

Recognizing Taiwan's true status

Written by Jerome Keating

Thursday, 18 November 2021 07:24

The Christmas holiday season is approaching, but a different season is already here. It is the season where the nations of the world are getting “woke” on a macro and a micro level.

The macro side of getting “woke” is seen in the growing awareness of how all humans, regardless of race, creed or politics, are globally interconnected and endangered. This reality continues to call for the needed paradigm shift from a global village to a global home where planet Earth is recognized as home and all are family. In effect, what happens in one room of the house can and does affect the whole house. No nation, region or people will escape.

For example, COVID-19 might have begun in Wuhan, China, but as it quickly spread, it rampaged the planet, infecting more than 254 million people and killing more than 5 million. Ignoring national boundaries, the virus mutated and did its damage throughout the whole house.

A different example is the COP26 global warming conference held this month in Glasgow, Scotland. With more than 100 world leaders in attendance, this 26th conference of the UN again attempted to cope with the challenges of global warming and climate change. Nations are realizing that we humans have one home — Earth — and that global warming is not limited to a specific country or continent. All nations suffer. What happens in the Amazon rainforests or the polar ice caps can and does impact the sustainable environment of all.

However, the commitment of each and every nation to solving this problem still remains at the theoretical level; the tipping point has not yet been reached where nations are committed enough to abandon their zero-sum games of self-protection and private benefit. Cooperation in making the planet a better home remains limited and COP26 is getting mixed reviews.

That is the macro level. On the micro level, the “wokeness” of nations also continues, but relates to different issues. These more often depend on what region a nation is in. In Asia, Taiwan has finally been drawing the attention it deserves. Its neighbors and others are finally becoming “woke” to China's hegemonic desire to take over this jewel of a country and why.

Taiwan is a mid-sized nation. In population it is larger than about 75 percent of the countries in

Recognizing Taiwan's true status

Written by Jerome Keating

Thursday, 18 November 2021 07:24

the UN. In GDP by purchasing power parity it ranks 19th among 226 nations and territories. It controls crucial microchip production and by location has overwhelming strategic importance. It is a jewel.

Where then do we find the wokeness as to why this jewel is not in the UN? One is in history. The western half of Taiwan was once controlled by the Manchus and the Manchu empire is too often mistakenly identified and misrepresented as China. Few recognize that when the Manchus began building their empire, they conquered China, Tibet, Mongolia, Xinjiang, etc. Later, when the Manchus surrendered Taiwan to Japan in the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan became the first nation to colonize and control the whole of Taiwan.

China has no legitimate claim to Taiwan. Ironically, however, one still hears those false memes on how Taiwan has been part of China since “time immemorial” or how Taiwan is an “inalienable part” of China. The reality is that the only nation that can make any claim to controlling all of Taiwan is Japan. It ruled Taiwan from 1895 to 1945, and gave up its colony in the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty.

This brings up Taiwan's second stage of “wokeness.” Nations are finally acknowledging that in the San Francisco Peace Treaty, Japan never did name a recipient for its colony. The US, as the chief victor in the Pacific War, admits that it is still “undecided” on the fate of Taiwan. Perhaps it is time for all to face the fact that this former colony should have the right of self-determination under the UN Charter. The US at least has said that Taiwan is definitely not part of China, but it needs to go further.

The next stage of wokeness is that the UN member states are also finally recognizing the wording of UN Resolution 2758, whereby the “followers of Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石)” were the ones that were expelled from the UN in 1970 and not Taiwanese. The followers of Chiang had lost the Chinese Civil War way back in 1949, but they had by default remained in the UN. By 1970, it was time for them to go; they were a government living in exile and on Taiwan.

In hindsight, it certainly seems strange that it took more than a half a century before the nations of the world came to realize that reality, but such often is the way of the world. The given times had contained too many other pressing issues.

Recognizing Taiwan's true status

Written by Jerome Keating

Thursday, 18 November 2021 07:24

As World War II ended in 1945 and the UN was being formed, a new Cold War had developed between the East and the West. In China, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) would defeat the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) by 1949. That was followed by North Korea invading South Korea in 1950.

All this stoked the fears of a communist takeover in Asia and, unfortunately, kept many nations from realizing the true plight of Taiwan. Taiwanese suffered under the one-party state rule, White Terror and martial law that Chiang and his KMT followers imposed there. Chiang did this in the guise of supporting democracy.

Surprisingly, however, as the years rolled by, Taiwanese would still manage to forge a democracy and a vibrant one at that. At the same time, the CCP was setting up its own dynasty in China, and while China suffered the disasters of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, it also eventually did become economically strong after Mao Zedong's (毛泽东) death.

That brings matters to the present. Not content with China's current strength, the CCP seeks more and fans its hegemony with the dream of taking over Taiwan.

The final part of this "wokeness" is the reality that Taiwan poses no threat to the world, but China does. Taiwan is a peace-loving democracy and a major contributor to peaceful development. Its successful handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is admirable in comparison with all other nations, especially China. In this, as well as international development and fostering trade, Taiwan can contribute much to the UN, but hegemonic China prevents its membership.

The Montevideo Convention, which sets forth the four basic requirements of statehood, provides the final touch of wokeness as regards Taiwan's reality. A nation must have a permanent population, a defined territory, a government and the capacity to conduct international relations. Taiwan has all these and more.

As defined by the Montevideo Convention, a nation does not even have to be recognized by others to be such, although Taiwan does have 15 nations that do recognize it and many others that have "unofficial" embassies. The US, with its own American Institute in Taiwan, has

Recognizing Taiwan's true status

Written by Jerome Keating

Thursday, 18 November 2021 07:24

ironically remained “undecided” for more than 75 years.

This is the current season of wokeness. The nations of the world are slowly moving to being woke to climate change. Theoretically they can accept a full commitment to the paradigm shift of a global home. However, it is also time for those nations to recognize the reality of how much Taiwan's mid-sized national democracy can and does contribute. It is time for Taiwan to be accepted into the UN.

Jerome Keating is a writer based in Taipei.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2021/11/18](#)