

Ma Ying-jeou sets world shoe toss record in Taiwan amidst growing call to resign

Written by Michael Richardson
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[Ma Ying-jeou](#) , the president of the [Republic of China](#) in-exile, has finally taken his place on the stage of world leaders despite [Taiwan's](#) unresolved international status. Out of the murk of strategic ambiguity Ma has emerged as a clear winner in the shoe-toss competition. In less than a year Ma has gone from backstage into the limelight as protestors heave their shoes at Ma whenever opportunity presents.

Ma Ying-jeou's entry into the exclusive shoe club began last December at International Human Rights Day in Taipei. Human rights activists, angered at Ma over the [mistreatment in prison](#) of former ROC President Chen Shui-bian, [shouted Ma off the stage](#) at a museum event while one man, Peter Wang, gave both of his shoes and a handbag a toss before he was carried out of the room.

Wang, who somehow escaped years of solitary confinement and other tortures for his effort, was given his shoes back by museum staff sympathetic with the protest. Wang said the next day that he would auction the shoes to raise money to oppose Ma Ying-jeou. But Wang went further, expressing disappointment that only his shoes were in the air. Wang showed up at another demonstration with a pair of boots around his neck and the urge to toss caught on with others.

Police now have to carry fishnets when Ma appears in public to catch the flying footwear. When Ma isn't around to be tossed at, his critics content themselves with [target practice at a poster of Ma's face](#) . Recent resignation protests have featured a large pile of shoes donated to be tossed at Ma.

Ma Ying-jeou's popularity is at its lowest point since he took office. A series of events have swept together a perfect storm of discontent from those unhappy with [Ma's ongoing mistreatment](#) of imprisoned and ailing Chen Shui-bian and his [controversial conviction at a no-jury trial](#) , to those unhappy with [Ma's tilt to China](#) , along with anger over the death of an army conscript and the wiretap scandal involving the Legislative Yuan.

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Events in Taiwan, particularly Ma Ying-jeou's eroding authority as evidenced by the shoe-throwers, are closely watched by both Beijing and Washington, D.C. While the Republic of China in-exile likes to assume sovereignty of the island, the reality is that Taiwan's status is very much unresolved even to the point of its name. Formosa somehow became Taiwan while being the Republic of China but is now Chinese Taipei or something confusing like that.

Under the San Francisco Peace Treaty that ended World War II between Japan and the United States the status of Formosa was left undetermined and under control of the United States, the principal occupying power. America's subsequent installment of the ROC as an occupation government was never a grant of sovereignty to the exiled Chinese regime. Nor is the diplomatic doubletalk about "one China" proof of any legitimacy to the territorial claims against Taiwan by the People's Republic of China.

Independence for Taiwan must somehow be accomplished without a violent revolution but with the same force of history. Ma Ying-jeou's membership in the shoe-toss club is beginning to look like the key to the door of the island's future.

Source: [Michael Richardson - Boston Progressive Examiner](#)