

The US has unfinished business

Written by Kengchi Goah 柯景奇
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It was that time of year again, a time of wounds unhealed, a time of unhealed wounds reopening.

It was the 68th anniversary of the 228 Incident. It will then be the 69th, the 70th, etc. The count will just keep piling up if the truth stays hidden and no closure is brought about.

No single phrase does more to describe the suffering Taiwanese have endured than the following epigram widely circulated among Taiwanese communities:

“America dropped two atomic bombs in Japan, but one Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) in Taiwan. Which option do you prefer?”

With the wisdom of US General Douglas MacArthur and the collective will of its people, Japan quickly recovered and is now a key US ally in the Western Pacific.

However, Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je (柯文哲) was hesitant accepting an olive branch from President Ma Ying-Jeou (馬英九) in the form of an attempted, but failed, handshake during a memorial ceremony on Feb. 28.

The gulf dividing ethnic Taiwanese and Mainlanders is to this day still perceptible. Plenty of historical legal papers and declassified US documents attest to how the divide came about: Unequivocal resentment of the pain, hurt and injustice Taiwanese sustained at the hands of the brutal Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) administration.

On one hand, Taiwanese were then too naive to be on guard against an undisciplined, uncivilized Chinese military. On the other hand, the US military, either misguided or for political expedience amid the beginning of the Cold War, ignored Chiang's corrupt nature. Both sealed Taiwanese fate to a long stretch of authoritarian oppression with bloody consequences. Soon it will be 70 years since the 228 Incident. It is too long to let the wound bleed any longer.

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The US must end the unfinished business that has cost Taiwanese uncountable suffering. Taiwanese refuse to live in limbo. Taiwanese are not seeking revenge, but justice. A free and peaceful Taiwan serves the best interests of all countries involved.

On April 3 last year and Feb. 4 this year, rays of hope started flickering. In testimony to the US Congress, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Daniel Russel said: “Strong United States support for Taiwan autonomy also helps give our friends in Taiwan the confidence to strengthen their cross-strait relations.” (www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2014/04/224350.htm).

He also pledged: “Our continued efforts to help ensure that Taiwan can preserve its autonomy and manage its defense.” (fpc.state.gov/237218.htm).

The US should grant Taiwanese the following: autonomy devoid of the falsehood of Republic of China (ROC); the right to set up an autonomous governing body replacing the existing exiled ROC; the right to occupy the current property of Taiwan Provincial Government in Taichung; and the right to bear passports issued by the new autonomous government.

In addition, the US should also ban the display of the so-called “ROC flag” in Taiwan and anywhere else, because it is a symbol of oppression,

As a victor in World War II and still the legal guardian of Taiwan, the US must work with Taiwanese — who want to be free.

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