

Reclaiming 'one China' narrative

Written by Dai Kee Liu

Thursday, 12 December 2019 06:11

The end of World War II brought the people of the former Japanese colony of Formosa no peace. Unlike all other colonial peoples who gained independence after the war, the US' "one China" policy trapped them, in the words of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, in "political purgatory." The policy also trapped the US in fear of a war with China.

It started in 1943, when the US in the Cairo Declaration promised Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) that "Formosa shall be restored to the Republic of China [ROC] after the war."

In 1972, the US in the Shanghai Communique acknowledged to Mao Zedong (毛澤東) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) that "Taiwan is a province of China."

This "one China" narrative is based on an untruth. China is prepared to go to war to defend this untruth. The truth is that China never owned Formosa.

For a century, the West was led to believe that Formosa, Tibet and Xinjiang have been parts of China, ignoring that Chinese, who wore the Manchu pigtail as a symbol of subjugation for 264 years, could not have owned these Manchu acquisitions.

The Manchu treated all the people, including Chinese, as equals. China's territorial over-reach explains the anti-China sentiment in these territories.

The US foreign policy establishment was in denial that the "one China" policy ended in 2005, when the KMT and the CCP ended the Chinese Civil War in Beijing, and again in Singapore in 2015. The exiled KMT on Taiwan practically surrendered to the CCP without involving Formosa.

The reason: Since 1996, Formosa has been self-ruled, ending the KMT's one-party rule that began in 1945. The public elected independence-promoting, local-born Lee Teng-hui (李登輝), Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) and Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) as presidents. They all reject the "one China"

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policy.

Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) realized that neither the KMT, nor the US, could deliver Formosa to the CCP. He took the matter in his own hands, calling Formosa: "Taiwan, China," as China has done to Tibet, Xinjiang and the South China Sea.

Xi demands that the rest of the world, including the US, capitulate to its "one China" principle.

As Tsai resists, he has heightened the "united front" assault, exploiting the election process by spreading disinformation and "one family" propaganda through pro-Beijing media groups to people who are still mired in a post-Chiang Stockholm syndrome.

With the KMT on Beijing's side, he took city by city, county by county, making mayors and county commissioners his proxies, bypassing Tsai's government in Taipei.

The KMT mayor in Kaohsiung, Han Kuo-yu (韓國瑜), became the party's nominee for next month's presidential election. Han's unruly supporters are reminiscent of China's Red Guard of the 1960s.

In short, Xi has implemented a Hong Kong-style "one country, two systems" formula to the localities. It is only time before he takes Formosa by default, undermining the US' Taiwan Relation Act (TRA).

Not many Americans know that the US is defending the TRA, which was enacted in 1979 for arms sales to Taiwan.

China in 2005 enacted its "Anti-Secession" Law after the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) took control of Formosa. It criminalizes the Taiwan independence movement as a justification to use force against Formosa.

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The US foreign policy establishment's desire to meet Xi halfway only because the global center of gravity has shifted to China undermines the countermeasures against China, such as new legislation friendly to Formosa, arms sales and US-Taiwan exchanges. These are mere improvisations. The US needs a game changer.

How? Tell the truth. Revisit US diplomats' experience regarding Formosa and use the data for a "Formosa White Paper." Use it to accuse China, i.e. both the KMT and the CCP, of deceit and overreach on their own history, of betrayal of the US' post-WWII generosity.

For instance, the White Paper could include the hands-on experiences of John Forster on the Shimonoseki Treaty on behalf of the Manchu and James Davidson's eyewitness account in *The Island of Formosa, Past and Present* of the founding of the independent Republic of Formosa and the War of 1895 against the Japanese.

This part of Formosa's history alone could shame Xi, as his opposition to Taiwanese independence is not only 124 years late, but also utterly pathetic.

The US could remind Xi that he has no right to Formosa based on the following:

First, the US objected Chiang's exile to Formosa in 1949.

Second, China was denied Formosa's sovereignty in the 1952 Treaty of San Francisco.

Three, China is responsible for crimes committed by Chiang in the still legally unsettled WWII Allied occupied territories from 1945 to 1987 (George Kerr's *Formosa Betrayed*, 1965; Su Beng's (蘇秉)

Taiwan's 400-Year History
, 1983).

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Fourth, John Tkacik and others' analysis that China has no right to claim Formosa, as there was no due process and no historical basis.

Fifth, China has no monopoly to claim Formosa in the 1972 Shanghai Communiqué, as there were separate US and China versions.

Finally, the KMT and CCP are already at peace without involving Formosa.

The US could demand that Xi cancel the US' post-WWII engagements with China regarding Formosa; that he thank the public for ending the civil war; and that he stop pushing Chiang's victims to surrender, which amounts to a repeat of Jaycee Dugard's *Stolen Life*.

As the facts are revealed in the "Formosa White Paper," what exactly should the US do? Take back the "one China" narrative and do what should have been done 75 years ago: Call Taiwan its pre-1945 name, Formosa, and assign the name for the government on the ground: the post-colonial authority.

The authority and the US would begin a liberated-liberator relationship, like the post-WWII relations between Japan and the US.

By implication, the authority would become an interim caretaker, its primary role being decolonization. At the same time, Taiwanese independence groups could come together to work on a new Formosan constitution, as their forebears did for the 1895 Republic of Formosa.

The authority would make the US a perceived principal occupation power. Their relations would ensure Formosa's military loyalty to the authority and new Formosa. This would make arms sales and joint war games the US' domestic affairs under the TRA.

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On the ground, the authority stops the “geopolitical absurdity” as Chris Horton calls it in the July issue of the *Atlantic*, that Tsai practically insources the long-vanished ROC, uses its 1947 Constitution written for China, fights its long-completed civil war, rules Formosa as an imagined China that only invites threats from Xi.

The authority would expose Xi’s proxies and stop the subversion. It would make pro-China media groups run for cover. It would stop exploitation by the pro-China refugees from 1949. It would awaken local “Taiwanese KMT factions” from their post-Chiang collective Stockholm syndrome.

It is time for people to take care of the tens of thousands of ghosts of forgotten colonial victims throughout Formosa.

The authority could give KMT members, such as Han, retired generals, and “one family” promoters, such as Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je (柯文哲), a choice: Pledge allegiance to the authority or report to Xi in China.

In short, the authority and US could stop all negative political noises, and ensure military allegiance and the integrity of the TRA.

This no-cost, no-risk approach would not force Xi’s hand, yet would allow the US to duly take back control of general Douglas MacArthur’s “unsinkable carrier.”

The US could rightly claim the rights earned with American blood in WWII. From this, the US could command the whole West Pacific region. The US 7th Fleet would be free to use military facilities throughout Formosa, Pescadores in the Taiwan Strait, Itu Aba Island (Taiping Island, 太平島) in the South China Sea, and even at Quemoy and Matsu. This new capability would restore Formosa as a gatekeeper for China’s access to the Pacific, making the “post-one China” policy in sync with a robust Indo-Pacific strategy.

As Formosa found peace, an autonomous Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong would not be far behind.

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