

FEATURES

Dialogue —

Two Distinguished Chinese-Americans Discuss U.S. Policies Towards China

Mr. Ko wrote this e-mail* about United States' Policies towards China:

Date: Wed, 4 Jul 2007 07:33:16 -0700
(PDT)
Subject: United States' Policies toward China

*First I like to wish you a
Happy Independence Day.
The following is an email I wrote to
some members of a discussion group at
the Darien Senior Center. I would like to
receive your criticism and comments
about my email. Thank you.*

**Regards,
Paoshu**

*In the following I would like to talk a little on a subject which may be of some interest to you: What Chinese people would think of our country's China policies.

To start with, I think I should point out that Chinese people love the United States (in Chinese, U.S. is called *Meiguo*, meaning *Beautiful Country*). They want to imitate our country and to learn everything from us. But they must be surprised to learn that our country considers China a threat, because in every direction they look, they can see poverty and backwardness of China. They know that China is still a developing country and there is a long way to go for China to catch up with the developed countries like USA, Japan, etc. How can China, a developing country starting from a very low point, be a threat to the world's most powerful country? That's puzzling.

In the meantime, China has so many difficult internal problems to solve, one may even have doubt about whether China would ever be



capable of solving all those problems without being embroiled in endless internal conflicts. Better informed Chinese would know that in our country we have a very influential military industrial complex whose prosperity requires that our country has an enemy, potential or fictitious.

But they would not understand why China was picked as the threat, since Russia and Japan are much better qualified. One may say that Japan was a defeated country in the last world war, it accepted the defeat and is considered an ally and it still has U.S. forces stationed in the country. But world situation is changing, the potential of Japan becoming a threat is not unthinkable. Russia is the inheritor of the collapsed Soviet Union, our principal enemy in the Cold War. It is no longer labeled communist and has lost the international appeal of its predecessor, but it still possesses its military strength, second only to our country. China is still labeled communist, despite the fact that capitalism is running rampant in China.

For people who continue to live in the Cold War mindset, China is an easy pick. Chinese people could not understand why in our country we make a big issue out of China's military budget, which is only a small fraction of ours and which, not long ago, was less than that of Japan, a much smaller country with a much smaller population. On per capita basis, China's military budget is minuscule. It will take a very long time for China's military to catch up in both quantity and quality to meet modern challenge.

Because of China's long history, Chinese people tend to pay more attention to history. It is particularly difficult for them to forget the humiliating recent history in the past one and half centuries, when China was the victim of multiple aggressions from Western powers and Japan. China was then called the Sick Man of East Asia. At the end of WWII, in 1945, most areas occupied by foreign powers had been recovered, including the Taiwan Island which was occupied by Japan for 50 years, and all unequal treaties signed with foreign powers had been annulled.

The government of China, known as Republic of China (ROC) since 1911, was then under the Nationalist Party (Guomindang) with the capital in Nanjing. Taiwan became again a province of China as before it was ceded to Japan. In 1949, as its armies had been defeated by the People's Liberation armies led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in a long civil war, the Nationalist government had to retreat to Taiwan, protected by Taiwan Strait, bringing with it a large number of functionaries, military personnel and equipment, all the valuables in the national treasury, all the portable treasures of national museums. The Nationalist government, reestablished itself in Taiwan with Taipei as its temporary capital, continued to represent the whole China and continued to be recognized by important countries like USA. ROC did have the ambition of taking back the whole country with the help of our country.

On October 1, 1949, CCP established a new central government in Beijing and renamed

the country People's Republic of China (PRC). There were so much work to be done in the country, after eight years of war with the Japanese aggressor and more than four years of civil war, the new government, not even having a small navy, was really incapable of embarking on the task of ending the civil war by attacking Taiwan Island. Then an international event happened, the Korean war. PRC got involved in the war and Taiwan Island has been put under our protection ever since.

Gradually, many countries switched their recognition from ROC to PRC. Later, the government of PRC in Beijing was recognized as the legitimate government of China by the United Nations (UN) and PRC replaced ROC as a member of UN and a permanent member of its Security Council. Ultimately, in late 70's our country had to accept reality and recognize the PRC government in Beijing as the legitimate government of China and withdraw our recognition from ROC. But underhandedly, we have been trying to keep Taiwan separated from China by encouraging the separatist movement. We even have a Taiwan Relation Act for the protection of Taiwan, which will make a confrontation with China unavoidable over the unification of Taiwan with China.

When Taiwan Island was returned to ROC, it became a province of China, a part of Chinese territory as it was before Japanese occupation. When PRC was recognized instead of ROC, Chinese territorial integrity should remain intact and should be respected. The current political separation of Taiwan from Mainland China is the result of an unfinished civil war and a consequence of foreign intervention. Our country should not be involved in the internal politics of another sovereign country.

When Chinese people examine the history of Taiwan, they would find that what our country has been doing is just a continuation of what imperialist powers had been doing toward China all along in the past: divide and conquer, whatever excuse we may use for our intervention.

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It is not difficult to see that when a war between China and our country develops over Taiwan, Chinese people would consider it China's last anti-imperialist war and would consider as their duty to defend their country's territorial integrity. Such a war is unthinkable to me. It will be disastrous for people of both countries, in particular for people of Taiwan. I personally cannot find any reason for our country to go to war with China over Taiwan. I don't think we want our country to be seen as imperialist.

I apologize for this lengthy discussion. Even so, there are still some relevant points not

covered here, such as our country's relation with Japan in connection with its aggression against its neighbors and our country's moral standing in the world. I would welcome any criticism and comments.

Stanton Jue responded:

In response to Dr. Ko's request, let me comment on several core points raised in an otherwise excellent historical analysis of US-China interactions. Please forward to him and others as you see appropriate.

Why is China viewed by the United States as a threat or potential enemy?

As I see it, China is no long considered as an enemy or threat to the United States. At the official level, China is welcome into the international community as a responsible "stakeholder" and the US does not fear competition. This does not mean there can be no dissenting opinion on this, especially from some members of the Congress, the Pentagon, the pundits, and the media. For example, the Pentagon annual report to Congress, issued in May 25, 2007, describes China's military expansion as "a threat." America is a very vocal country which allows its citizens to criticize the government or official policy on any issue. This tends to confuse people, especially those who are unfamiliar with the American political system of government.

Why is it that the U.S. supports Taiwan's separation or independence from the motherland?

Again, as I understand it, the US does not support Taiwan independence as a matter of policy. Nixon said it in 1972, Bill Clinton repeated it in 1968, and President Bush has assured President Hu Jintao a number of times that US is committed to a "One China" policy and non-support for Taiwan independence. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell told the press in Beijing in October 2004 that "There is only one

China. Taiwan is not independent. It does not enjoy sovereignty as a nation, and that remains our policy.” That having said, because the future status of Taiwan is still uncertain, the oft-repeated US position is that “a peaceful resolution of the cross strait issue is a matter for both sides to decide so long as it is made without coercion.” And there is no U.S. role to mediate in what China considers its internal affairs

What about the TRA to help or protect Taiwan?

While the TRA does not mandate the U.S. defense of Taiwan, it does specify that an attack on Taiwan would be of “grave concern” to the U.S. and it provides arms sales to Taiwan for its own defense. Taiwan does play a security role in the region which is important to U.S. national interest. Moreover, it is a law of the United States passed by Congress in April 1979, and the government is required to implement it.

Please note my comments do not imply this policy is right or that policy is wrong; it depends in part on one’s political persuasion or viewpoint. Of course, the one-China policy is not a perfect policy, as one can see inconsistencies and contradictions. But it is a policy that has been successfully carried out by seven US administrations from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush to provide a measure of peace and stability in the region. Finally, I don’t see a nuclear confrontation between the U.S. and China over Taiwan – only miscalculation and misperception could lead to such ***a war like no other***, the title of a book published in Washington two months ago.

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Paoshu Ko was born and raised in Shanghai, China. He was educated mostly in schools established by French Jesuits and graduated from Aurora University in 1942. He went to Taipei, Taiwan in 1947 and worked first for the Mathematics Department of National Taiwan University, then for Taiwan Power Company. In 1956, he was sent to the United States to receive nuclear training under the Atom-for-Peace program. After his return, in 1959 he joined the faculty of the Institute of Nuclear Science of the National

Tsing Hua University In Hsinchu. In 1961 he went to France for further study and obtained a doctoral degree in nuclear physics in 1963 from the University of Paris. In 1964, he immigrated to the United States and worked first for the Physics Department of Manhattan College in New York City and then for the Atomic Power Division of Westinghouse Electric Corporation, from which he retired in 1987. He has been a member of CAF since 1985.

Stanton Jue is a retired Foreign Service Officer who held overseas assignments in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Australia, and in Washington, as China policy officer in USIA during Nixon’s historic visit to China in 1972. His professional experience focuses on China from the Cold War, through normalization of relations, to China’s recent rise as a dominant power in regional and global affairs.