

Surrender, opposition to US are silly ideas

Written by James Wang 王健

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Taiwan's pro-unification media outlets and academics all have a rigid formulaic response to any issue related to Taiwan's difficult international situation: Destroy the relationship between Taiwan and the US and between Taiwan and Japan, and if Washington is friendly to Taipei, slander the US and accuse it of playing the "Taiwan card" as a way of dealing with China.

The subtext of this response is that Taiwan should avoid being used by Washington, that moving closer to the US will only increase China's pressure on Taiwan and that cross-strait relations should be improved to counterbalance the relationship with the US.

The thought that has never struck these people is that if Taiwan is a card to be played, then China's new "emperor," Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平), can also play the same card. Why would he let the US monopolize it?

If Xi played the "Taiwan card" without having the ambition to annex Taiwan and if he respected Taiwan's democracy and independence while improving relations based on an equal status, then the US would not have a "Taiwan card" to play anymore. Surely this would be the best way to resolve the problem once and for all.

Following the same line of reasoning, if China did not aim to destroy the "status quo" and strive for hegemony, there would be no need for the US to work with nations that share its interests to stop Chinese expansion.

Taiwan is a small nation with a relatively small population, but China wants to annex it. Independence requires the assistance of strong countries, and that is why Taiwan, ever since the time of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) and his son former president Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國), has played the "US card."

If China really wants to achieve its territorial ambitions, why does it not play the US card with Taiwan, demand that the US accept the "one China" principle, block US arms sales to Taiwan — as well as the development of US-Taiwan relations — and perhaps even pressure Washington into making Taiwan accept "unification" with China?

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Although the US is opposed to a unilateral change of the “status quo,” it is not opposed to Taiwan voluntarily abandoning its independence and accepting annexation by China, which means that the US card has restrictions after all.

The US does have a “Taiwan card” to play, but Xi cannot cancel out the US’ advantage by playing a Taiwan card based on equality and mutual respect, because he has misunderstood Taiwan’s position. He has positioned Taiwan as being a part of China, which turns his Taiwan card into a savage threat to the nation that only serves to push Taiwan ever further from China.

Xi has anointed himself emperor and is competing for hegemony with the US. When the China Unification Promotion Party and the Blue Sky Action Alliance fly the Chinese national flag and when pro-unification media outlets and academics accuse the US of playing the Taiwan card, they are only making fools of themselves.

There are no incentives or fundamental reasons for Taiwanese to surrender to China and oppose the US.

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Translated by Perry Svensson

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