

The high price of attacking Taiwan

Written by Jerome Keating
Thursday, 23 June 2022 05:21

As Taiwan is facing global crises from the COVID-19 pandemic to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it is again time to take stock.

In terms of public health, Taiwan has made it through the COVID-19 challenge quite well. By combining masking, vaccinations and border controls, it has achieved a sufficiently protective herd immunity and is expected to end quarantine requirements for incoming travelers by the end of the summer.

What about Ukraine? Here, Taiwan must assess four key players in its region.

The first is Russia, which must be seen as a developing enemy.

When the Soviet Union broke up in 1991, Ukraine declared independence. In 1994, it signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, by which it agreed to return all nuclear weapons on its soil to Russia. In exchange, Russia, the US and the UK guaranteed Ukraine freedom from any future attack.

That obviously did not work out as promised. In 2014, Russia started nibbling away part of Ukraine and is now waging full-scale war.

For Taiwan, Russian President Vladimir Putin's "imperial ambitions" pose no immediate threat. However, because he is seeking validation from China, he agreed with Beijing that the Taiwan question is a matter of its internal affairs.

Putin would readily throw Taiwan under the bus if that is what it takes to get China's continued support.

Next is China, democratic Taiwan's main enemy. China has no legitimate territorial right or

The high price of attacking Taiwan

Written by Jerome Keating
Thursday, 23 June 2022 05:21

claim to Taiwan, but that does not stop its hegemonic ambitions.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) insists that other nations accept the infamous “one China” principle, which enables the CCP to rewrite all narratives on what is part of “one China.”

It contrasts with the US’ “one China” policy, by which other nations acknowledge that the CCP has the freedom to fantasize about what “one China” is, but those nations are not obliged to accept or believe in that fantasy.

That is not the end of the CCP’s rewriting of history. It now accepts textbooks that claim that when the Manchus gave Hong Kong to the UK in the 1842 Treaty of Nanking, that did not count. Supposedly, the 1997 Hong Kong handover was a waste of time. It might soon disappear into the dustbin of history, like the Tiananmen Square Massacre and promises that Hong Kong would have full democracy by 2017.

As for Japan surrendering sovereignty over Taiwan in the 1952 Treaty of San Francisco, all Chinese “know” that Japan gave it to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) even though the PRC was not privy to the treaty.

Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesman Wang Wenbin (王文彬) added to this that the Taiwan Strait is now part of China’s exclusive economic zone, as well as most of the South China Sea.

This is the constant fake narrative that Taiwan must battle.

On the ironic side, the CCP has suddenly become draconian in seeking to eliminate COVID-19, presumably before the upcoming Chinese National People’s Congress. While Shanghai and Beijing endured serious lockdowns in the past months, the nagging question remains: Why was the CCP not similarly draconian when the virus first began to spread from Wuhan? Why is the CCP all of a sudden playing catch-up after two years?

The high price of attacking Taiwan

Written by Jerome Keating
Thursday, 23 June 2022 05:21

Taiwan must constantly watch and be wary.

What then about Taiwan's friends? It is time for them to stop placating China's hegemony, as Beijing simply sees that as a sign of weakness and opportunity.

It is now more than 76 years from the end of World War II and yet Japan is the only nation bound by the dated restrictions of that era.

Article 9 of Japan's constitution, which places limitations on the Japan Self-Defense Forces, must be done away with. Times have changed.

Japan's announcement to assign an active-duty military attache to its representative office in Taiwan is a positive sign to be encouraged.

As regards protecting Taiwan's democracy and sovereignty, Japan is a staunch ally that has more skin in that game than any other nation. Taiwan must continue to build appropriate alliances.

Taiwan's other strong ally, the US, still needs to wake up from the limitations and lethargy of its past strategic ambiguity.

Three years ago, no one could have recognized or predicted the situation that the world is now in with COVID-19 and Ukraine, let alone all that has developed since the end of World War II.

Hopefully, the US will recognize how the 1994 promise of the US, the UK and Russia to protect Ukraine was obviously written in water.

One area where the US has moved on from its technically "undecided" position is in how it is

The high price of attacking Taiwan

Written by Jerome Keating
Thursday, 23 June 2022 05:21

helping Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co develop chipmaking in Arizona.

Finally, of course there is Taiwan itself. Much of the present confusion is unlikely to change until Taiwan officially gets rid of the confusing Republic of China name, and gets a new flag and constitution, which are in line with reality.

As Taiwan follows the maxim that if those who want peace must prepare for war, it must continue developing its porcupine defense, but it must also develop an “Israeli attitude” on defense: If it were to be attacked, it would not be limited to fighting in its own territory.

Ukraine unfortunately suffers this limitation, and all the fighting has been on its soil. As Taiwan takes stock, it must therefore be prepared to bring the battle to China.

Legislative Speaker You Si-kun (游錫堃) understood this when he earlier this month said that if needed, Taiwan’s Cloud Peak supersonic cruise missiles can strike Beijing or the Three Gorges Dam. Taiwan must have more of these in its arsenal, as well as others that are just as deadly.

In brief, if China were to dare to cross the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan must let China know that it would pay a higher price than the one Russia is paying in Ukraine.

What happens in Taiwan goes beyond its borders and affects the whole democratic world. That is the realistic mentality that Taiwan and its allies must possess and convey.

Jerome Keating is a writer based in Taipei.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2022/06/23](#)