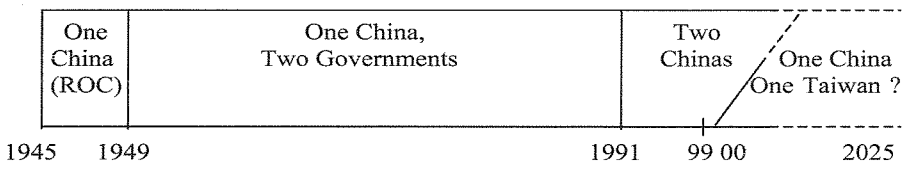
conditions, it would come to defend Taiwan. What is known as the "U.S. strategic ambiguity" is believed to have deterred Beijing and Taipei from taking drastic measures. But the question is how much longer would the U.S. commitment last? As China continues to grow stronger militarily as well as politically, it could become difficult for the United States to maintain the same degree of defense commitment it now reserves toward Taiwan. At least, at the perception level, Beijing may come to no longer take U.S. commitment to Taiwan as credible, assuming that the U.S. would choose not to engage in a war against it over Taiwan. Moreover, what if mainland China democratizes in the future? The United States would then lose its moral obligation to protect Taiwan from an authoritarian regime. Would Taiwan then submit to Beijing and be reconciled to a status of a province or a special administrative region of China?

Taiwan Adrift

Beneath the status quo, the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China has shifted from "one China" to "one China, two governments" to "two Chinas," if not "one China, one Taiwan" since 1945 (Figure 1). First, there was one China, the Republic of China from 1945 to 1949. Then, there was one China, two governments - the ROC and the People's Republic of China (PRC) - after the latter declared its foundation in mainland China in October 1949. The reality of two governments was never fully acknowledged by the international community for mainly two reasons: First, both Beijing and Taipei asserted that it represents the sole legitimate China and refused to acknowledge each other; Second, the Chinese civil war was incorporated into the framework of the ideological contest of the Cold War. With the eruption of the Korean war in 1950, the U.S. recognized the ROC as legitimate China and supported its admission to the United Nations while isolating the PRC.

After years of separation, due to failure of unification by force, the ROC and the PRC became *de facto* two Chinas, at least two independent political entities. Taipei, under the leadership of former President Lee Teng-hui, for the first time since 1949, recognized the presence of a "political entity" in Beijing in 1991. Lee Teng-hui promulgated this to the international community in July 1999, when he defined Taiwan's relationship with the PRC "state-to-state, or at least special state-to-state." With Chen's election in March 2000 and his refusal to adhere to the "one China" principle, one may argue that the relationship between Taiwan and mainland China is now drifting from "two Chinas" to "one China, one Taiwan."

Figure 1 Taiwan Adrift? Taiwan's Relationship with Mainland China since 1945



Building a Taiwanese Nation

Nation is an "imagined community" (Anderson 1991) that is, more or less, artificially constructed, based on common historical experiences and other shared features such as geographical propinquity and language. One could argue that Taiwan has been in its early stage of nation-building since 1991 when the government terminated the temporary provisions to the constitution. The jurisdiction of the state was then fixed to territories they occupied at the time - island of Taiwan, Penghu, and outer islands such as Kinmen and Matsu. While the state is made, the Taiwanese nation, which constitutes the state, has not been yet fully established.

The construction of a Taiwanese nation is a complicated matter due to historical reasons. Taiwan is a multi-ethnic society, comprised of Taiwanese (Holo), Chinese (mainlanders), Hakka, and aborigines. Respective ethnic groups make up 73.3 percent, 13 percent, 12 percent, and 1.7 percent of the total population of Taiwan. They all speak different languages. Taiwanese, Hakka, and the aborigines, which have been residing in the island prior to World War Two are categorized as "*Benshenren*" (people from Taiwan province) as to "*Waishenren*" (people from the external provinces), which refers to Chinese who migrated from mainland China after WWII. Under the occupations by alien regimes in its modern era, first by the Japanese (1895-1945) and then by the Chinese since 1945, the people in Taiwan became "Japanese" and were later converted to "Chinese" through political socialization. Under the KMT rule, people in Taiwan were forced to speak Mandarin in public space. They were also educated to identify with national symbols such as the national anthem and the flag and to fight and die for them if necessary.

However, political liberalization in the late 1980s gradually eroded the official Chinese nationalism. The construction of a Taiwanese identity (Taiwanization) coincided with the deconstruction of the Chineseness (de-Sinicization). Such phenomenon is reflected in the polls on how people in Taiwan identify themselves. According to one public opinion

survey, respondents who answered that they identify themselves as "Taiwanese" have increased from 16.7 percent in 1992 to 42.5 percent in April 2000, while those who identify themselves as "Chinese" have decreased from 44.0 percent to 13.6 percent in respective years.[6]

Indications of Taiwanese nation-building are evident in all aspects of the society. Since the mid-1990s, Taiwanese language has been broadcast on radio and television. Announcements in public transportation now are made in Taiwanese (along with Mandarin and sometimes Hakka), and Taiwanese is taught in public school. In 1997, the government revised textbooks for junior high school students. The new textbooks accentuate the history and geography of Taiwan. More recently, the legislature passed a resolution to add the word "Issued in Taiwan" to its passport. The current passport simply prints "Republic of China." The Government Information Office (GIO), Taiwan's official public relations agency, also introduced a new logo, replacing the old one, which had a flag of Republic of China over the map of mainland China.

Various symbols of Taiwanese identity include historical and contemporary designs. Some of the historical symbols are water buffalo and remains of the Japanese colonial rule such as the Governor's Mansion. These images help the Taiwanese people identify themselves as Taiwanese vis-à-vis Chinese in the mainland. It is Taiwan, after all, not mainland China, that was colonized by the Japanese for half a century.

The contemporary symbols, however, are more appropriate as they embrace all ethnic groups, including mainlanders who came to Taiwan since 1945. They help build a new national identity, not ethnic identity, as "Taiwanese" or "New Taiwanese."[7] People in Taiwan, regardless of their ethnicity, are beginning to have a "shared culture" (Gellner 1983) or an "imagined community." Contemporary symbols are represented by a recent TV commercial produced by the GIO. As shown in this piece, what makes Taiwan unique as well as proud are democracy (free and fair elections) and baseball. Taiwan is a vibrant democracy, in which voting rates in national elections remain as high as 80 percent. It also came in third place in the 2001 World Baseball Games, only after Cuba and the United States. People in Taiwan, whether young or old, islanders or mainlanders, all share the excitement of the Presidential election of March 2000 and the victory over Japan in the 2001 World Baseball Games in Taipei.

Thus, Taiwan has begun building its nation while it already has a state despite little international recognition. What could be the consequence of this trend? What would happen if more than 70 percent of the

people identify themselves as "Taiwanese" and feel they have nothing to do with mainland China or Chinese? This may lead people in Taiwan to question its national title - Republic of China - and its symbol such as the national anthem and the flag. Moreover, the goal of unification with mainland China would also become obsolete.

A tug of war between Beijing and Taipei continues under the surface of the status quo. The status quo has been sustained to this date since both Beijing and Taipei consider it a second best to unification and *de jure* independence respectively. Each side also seems to believe that "time is on our side." However, once Beijing perceives that time is against itself as Taiwan continues to drift away regardless of economic and social interdependence with mainland China, it may resort to arms. Whether or not the United States intervenes and how it intervenes would make a difference to the characteristics of the conflict and its outcome. However, if the United States decides not to intervene in order to avoid a direct military confrontation with the PRC, the end game in the Taiwan Strait may resemble today's Middle East or Northern Ireland: Taiwanese people fighting for their liberty and independence. Needless to say, such a military conflict in the Taiwan Strait would have a huge impact on the security and prosperity of the region.

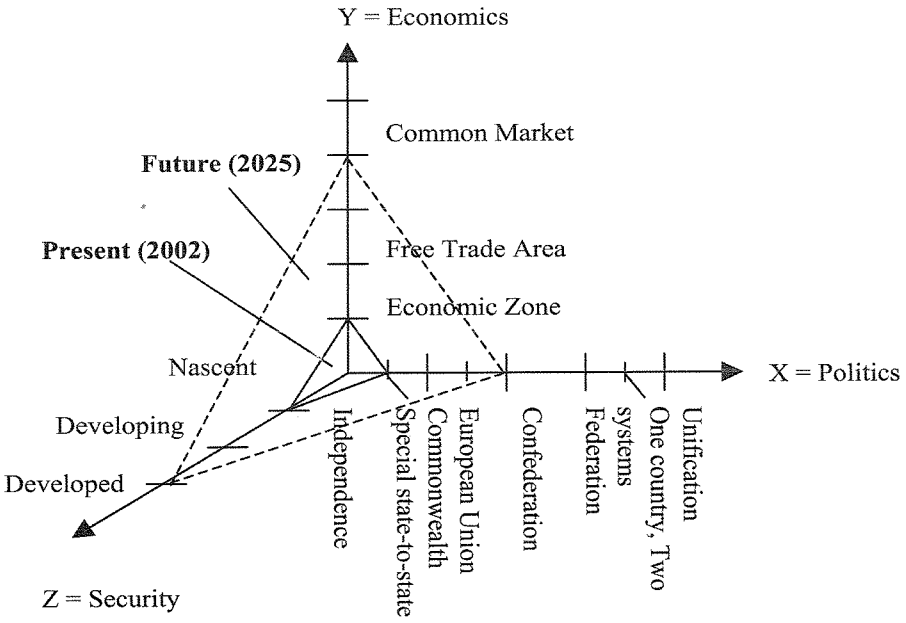
Envisioning Cross-Strait Chinese Community

I have suggested that Taiwan is in an early stage of nation-building. Its future implications could turn out disastrous for people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, inviting a military conflict. How can we prevent this worst scenario from happening? How could we create a sustainable peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait?

I propose a transformation from the unification/independence dichotomy and disputes over sovereignty of Taiwan to a creation of a "Cross-Strait Chinese Community" (*Lianan Zhonghua gongdonti*),[8] in which Taiwan and mainland China are both members and the respective governments share sovereignty. In this community, both people in Taiwan and mainland China are loosely bound as "Chinese" (*huaren*), which is not political (not referring to nationality or citizenship) but cultural (language, tradition and social, cultural practices).[9] This shall provide an alternative to clash of nationalism between Taiwanese and Chinese. *Huaren* would be a collective identity, which embraces various ethnic and regional groups in both Taiwan and mainland China (Cantonese, Hongkongese, Shanghaiese, Taiwanese, Hakka, Mongols, Uygur, Koreans and Tibetans).

At present, close to 40 percent of the Taiwanese people (inferring from the survey data provided by the MAC) identify themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese (*Zhongguoren*). Considering Taiwan's history and its relationship with the mainland, it is quite normal. The government should not push them to choose their identity either Taiwanese or Chinese. These people with dual (or complex) identity could become a vanguard of community building between Taiwan and mainland China in the future.

Figure 2 Maturity of Cross-Strait Community[10]



As Figure 2 shows, a cross-strait Chinese community has three dimensions: economics; politics; and security. This community is still nascent. On the economic dimension, Taiwan and mainland China have already formed an economic zone across the Strait. The two economies are interdependent. Taiwan needs mainland China's market and cheap labor while the mainland needs Taiwan's capital and technology. Total value of cross-strait trade exceeded $30 billion in 2000. Taiwan's exports to mainland China and Hong Kong amounts 24 percent of Taiwan's total exports. Figures on Taiwan's investment in mainland China varies from $17.1 billion (Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs) to $50 billion

(Central Bank of Taiwan), consisting 40 to 60 percent of Taiwan's declared outward investment. The economic trend compelled the Chen administration to ease restrictions on the cross - strait investment. The government replaced its "no haste, be patient" policy with "pro-active opening, effective management." Reflecting the policy change, the Taiwanese government dropped US $50 million dollar ceiling on investment in mainland China. Moreover, the government opened "small three links" - direct trade, transport, and communications links between its outer islands (Matsu and Kinmen) and mainland China - effective January 2001. In February 2002, Beijing suggested its willingness to drop the precondition that Taiwan recognize "one China" before opening a full "three links." With both China and Taiwan joining the WTO, economic interdependence is likely to accelerate. This may lead both sides to conclude a free trade agreement in the near future.

On the political dimension, Taiwan and mainland China are presently in what Lee Teng-hui coined "special state-to-state relations." Relationship between Taiwan and mainland China is "special" since, unlike other states, it includes a possibility of "unification" in the future.[11] The political development is in a stalemate since Lee's announcement of "two states theory" in July 1999. Since his inauguration in May 2000, Chen Shui-bian has occasionally expressed goodwill to make a breakthrough of the impasse across the Strait. For example, in his inauguration speech, President Chen announced that Taiwan would not declare independence, change the national title, push forth the inclusion of the "state-to-state" clause in the Constitution, and promote a referendum to change the status quo in regards to the question of independence or unification as long as Beijing has no intention to use military force against Taiwan. Chen also proposed "future one China." Moreover, in his New Year's Eve address, Chen stated that "one China" is not an issue according to the ROC constitution. He also said that the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait came from the "same family" and wish to live "under the same roof." In the same speech, he even suggested "political integration" with mainland China. More recently, Vice President Annette Lu proposed to use the term "one Chinese" in lieu of "one China" in opening a cross-strait political dialogue, given that both sides are of the same origin and share the same culture (Lin 2002).

Beijing has softened its rhetoric toward Taiwan since the election of Chen Shui-bian. For example, the PRC vice-premier Qian Qichen, on several occasions, has stated that "one China" does not have to mean the PRC or the ROC. He also stated that "there is a distinction between the

vast majority of DPP members and a very small number of stubborn Taiwan independence activists" (Pomfret 2002). Qian's comment was marred when the official of the Taiwan Affairs Office said that both President Chen and Vice-president Lu belong to the latter category.

Despite some good gestures, neither side has embraced each other's proposal. Lack of trust and false perception that "time is on our side" seem to be keeping cross-strait political relations from any progress.

As for security dimension, Taiwan Strait is still far from a developed security community, in which there is a "real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way" (Deutsch 1957: 5). The security community is still nascent. At present, security in the Strait is maintained by military balance across the Strait and U.S. deterrence. Thanks to U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, Beijing still lacks the muscle to conquer Taiwan. Moreover, the U.S. policy aimed at deterrence at two fronts. The U.S. has strongly suggested to Beijing that it would intervene if Beijing uses force against Taiwan. At the same time, the U.S. government has warned Taiwan not to take provocative actions such as declaring independence.

There is no doubt that the economic relations will be the locomotive in the development of a cross-strait community. Unlike the issue on political sovereignty, which tends to be uncompromising, economic issues are positive-sum in general. It would have a spill-over effect to other two dimensions. In the case of Taiwan Strait, the development of the security dimension of community would be faster and easier to grow than the political one because of different political systems across the Strait. Unless mainland China democratizes, it would be difficult for the people in Taiwan to support any moves beyond the phase of "confederation." The polls show that close to 70 percent of the people in Taiwan oppose "one country, two systems" as a solution to cross-strait dispute. Security community will be strengthened along with a development toward economic integration. As both sides benefit from cross-strait trade, use of force will become a less favorable choice for Beijing, though it is likely to maintain such option as a right of a sovereign state.

By year 2025, I envision a cross-strait community, in which there would be a common market with a single currency. Taiwan and mainland China would form a confederation. There would be a strong assurance in the community that political entities would not use force as a means to solve their disputes. People across the Strait would share a common identity as Huaren over their old national identities of Taiwanese and Chinese. The

new identity would be based on the common interest of all people living on both sides of the Strait and on a new consciousness of a shared destiny.

Toward Sharing Sovereignty

What should be done to bring about this transformation? First of all, I suggest that both Taiwan and mainland China reconsider the issue of sovereignty. The dispute between Taiwan and mainland China boils down to this issue. Beijing claims that there is only one China; Taiwan is part of China; and Beijing is the sole legitimate government of China. Taipei refuses to accept Beijing's "One China" formula because it would make the cross-strait dispute an internal affair of the PRC. Then, the international community, particularly the United States, may be reluctant to intervene.

While both Taiwan and the PRC claim exclusive sovereignty over Taiwan, in reality, their sovereignty is both limited and incomplete. Taiwan is independent and sovereign in all aspects: it has its own government, constitution, territory, and military. However, its international recognition is limited due to PRC's interference: Beijing pressures many countries, including all major powers, not to recognize Taiwan as an independent state as well as not to support its entry to international organizations, which require statehood. Moreover, despite its *de facto* sovereignty, Taiwan, unlike other states, cannot revise its constitution, change the national title, and conduct a national referendum on the island's future without an intervention from mainland China.

Similar constraints hamper the PRC. The PRC, despite its territorial claim over Taiwan, has never ruled the island. Beijing does not collect tax from the people of Taiwan. From a political science perspective, the PRC has no sovereignty or supreme authority over Taiwan. Beijing also claims that, as a sovereign state, it reserves a right to use force to solve the Taiwan issue. However, as long as the United States and other countries in the region are interested in maintaining peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait, a military attack on Taiwan is likely to turn into a war that is in disadvantage to the PRC. Especially, the Taiwan Relations Act stipulates that the United States considers "any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and stability of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States." When Beijing launched missiles near the island of Taiwan in March 1996, Washington dispatched two aircraft carriers to waters off the Taiwan Strait. Use of force against Taiwan is,

therefore, a "right" that is rarely exercisable for China. Lastly, the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a state is less respected in the era of globalization. This is especially evident in the Taiwan Strait since implications of war are too large to ignore for the international community. In this sense, both Taiwan and the PRC are "partial" or "limited" sovereign states.

Whether the glass is half-full or half-empty is a matter of perspective. Therefore, the partiality of sovereignty over Taiwan by Taipei and Beijing can be viewed as sharing sovereignty over Taiwan. Today, time is ripe for a paradigm shift on sovereignty. Transnational issues - from terrorism to fisheries - are often beyond the control of a sovereign nation. With the revolution of information technology, states can no longer effectively control the flow of information. Moreover, a zero-sum nature of sovereignty has caused conflicts both between as well as within states all over the world.

Sovereignty has been consecrated in the modern era of international relations. However, a recent work by Stephen Krasner (1999) suggests that states hitherto have never been as sovereign as some have supposed. Sovereignty has been violated as much as honored according to convenience of the rulers. Hedley Bull (1977) once wrote that there would be a short step from "a situation of protracted uncertainty about the locus of sovereignty" to the condition where "the concept of sovereignty is recognized to be irrelevant(266)."

A paradigm shift is also needed on unification/independence dichotomy. Beijing regards unification with Taiwan as a national goal and a long-cherished desire of the Chinese people. Any leader to accomplish this goal will have his name inscribed in the Chinese history with fame. Similarly, one to lose Taiwan will be remembered in infamy. But, if Beijing and Taipei resolve the sovereignty issue over Taiwan without using force, their leaders' name shall be remembered in the world history for their courage and wisdom. It would open a new era of peace and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. China and Taiwan can together become a pioneer in the post-Westphalia world system.

Conclusion: Untying the Gordian Knot

I have argued that Taiwan is drifting away from mainland China with the emergence of Taiwanese national identity. Taiwan is in a process of nation-building. Once the nation is built, that would create a *de facto*,

"one China, one Taiwan" across the Taiwan Strait. It is doubtful whether Beijing can tolerate such development. Therefore, in order to avoid the worst scenario from happening, I have suggested a creation of a "cross-strait Chinese community."

The sovereignty issue between Taiwan and mainland China is a "Gordian knot." Cutting the knot by the use of force is not a preferable solution. In order to untie the knot, we should consider ways of sharing sovereignty in the cross-strait community and develop a collective identity as *Huaren* across the Strait.

A strong leadership is required on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to envision a community in the Taiwan Strait. Future leadership in Beijing needs to understand that neither unification nor independence will be achieved without the consent of the people in Taiwan. Beijing has been successful in deterring Taiwan from declaring independence to this date. But blackmailing the Taiwanese people is not sufficient to bring them back to the mainland. Beijing needs to show its respect and sincerity to people in Taiwan as well as to the government they elected. It also needs to understand the desire of the Taiwanese people for self-governance. If Beijing wants "one China" and unification with Taiwan, the leaders should first normalize its relationship with Taiwan by recognizing the ROC in Taiwan. Then, the two sides could discuss how to accomplish unification, whether that is in a form of federation, confederation or something else. This would prevent Taiwan from moving toward a *de facto* Taiwanese nation-state. Ironically, by denying the existence of the ROC, Beijing is contributing to the acceleration of "de-sinicization" movement.

As for Taiwan, it is a mission for Chen Shui-bian and the Democratic Progressive Party to normalize Taiwan's relationship with Beijing. The position of DPP in Taiwanese politics has shifted in the past decade. The DPP, as an opposition party, used to be a strong advocate for Taiwan independence. However, the party has toned down its rhetoric in order to appeal to the bulk of Taiwanese voters, who do not prefer any drastic measures. This strategy succeeded the DPP in gaining seats in the legislature. In March 2000, its candidate Chen Shui-bian won the presidential election. Then, in December 2001, the DPP became the largest party in the legislature. Although the DPP has not abandoned its independence clause, the party has toned down such advocacy. As a ruling party, the DPP now claims Taiwan independent and sovereign as the ROC.

Beijing prefers the KMT and the People's First Party (PFP) over the pro-independent DPP. This seems why Beijing is reluctant to break the

impasse in cross-strait political relations. The Chinese leaders do not wish to take any actions that would strengthen Chen's political foothold for the 2004 presidential election. Beijing can sure wait and see. But, in the meantime, Taiwan is drifting further away.

Notes

1. The author is indebted to Fumiko Halloran and Sohail Inayatullah for their suggestions and insights.
2. For details on alternative future scenarios on cross-strait relations, see Yoshihisa Amae, "Bridging the Gap from the Future: In Search of a Solution to the Taiwan-PRC Rivalry," *Journal of Future Studies*, vol. 6, August 2001: 8-9.
3. According to a public opinion survey conducted by the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) in February 2002, respondents who preferred Taiwan's relationship with the People's Republic of China to be "status quo, unification later," "status quo, independence later," "status quo, decide later," and "status quo forever" were 15.0 percent, 14.4 percent, 37.4 percent and 15.7 percent respectively. <http://www.mac.gov.tw/english/POS/9102/9102e_1.gif>
4. Beijing's official definition of "One China principle" is unclear. In a paper titled. "The One China Principle and the Taiwan Issue" issued by the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office (known as the Taiwan White Paper) in 2000, "one China principle" is defined: there is only one China in the world; Taiwan is a part of China and the government of the PRC is the sole legal government representing the whole China. However, since August 2000, vice-premier Qian Qichen has expressed on several occasions that both Taiwan and mainland China are part of one China. He stated that the official name of China in the future needs not to be the PRC. Taipei considers the former to be official since it appears in the latest written documents on PRC's Taiwan policy.
5. Other conditions are: 1) if a grave turn of events occurs leading to the separation of Taiwan from China in any name; 2) if Taiwan is invaded and occupied by foreign countries (Taiwan Affairs Office, 2000).
6. The data is from a public opinion survey conducted by the Mainland Affairs Council. The latest figure given in this paper is April 2000 since the survey has been discontinued since then.
7. The concept of "New Taiwanese" was introduced by former President Lee Teng-hui in support of Ma Yin-jeou, a mainlander KMT candidate, during the 1998 Taipei Mayor Election. Lee later defined "New Taiwanese" as "those who are willing to fight for the prosperity and survival of their country, regardless of when they or their forebears arrived on Taiwan and regardless of their provincial heritage or native language." See Lee Teng-hui, "Understanding Taiwan: Bridging the Perception Gap," p. 9.

8. This term is a modification of Chang's term, "Cross-Strait Community." See Chang Yachung (2000).
9. There are at least two different ways of saying "Chinese" in Chinese. One is *Zhongguoren* and another is *Huaren*. The former, which literally means "people of the Middle Kingdom," has political connotation in general.
10. This figure is adopted and modified from Shih Cheng-Feng, *Taizhongmei Sanjiao Guanxi: You Sin Xianshi Zhuyi Dao Jiangou Zhuyi*, p. 40.
11. North and South Korea also have an option of unification. However, they are different from Taiwan and China since they are both independent sovereign states, recognized by the international community.

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