

Trump is right, if for wrong reason

Written by William R. Stimson
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The US is all abuzz about US president-elect Donald Trump's 10-minute phone call with President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文).

Surprise of surprises! Trump did one thing right, even if perhaps for the wrong reason. Yet, how unforgivingly the US media and its pundit journalists have lashed out at him for it. The US is shaking in its boots for fear the phone call will offend China.

Trump has brought out into the open for everyone to see the unabashed cowardliness of the world's greatest military power and its strongest economy when it comes to the fair treatment of Taiwan.

To be sure, the US is all that stands in the way of a brutal Chinese takeover of this prospering independent free-enterprise democratic nation. And yes, every Taiwanese is supremely grateful. What Taiwanese of sound mind would want to see this thriving, free and bustling country turned into another colony exploited and ruined by China — like Tibet, Xinjiang Province and now even Hong Kong?

However, that the most powerful nation on Earth should be so craven that it cannot even come out in the open and admit the plain and obvious truth — that Taiwan is an independent state, one that issues its own stamps, flies its own flag, fields its own military and, in many ways, has more in common with Japan or the US than it has with China — is shameful and unbecoming a great democracy that enshrines free speech and criticizes other nations for their censorship of the truth.

What's more, the US' behavior hurts Taiwan. Entrepreneurial creativity, business development, and scientific progress all thrive on openness and interconnection.

Taiwan being denied proper embassies, and the connections these afford — in most countries around the world — shackles this small, but advanced nation just as it is poised to leap to the next level and become a world leader in critical fields. Could the US have forgotten that Taiwan is its loyal friend?

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With its weapons, or its bombing, or its armies, the US blundered right into Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, all of which were historically, to one degree or another, client states of Russia. The way it blundered into Libya likewise offended the Russians supremely. The US does not seem to be afraid of insulting Russia.

In stark contrast to these client states of Russia, Taiwan has traditionally been the US' own client state, not China's.

The People's Republic of China has no claim on Taiwan, whatsoever. It might once have been a part of the Republic of China but it has never, not for one day, not for one second, been a part of the People's Republic of China. The US is wrong not to recognize it diplomatically.

It is right and proper for the freely elected presidents of the two independent nations to talk on the telephone. With this 10-minute phone call, even if perhaps for the wrong reason, Trump did something right.

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