

Taiwan, China, and freedom

Written by A-gu ☐☐

Sunday, 18 October 2009 01:15

Michael Turton has repeatedly made the point that the closer Taiwan moves to China, even as talks remain restricted to economic issues (for the time being), the farther away Taiwan moves from democracy.

Now, my nose tells me that there will be plenty of skeptics to this theory, especially as the connection is not so linear. After all, why must it be so? There are so many other possible outcomes. Maybe nothing will really change in Taiwan. Or maybe Taiwan will make China more democratic through osmosis, right?

I think it's increasingly apparent Michael is right. Not because this outcome is somehow inevitable, but because China clearly has every intention of using all the leverage it has to extract compliance from Taiwan in all areas. Let us count the ways that Chinese pressure has manifested in just the last couple of months:

-

Rebiya Kadeer was denied a visa due to the "national interest," which is to say because China would have thrown a hissy fit.

-

Kaohsiung City nearly didn't show *The 10 Conditions of Love* at their film festival due to Chinese pressure; an earlier decision to screen it early and separately still resulted in China directing its tourists away from Kaohsiung, causing a hit to the tourism industry here and setting a solid precedent.

-

The virtual guarantee that the Dalai Lama will not be granted a visa again (it had been denied once already, but the 8/8 flooding made it impossible to deny it the second time).

Taiwan, China, and freedom

Written by A-gu 阿古

Sunday, 18 October 2009 01:15

China already uses its rhetorical leverage to send international investors scurrying away from Taiwan whenever China gets its feelings hurt or senses "splittist" activity. But imagine what's going to happen when the Chinese own significant amounts of stock, real estate, and businesses here (including joint ventures with Taiwan companies).

These tools will be leveraged just as the tourists were in Kaohsiung; when Taiwan complies with Chinese wishes (which everyone agrees are aimed solely at unification), China will play nice. When Taiwan does not comply with those wishes, China will make Taiwan hurt.

Even if we grant the KMT the best of intentions, the KMT-CCP dynamic is a whirlpool that will suck Taiwan into ever-decreasing norms of freedoms and eventual unification. Simply put, the KMT wants greater economic integration with China and political détente; China wants unification; China has the greater leverage in negotiations; so China will demand steps toward unification as it grants economic integration and marginal political favors, while denying any political détente that will really push unification off the table for a while.

None of this is to say that China can use this intimidation to successfully annex Taiwan -- there could eventually be significant backlash. But with the KMT in power, things do not look bright.

Written by 阿古 on [10/17/2009](#)

Source: [A-gu's Blog](#)