Independence or Reunification? The Evolving PRC–Taiwan Relations¹

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Abstract: *The article attempts to examine the relationship between Taiwan, a de facto political entity, and the People's Republic of China (Mainland China) since 1949, the landmark year when the then ruling party KMT (The Nationalist Party) was defeated by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) in the Mainland. Essentially, the narrative is focused on the government policies by the two respective political entities. The PRC pledged to unify Taiwan again and subsequently its unification policies are delineated. A two-stage schema is proposed for the analysis, albeit the second stage can be further divided into three phases. As for Taiwan, a five-stage categorization is proposed. Moreover, three sets of factors influencing the cross-Straits relations would be discussed, namely the power dynamics within the PRC, internal development inside Taiwan and the role of the USA. Finally, the implications of the coming of Trump era are outlined.*

¹ In denoting the relationships between Taiwan and PRC, three forms have been prevalent, namely, cross-Straits relations, cross-Taiwan Strait relations and Taiwan–PRC relations, depending on which side you are talking about. I would use them interchangeably in this chapter. The first is the most common one. However, for readers who are not familiar with Asian Pacific affairs, they might not know what the word Strait means. This terminology can be dated back to the first communique signed by the USA and the PRC when President Nixon visited the PRC in 1972. The second is less common but it describes correctly the geographical positions of two independent political entities. The last one is the least used one for it has a political connotation that Taiwan is not covered by the PRC and therefore the PRC will see it as a violation of the One China policy. I prefer to use it in the title because the terminology reflects better the current political reality in that Taiwan and the PRC are two independent political entities. In the text, I do use the other two terms quite frequently.

Keywords: *cross-strait relations, “one China, respective interpretations”, “one country, two systems”, two-state theory, unification*

1. Introduction

The chapter aims to examine the relationship between Taiwan, as a *de facto* independent political entity, and the People’s Republic of China (PRC, or Mainland China) since 1949. Since that year, the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has pledged to reunify the renegade island but to date has been incapable of doing so. The chapter begins by analyzing Taiwan’s Sunflower Student Movement, which occupied the legislature for almost three weeks. The conflict typifies, indirectly, the increasing tensions in relations across the straits. This is followed by the delineation of the Beijing’s reunification policies on Taiwan over more than six decades and Taiwan’s mainland policies since 1949. Finally, three sets of factors influencing cross-strait relations will be analyzed, in particular, the political implications of the PRC’s proposition delivered by the top Chinese leaders. Taiwan cannot delay the unification process forever. In the process the role of the USA is critical.

2. The Sunflower Student Movement

From 17 March 2014 to 10 April 2014, a large-scale and popular student movement in Taiwan emerged, triggering the greatest crisis for the Ma Ying-jeou government since he became President of Taiwan (Republic of China, ROC) in 2008. On 17 March 2014, the Legislative Yuan (Chamber) decided to pass the Cross-strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA), which was subsumed under the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) between Taiwan and the People’s Republic of China (PRC), signed in June 2013, because the Kuomintang (KMT, Nationalist Party) had a majority in the Yuan which currently has 113 elected representatives. The CSSTA had been negotiated by Taiwan and Mainland China for years and the conclusion of the package was thought to be indispensable to Taiwan’s economic regionalization and development. Furthermore, the package had been scrutinized by the legislators, especially the opposition party Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) since September 2013. The KMT legislators sought to reach a conclusion and called the debates to a halt. However, the hasty passing of the Agreement provoked a

strong reaction from the public and about 20,000 protestors, mostly university students, surrounded the building of the Legislative Yuan.

Without any resistance from the guards, about 200 students, led by two student leaders Lin Fei-fan and Chen Wei-ting, broke into the building and occupied the Chamber (see *South China Morning Post* on 21 March 2014, p. 6; 24 March 2014, p. 6) until 10 April 2014. Without causing any injuries, the students' occupation of the Chamber won support across Taiwan, including support from the academics and university presidents. On the sixth day of occupation, some radical students even attempted to seize the Executive Yuan, which is the power centre running Taiwan, but they were rebuffed by the police. Fifty-five students suffered injuries in the violence, but they continued to stay in the Legislative Yuan (see *Apple Daily*, 25 March 2014, A1).

The package was thought to be asymmetrical: its conditions more favourable to Taiwan than the PRC. Under the agreement, Taiwan would open its investments to Mainland investors in about 64 industries and about 80 industries in the Mainland would accept Taiwanese investments. Investments in Taiwan include computers, Internet, publishing, courier post, elderly homes, recreation facilities, sports gymnasiums, sewage management facilities, financial branches among others, while Mainland industries opened to Taiwan investments include publishing, Internet companies (the Mainland shares must account for 55%), hospitals, travel industries, theatres, cinemas, environmental industries, etc. Despite the favorable terms, both the Taiwanese public and academics commenting on the arrangement have long been suspicious of the agreements. In particular, concerns have been raised about the national security of Taiwan.

They fear that because of the nature of the one-party dictatorship, the PRC would make use of investment opportunities to infiltrate Taiwanese society and facilitate the process of reunification. Taiwan is a democracy and a small island and its investments have little influence on the PRC because of the size of the country and the restrictions imposed on foreign investments in mass media. Immediately after the students occupied the Chamber, the polls on the agreement showed that 31% of the population supported it, and 45% was against; moreover, 63% of the public expressed hope that the ruling party and the opposition party could have a transparent debate on the pros and cons of the agreements (see *Ming Pao*, 20 March 2014, A2). One week after the occupation, a weekly *Today* in Taiwan published a survey showing 56.3% against the agreement, 22.3% in favour, and 76.1% favouring a reexamination of the package by legislators (Lam, 2014).

This crisis crystallized the crisis of the Ma Ying-jeou administration of Mainland policies. Reversing the adversarial politics of Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bien, Ma hoped that his policies of rapprochement could stabilize cross-Strait relations. Indeed, it was successful in the first two years, but the increasing contacts between the two sides created ever-increasing conflicts stemming from cultural, political and social differences. The passing of the agreements brought the hidden tension to the surface. Ma's government was facing a dilemma. On the one hand, there was no turning of the clock—the move to a pro-independent stance would certainly destabilize cross-Strait relations. On the other hand, the more integrated Taiwan with the PRC is, the more domestic conflicts it invites, which, in fact, had a disastrous effect for the KMT in the presidential election in 2016. The popularity of Ma has declined to one-digit figures, which is hardly sufficient for maintaining its legitimacy in running the government. Besides the “China” factor, the failed experiment of “one country, two systems” in Hong Kong further alienated more Taiwanese. (Lam, 2014)²

The crisis was finally resolved as the students withdrew from the Legislative Yuan on 10 April 2014, after Wang Jin-pyng, the speaker of the Legislative Yuan, promised that the Legislative Yuan would formalize the mechanisms monitoring cross-Strait relations before scrutinizing the specific provisions of the agreements.³ However, the Beijing authorities were not happy with what happened and, while they did not criticize the students openly, they expressed the view that they would not re-negotiate the Agreement. Worse, they identified the Sunflower Student Movement as a sort of separatist or pro-independence activity. In a meeting on 7 May 2014 with the leader of the Close-to-the-People Party Sung Cho-yu, General Secretary Xi Jinping stated that the policy of the PRC on Taiwan remained “four nos”—namely no change of policies on the cross-Strait relations, no change of the reciprocal exchanges between two sides, no reduction of the solidarity between two sides, and no change of the will of strongly opposed the pro-independent activities (see *Asiaweek*, 25 May 2014, p. 20).

² Hong Kong was supposedly a showcase of the “one country, two systems” to lure Taiwan into accepting the formula. However, more than 17 years after the handover in 1997, Hong Kong was completely subservient to the PRC: the Basic Law was subject to the arbitrary interpretations of the National People Congress; politically, democratization of the system stalked, the influx of the nearly 40 million Mainland tourists (2013) in such a small place made people breathless. Furthermore, the influx also boosted the housing prices, making milk powders scarce and paralyzed the public transport. A history of the failure of the democratization in Hong Kong has been presented by Margaret Ng (2008).

³ In fact, what Wang promised was contradicted by the Ma government who insisted on passing the agreement first (see *Apple Daily*, 8 April 2014, A23).

How have the PRC policies on the reunification of Taiwan evolved over the past decades? We must start with 1949, the year the PRC was founded and the KMT settled in Taiwan. This chapter will provide a historical narrative of the policies on both sides.

3. Beijing's policies of reunification on Taiwan

The year 1949 was certainly the watershed both for the ruling party the KMT (GMD), and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) across the Strait. Devastated in the civil war, the KMT government withdrew to Taiwan, which had been handed back to the Republic of China (ROC) in the aftermath of World War II. The People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949, its capital in Beijing. Since then, the CCP has never given up hope of unifying Taiwan again, this would allow the CCP to claim that it has unified the whole of China. To date, the aspiration remains unfulfilled. Since he became the General Secretary in 2012, Xi Jinping has often talked about the "China Dream". One of the ingredients of the "China Dream" is the unification of China. For more than six decades, Beijing's policies of reunification with Taiwan have changed constantly, often in response to external international conjunctures as well as domestic politics. Hickey (2006, pp. 31–70) has identified the following eras in policymaking:

- 1) 1949–1979: Armed liberation;
- 2) 1979–1987: "One country, two systems";
- 3) 1987–2005: Reconciliation and conflict;
- 4) post-2005: Carrots and sticks.

This essentially shows a general schema in which the CCP policies operated under various constraints but it is too sketchy and lacks delineation of the subtle changes of important policies on reunification. I propose another periodization which better summarizes the major policy changes. Essentially, there are two periods:

- 1) Armed liberation: 1949 to 1978; and
- 2) Peaceful reunification: 1979 to the present.

However, the second period can be further divided into three phases:

- a) Reconciliation ("one country, two systems"), 1979–1999;
- b) Confrontation 1999–2008;
- c) Rapprochement (economics first, politics second), 2008–present.

The following narrative is based on this schema. Setting up as the sole legitimate government in China in 1949, the CCP aimed to unify China as fast as possible. The official policy on Taiwan was that Taiwan was an inalienable part of China and liberation of Taiwan was the sacred duty of the ruling party. Its confidence was boosted as it captured the Hainan Island in April 1950 and the military was prepared to launch an attack on Taiwan island itself. This was thwarted by the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950. The Korean War lasted for three and half years, resulting in the deployment of the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait to protect Taiwan and subsequently leading to the signing of the formal US-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty in 1954. To date, the Chinese leaders have repeatedly said the most significant obstacle between the USA and China relations is the Taiwan issue.

The death of Mao Zedong in 1976 marked the end of radical politics in the PRC. The era of “politics in command” came to a halt. The leadership of Hua Guofeng from 1976 to 1978 was the transition from Maoist cult-like theocracy to comprehensive reform, and the opening up of the regime was dominated by the supreme leader Deng Xiaoping. The Third Plenum of the Eleventh CCP Congress was a turning point in the history of the PRC, which heralded in an era of modernization. The communiqué of the Third Plenum endorsed the decision to shift the focus of the Party work from “class struggles” to “socialist modernization”. It called on “the whole Party, the army and the people of all nationalities to work with one heart and one mind. [...] mobilize themselves and pool their wisdom and their efforts and carry out the new Long March to make China a modern, powerful socialist country before the end of this century.” (ZZWY, 1987, p. 5)

In January 1979, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) issued a ‘Message to compatriots on Taiwan’, formally abandoning the “military liberation” of Taiwan and calling for the “peaceful reunification of the motherland”. The message also suggested to start what later became to be called “three links (air, shipping and postal) and four exchanges (academic and cultural, sports, sciences and technological, trade and economic exchanges)” as soon as possible. This is the most important policy shift by the CCP in more than three decades over the cross-Strait relations. In September 1979, Marshal Ye Jianying, President of the NPC, issued a document titled ‘Policy on the return of Taiwan to the motherland and peaceful reunification’, later to be called ‘Ye’s nine-point proposal for unifying China’. Taiwan was again urged to allow the establishment of “three links and four exchanges” between the two sides. The proposal also mentioned that, after the unification, Taiwan was allowed to have a high degree of autonomy in a special administrative region administered by local people.

Taiwan's existing socio-economic system was to remain unchanged. In January 1982, Deng Xiaoping declared publicly that the institutional arrangements in Taiwan after the reunification would be the realization of the concept of "one country, two systems" (1C2S), which had been incorporated into the Chinese Constitution of 1982 (Deng, 1987, pp. 15–17).⁴ In June 1983, at a meeting with Winston L.Y. Yang, an American Chinese academic from Seton Hall University, Deng Xiaoping reiterated that the concept of 1C2S could be applicable to Taiwan, and he even added that Taiwan would be allowed its own army, and that Beijing authorities would send neither army personnel nor administrative personnel to Taiwan, and Taiwan could exercise its own authority on its party, governmental and military affairs (Deng, 1987, p. 16).

As charismatic as Deng Xiaoping was, his official ranking in the Chinese bureaucratic apparatus was only a vice premier in the State Council, although his supreme power was guaranteed by his being the chairman of the Central Military Commission. It was not until May 1984 when Zhao Ziyang, Premier from 1983 to 1987, announced the concept of 1C2S as the state policy for the reunification of Taiwan.

The significant policy change had a thawing effect on cross-Straits relations. This will be discussed in detail in the section on Taiwan's Mainland policies. The ROC President Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975 and his son Chiang Ching-kuo became the Premier of Executive Yuan (Chamber) but he was in fact the *de facto* President. In 1978 he was elected President of the ROC and initiated a transition from a period of "hard authoritarianism" to "soft authoritarianism" (Fell, 2012, pp. 10–11).

The 1980s was the most liberal era in the history of the PRC. With Deng Xiaoping as the chief architect, Hu Yaobang, the then General Secretary of the CCP, was in charge of the party/state ideological work, and Zhao Ziyang, the Premier, exclusively devoted to the commodification (demise of planned economy) of the economy. The economic and political reforms went in tandem. And they have changed the party/state polity significantly (Wong, 2005, pp. 73–120). With hindsight perhaps, the massacre on 4 June 1989 was unavoidable. With the withdrawal of the party/state coercive force, society was liberated, and the social forces rose to challenge the one-party Leninist dictatorship. It was a life and

⁴ The concept of "one country, two systems" was first developed for Taiwan. As the sovereignty issue of 1997 of Hong Kong was raised by the United Kingdom and China was pressurized to devise negotiation strategies with the UK government, this concept was applied to Hong Kong first. The Chinese government used this concept to resolve the 1997 issue of Hong Kong in the negotiation between two governments. (Chen, 2009)

death conflict between the liberated social forces and the party/state bureaucratic machinery. The bloody crackdown indicated that the CCP's monopoly on political power would not tolerate any opposition. The reformist premier Zhao Ziyang was removed and replaced by the new conservative General Secretary Jiang Zemin. However, despite domestic turmoil, in July 1989, Jiang Zemin reaffirmed that Beijing's policy of unification was the formula of "one country, two systems" in an attempt to assure Taiwan's authorities that despite the extensive reshuffle of CCP leadership in the aftermath of 4 June 1989, the original policy on Taiwan reunification outlined in the early 1980s remained unchanged. In December 1990, Jiang reaffirmed the two working principles in dealing with the Taiwan issue: (a) peaceful unification by "one country, two systems"; (b) promoting political solution through people-to-people contact. Beijing was strongly opposed to Taiwanese flexible diplomacy under President Lee Teng-hui, who succeeded Chiang Ching-kuo as President of the ROC in 1988.

In December 1992, Beijing set up the Association for the Relations across Taiwan Straits (ARATS), in response to the establishment of the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) by Taiwan in November 1990. The main reason for the setting up of two quasi-governmental bodies across the Strait was that Beijing was opposed to the so-called government-to-government contacts, which to Beijing would be violating the One China policy. Moreover, in the early 1990s, under the tenure of Lee Teng-hui, the foreign policy aimed to be flexible, which implicitly accepted "one China, two governments" across the Strait. In 1992, secret negotiations were conducted between two sides in Hong Kong and reached a consensus of "one China, respective interpretations".

In April 1993, the first talks between Wang Daohan (Head of ARATS) and Koo Chen-fu (Chief of SEF), held in Singapore, formalized the consensus and concluded with four minor agreements on cross-Strait relations.⁵ In August 1993, the first White Paper titled *The Taiwan Question and Reunification of China* was published in which the PRC reiterated that "[a]s a sovereign state, China has every right to us whatever means it needs including military means to preserve its territorial sovereignty" (TAO, 1993).

In January 1995, the Chinese President Jiang Zemin issued an eight-point proposal titled 'Continue to strive for accomplishment of the great cause of

⁵ Despite the consensus between two sides, Taiwanese government and various political parties in Taiwan always refer to the whole statement, i.e. "one China, respective interpretations", in the discussion of the cross-Strait relations. However, Beijing never mentions the latter part of the statement, and only emphasize the former part, "one China" and in fact, it has set "one China" as the pre-condition for any political talks between two sides over the years.

national reunification', which included the following main points: (1) Adhering to the One China principle is the basis of peaceful reunification; oppose any activities in support of "Taiwan independence", "two Chinas"; (2) Oppose Taiwan's expanding of the so-called "international living space"; insisting development of non-governmental cultural and economic exchanges; (3) All negotiations must be conducted under the One China principle and the first step could be to end the cross-Straits hostility formally; (4) Chinese should not fight with each other; (5) The 5,000 years old Chinese culture should be the spiritual tie that constitutes an important basis for the peaceful reunification. In April 1995, Taiwan's President Lee Teng-hui responded by making a six-point statement (cited in Cai, 2011, pp. 27–28).

Between July 1995 and March 1996, Beijing conducted a series of military and missile tests in the eastern coastal areas. These were conducted in response to the visit of Lee Teng-hui to the USA, which Beijing considered as violating the One China principle. Lee delivered a speech in the Cornell University, his alma mater, entitled 'Always in My Heart'. In the face of the heightened tension, the USA sent a carrier to the Taiwan Strait and stationed another carrier 200 hundred miles offshore of Taiwan, a confrontational situation that had never been seen in the reform and open era. As a result, to calm the PRC, the American President Bill Clinton visited Beijing in June 1998, declaring for the first time in public that the US "three nos" policy in cross-Straits relations (no support for Taiwan independence, no support for "one China and one Taiwan", and no support for Taiwan's enlarging international space). In mid-1997, however, Beijing seemed to be sending out message that even though it insisted on the One China principle the PRC government was at the same time offering Taiwan a carrot. It was willing to discuss the national title of the state in order to lure Taiwan to the negotiating table. As Taiwan was called the Republic of China and the Mainland was called People's Republic of China, the message implied that a new national title could be envisaged if both sides were willing to talk about reunification (*Apple Daily*, 7 April 2000). Instead of the legitimacy of the PRC, Beijing apparently embraced Chinese culture as the foundation of talks on both sides.

In November 1998, the second talks between Wang Daohan (ARATS) and Koo Chen-fu (SEF) were held in Mainland China. However, the talks were inconsequential, and the only important consensus reached was to enhance exchanges at various levels and keep on with the dialogues on various issues. The end of the second Wang–Koo talks signaled the end of the phase of peaceful reconciliation. With the announcement of the two-state theory by Lee Teng-hui in Taiwan in July 1999, cross-Straits relations embarked on a phase of confrontation.

In February 2000, the PRC's second White Paper titled *The One China Principle and the Taiwan Issue* was published (TAO, 2000). For the first time, the PRC delineated three conditions where it would use military force to unify Taiwan:

- 1) Declaration of independence by Taiwan;
- 2) Uncontrollable domestic turmoil in Taiwan;
- 3) Peaceful talks indefinitely delayed.

The first point had already been widely discussed but the second and third points were new. Under Lee Teng-hui, the ROC Constitution had been amended in that now the ROC territories were confined to Taiwan and its outlying islands but excluding the Mainland. If Taiwan were to go one step further and change ROC to Taiwan in the Constitution, this would complete the act of declaring independence. The PRC was watching closely. Nonetheless, the definition of “indefinitely” was not specified by the White Paper.

The period under the presidency of Chen Shui-bien saw increasing tensions between Beijing and Taiwan. At the CCP Party Congress (CCPPC) held in October 2002, when Hu Jintao replaced Jiang Zemin as General Secretary of the CCP, the Party basically called to adhere to two principles laid down by the previous leaders, namely peaceful reunification with Taiwan by using “one country, two systems” and following Jiang Zemin's eight-point proposal.

In May 2004, the new General Secretary set out his policies for peaceful reunification. He pronounced the “four nevers”: never compromising on the One China principle, never giving up the efforts for peace negotiations, never changing sincerely in our pursuit of peace and development across the Strait with the compatriots in Taiwan, never wavering in our resolve to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and never tolerating “Taiwan independence” (Cai, 2011, pp. 33–34). In March 2005, while attending sessions of the National People's Congress and CCP Party Congress, Hu again expressed the “four nevers”, but slightly changing the emphasis: never swaying in adhering to the One China principle, never giving up on efforts to seek peaceful reunification, never changing the principle of placing hope on the Taiwan people, and never compromising on opposing the secessionist activities of Taiwan independence (Cai, 2011, pp. 33–34).

On 14 March 2005, the NPC passed the Anti-Secession Law. This meant that it was enshrined in law that China could now attack Taiwan to achieve reunification. Previously, peaceful reunification by “one country, two systems” was a policy by the CCP only. By enacting this law, Beijing was prepared to seek international recognition for reunification achieved through military force.

Throughout the first term of Hu Jin-tao, cross-Strait relations remained tense. However, the people-to-people exchanges increased greatly. The approach by the PRC could be labeled as “economics first, politics second”.

The re-election of the KMT candidate Ma Ying-jeou signaled the halt in the era of confrontation and the advent of the era of rapprochement in the cross-Strait relations. In January 2009, General Secretary Hu Jintao expressed six points on the current cross-Strait relations:

- 1) One China principle is the foundation of mutual political trust;
- 2) Both sides could sign a comprehensive trade and economic package;
- 3) Cultural and educational exchanges should be strengthened;
- 4) Contacts between the KMT and CCP should be preserved; if the DPP could change its independence position, the PRC would respond positively to them;
- 5) The PRC could handle the issue of Taiwanese participation in the international organization in a more flexible way;
- 6) There is a need to explore the possibility of establishing a military mechanism of mutual trust and the different forms of political relations before unification (see *Apple Daily*, 1 January 2009, A16).

Xi Jinping became the General Secretary in 2012 and it seems that Xi has not formulated his own policies on Taiwan so far.

4. Taiwan's policies on the PRC

With regard to Taiwan's policies on the PRC, Hickey (2006, pp. 31–70) identified clear eras:

- 1) Cold War: 1949–1987;
- 2) Warming ties: 1987–1994;
- 3) Economic convergence and political divergence: 1995–2008; and
- 4) A new start under Ma Ying-jeou: 2008–present.

Again, these demarcations are too sketchy and mostly overlook the transition period between Lee Teng-hui and the death of Chiang Kai-shek. The stages of Taiwan's mainland policies may not coincide with Beijing's policies on Taiwan, as the shaping factors on these two sets of policies were determined both by respective international and internal dynamics in the two locations. The policy stages in Taiwan seem to be more varied, mainly because over this period Taiwan had transformed from hard authoritarianism to a democracy (Rigger,

1999). Unlike the CCP's complete dominance in the Mainland, the ruling party in Taiwan could no longer exclude public participation in the decision-making process. Therefore, Taiwan's policies on the PRC could be delineated as follows:

- 1) Armed confrontation: 1949–1978;
- 2) Political stalemate: 1979–1987;
- 3) Consensus and escalation of tension: 1988–1998;
- 4) Confrontation: 1999–2008;
- 5) Rapprochement: 2008–present.

As a legitimate government in Mainland China, the KMT lost the civil war to the CCP, which lasted for four years from 1945 to 1949 and re-established its basis of power in Taiwan. Calling the CCP leaders “bandits”, the KMT still thought that it had the chance of recovering the Mainland by force. In fact, Hong Kong was the conduit through which the KMT infiltrated the Mainland and conducted sabotage activities. In the mid-1950s, there were clandestine negotiations between the KMT and the CCP on the reunification of the whole China (Wong, 2012). However, on the one hand the defense treaty with the USA in 1954 protected Taiwan from attacks by the PRC; on the other hand, it also forced the KMT to abandon to recover the Mainland by military measures. The 1950s saw a period of iron-fisted rule by the KMT in the island. Political repression was extensive, particularly targeting CCP suspects or elements. To maintain Chiang Kai-shek's authority unchallenged, even moderately political opposition was crushed. One of the examples was the case of Lei Chen, who once served as secretary of Chiang Kai-shek in the KMT on the Mainland. He founded the liberal *Free China Fortnightly* and later started to form a political party (Fell, 2012, p. 20). He was immediately arrested for treason.⁶ However, economically, the land reform was successfully launched and paved the way for economic development. It was in this period that Taiwan's export-oriented industrialization began to take off and ultimately became one of four “Little Tigers” in Asia in the 1970s (Gold, 1986).

Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975 and was succeeded by a party veteran Vice-President Yen Chia-kan, who was totally dominated by Chiang Ching-kuo, the premier of the Executive Yuan (son of Chiang Kai-shek). Becoming the Premier in 1972, Chiang emerged as a reformer within the ossified KMT party apparatus. He was able to attract a large group of intellectuals who had urged to reform the political structure, such as the “thousand years parliament”. Three years later, in 1978, Yen stepped down and Chiang Ching-Kuo became President of ROC. To promote localization, he chose Taiwanese Hsieh Tung-min as Vice

⁶ Lei Chun was later found guilty and imprisoned for ten years from 1960–1970.

President in the first term and later Lee Teng-hui in the second term. To develop Taiwan, he committed Ten Infrastructural Projects that propelled Taiwan into the modern era. He was a populist leader and lived an austere life style (Roy, 2003, pp. 156–158). It was said that Chiang had visited every village of Taiwan and knew what happened at grassroots level.

However, his political success in Mainland China was ensured by the dismantling of the belligerent mentality formed in the Cold War era by his father. In response to the peace offence by the CCP leadership in the late 1970s, he gave up the Cold War rhetoric and adopted a mild approach. Still upholding the One China concept, he effectively abandoned recovering the Mainland by force, and instead emphasized the idea of unifying the Mainland with the “Three Principles of the People” (nationalism, human rights, and people’s livelihood) promulgated by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the ROC. In reality, Taiwan practiced the “three nos” policy: no negotiation, no contact and no compromise with the Mainland. However, perhaps partly due to the reform dynamics inside the KMT and partly due to the impact of the CCP’s peace offences, Chiang Ching-kuo began to liberalize Taiwanese society. The KMT began to relax the ban on economic and cultural exchanges with the PRC in the mid-1980s, and in 1987, the KMT also lifted the ban on Taiwan’s aging soldiers visiting their relatives and families in Mainland. At the same time, the four-decade long martial laws in Taiwan were lifted. In 1986, when the *Tangwai* political force⁷ formed an opposition party, Chiang did not crush it, instead he said: “[t]he trends have changed and times have changed” and consequently ushered in a new era of multi-party politics in Taiwan.

Chiang Ching-kuo died in January 1988, and was succeeded by Lee Teng-hui, a veteran Taiwanese politician. When Chiang selected him as his vice-president in 1984, Chiang had three sons and one daughter.⁸ From the beginning, he had no intention of grooming his sons as his successor. In December 1985, Chiang had already stated publicly that the next president would not and could not be a Chiang family member.

⁷ Tangwai means literally “outside the Party” in Chinese. The Party means the KMT. In the early 1970s, political forces critical of the KMT policies emerged and these forces gradually consolidated into a larger force which embraced all oppositions after mid-1970s.

⁸ Chiang Ching-kuo’s eldest son was Chiang Hsiao-wen, who was in poor health. The second son Chiang Hsiao-wu was involved in an alleged murder of Chiang Ching-kuo’s biographer Henry Liu; the third son Chiang Hsiao-yung was a business man with no interest in politics. He had two illegitimate sons while he was serving post in Mainland before 1949.

Having succeeded Chiang as President, Lee continued the policies of liberalization and democratization. He implemented an extensive political reform and constitutional amendments and it was in the tenure of Lee that Taiwan became a full-blown democracy and achieved the rotation of ruling party in 2000.⁹

His tenure was characterized by two stages in regard to the Mainland policies, first by consensus as far as the One China concept was concerned and then the escalation of disagreements and even tensions after early and mid-1990s. Lee maintained the same posture as Chiang Ching-kuo in the beginning: there were no talks between the ROC and PRC but he changed his attitude by saying that no talks between the two sides would be held as long as the CCP insisted on the “four cardinal principles”.¹⁰ In February 1988, he suggested that the ROC should adopt “flexible diplomacy” in foreign affairs and expand international space and he accepted that there could be One China but there should be “two governments”. In May 1990, he added that if talks were to be held between Taiwan and the Mainland, they should be on a government-to-government level, not between party-to-party.

In October 1990, perhaps to show his sincerity or perhaps motivated by tactics to achieve consensus on One China, Lee established the National Unification Council (NUC) and a government ministry, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) to handle important issues/policies relating to Mainland. Moreover, the quasi-government agency the Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF) was established in November 1990 to conduct negotiations and talks with the Mainland. In response, the PRC set up the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) in 1991. From then on, these two units have served as “white gloves” for ROC and PRC governments in all subsequent negotiations. Naturally, in his so-called “practical diplomacy”, Lee Teng-hui rejected the formula of the “one country, two systems” offered by the PRC.

In July 1991, still adhering to the One China concept, the ROC government announced the *Guidelines for National Unification* (GNU) with its goal of achieving unification by three phases: a short-term phase of exchange and reciprocity, a medium term period of mutual trust and co-operation, and a long-term phase of consultations and negotiations on unification (GNU, 1991).

In April 1993, the first Wang–Koo talks in Singapore reached the consensus of “one China, respective interpretations” formula to lay the foundation of the

⁹ For a concise history of democratic development in Taiwan see Weng (2010).

¹⁰ Four cardinal principles denote the following: the dictatorship of the CCP, the dictatorship of People’s Democracy, Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought, and the Socialist Road.

bilateral talks.¹¹ After more than two decades, the formula still remains the cornerstone of bilateral relations. It was followed by a period of harmonious mutual exchanges. In April 1995, Lee Teng-hui proposed a six-points principle in respond to Jiang Zemin eight-point proposal, in which Lee expressed his willingness to conduct high-level talks with the PRC but to pursue unification on the premise that the country had been separated. Both sides would join international organizations based on equality. Moreover, the talks must be held in the international arena. The PRC was irked that Lee insisted on his “one China but two governments or two political entities” (*China Times*, 9 April 1995). Naturally, the proposal was ignored by the PRC.

In June 1995, Lee was prepared to visit his US alma mater, Cornell University, from which he had graduated with a PhD. In the previous year, during his visit to Central America, Lee had stopped over in Honolulu, but he was refused a transit visa by the US government and was humiliated by being confined to his airplane on the airfield. The US State Department had promised the PRC that it would not grant a visa to Lee’s visit but in a power struggle between the Congress and the Clinton administration, the Congress was able to win a landslide majority, forcing the executive branch to grant Lee a visa. The Cornell visit by Lee threw the US-Sino relations into an abyss and almost propelled the two sides to a military confrontation. The People’s Liberation Army fired missiles off the Taiwan coast and conducted the largest military drills since the 1960s, while the US sent an aircraft carrier, the *Nimitz*, through the Taiwan Strait (Roy, 2003, pp. 196–197). Another aircraft carrier was employed in international waters beyond the Taiwan coast. In fact, this remains the greatest crisis between the two countries after the 4th of June 1989 Massacre. The USA dispatched the largest naval force to Asia since the Vietnam War (Zhao, 1999). The Taiwan Relations Act, passed in 1980, did not guarantee the USA’s intervention in case Taiwan was attacked by the PRC, but it did provide an option for the US government to act in defense of Taiwan (Lee, 2000, pp. 183–187).¹²

¹¹ It could be argued that this “one China, respective interpretations” principle has become the foundation of the cross-Straits relations in that both sides selectively make use of the principle. To my knowledge, I have never seen any government papers or speeches of the officials from the PRC who mentioned the second part of the principle. On the other hand, the whole principle was repeated all the time by Taiwan officials.

¹² The US Congress was much more assertive in defending Taiwan. In a resolution passed on 19 March 1996, with a vote of 369 to 14, the House of Representative stated that “The United States is committed to the military stability of the Taiwan Straits and United States military forces should defend Taiwan in the event of an invasion, missile attack, or blockade by the People’s Republic of China.” (Lee, 2000, p. 192)

Amidst the military confrontation between the USA and the PRC, a new chapter in political development opened up in Taiwan. Following the direct election of the provincial governor of Taiwan in 1994, Lee extended the direct election to the presidency of the ROC. In March 1996, Lee won the presidency by taking 54% of the popular vote. Analysts estimated that the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) military exercises at least increased the vote to Lee by about 5% (Roy, 2003, p. 201).

Despite the explosive tensions, the PRC was not prepared to launch a full-scale attack on Taiwan, partly because it did not want to confront the USA in case of war and partly due to the economic development on the Mainland. The peaceful strategy remained unchanged. After three years, Taiwan and the PRC resumed talks and the second Wang–Koo talks were held in November 1998. This time the talks were held in Mainland China, the first time by two sides. However, the talks did not produce any fruitful results aside from the signing of relatively minor agreements.

Perhaps in a retaliatory reaction to the pro-Beijing visit by the US President Clinton in 1998, who declared the “three nos” policy relating to Taiwan international status publicly, Lee declared the “two state” theory to a German reporter in July 1999. On 12 July 1999, Taiwan formally declared that it had abandoned the policy of One China. Until then, since Lee became the President of Taiwan in 1988, Lee had always delineated cross-Straits relations as under one country but with “two governments”, two equal political entities. Limited government contacts were made through the SEF and ARATS and exchanges of private individuals were encouraged but Taiwan investments in Mainland were discouraged under the policy of “be patient, don't rush”.¹³

Lee had always emphasized the establishment of democracy in Mainland to be the prerequisite of the unification negotiation. Now, he declared to give up the One China principle and refused to abide by the principle in any future contacts with PRC (*Ming Pao*, 13 July 1999, A1). This, of course, infuriated Beijing which immediately suspended the on-going contacts between the SEF and ARATS. Cross-Straits relations stalled. In fact, this almost amounted to a formal declaration of independence by Taiwan. Beijing's reaction seemed to be relatively mild compared with the 1995–1996 crisis. The spokesperson in Beijing accused Lee of “moving a big step forward on the road of splitting the country, this is an extremely dangerous step for him. It will seriously affect the stability of the cross-Straits relations and the peaceful reunification of the country.” (*Ming Pao*, 14 July 1999, A1) Even more surprisingly, the PRC

¹³ In Chinese, 戒急用忍.

extended an olive branch to Taiwan, perhaps in a gesture of good will to the new President-elect Chen Shui-bien, the ARATS Chairman made an unprecedented move by declaring that even the national title of PRC could be the item for discussion in any future bilateral political negotiation. (*Apple Daily*, 7 April 2000, A31).¹⁴

The lack of strong reaction from Beijing was mainly due to the fact that Chen Shui-bien had just been elected as Taiwan's second President by popular election. Adopting a "listen to his words, observe his behavior" attitude, Beijing was watching intently. Due to the pressure from the US and also attempting to show good will to the PRC, Chen declared in his inaugural speech the central themes in his approach to cross-Straits relations "four nos, one without": no independence, no change in national title of the state, no change of the ROC Constitution, no referendum for the unification or independence; without the issue of abolishing the GNU and NUC (*Ming Pao*, 21 May 2000, A10). Though Beijing still accused of Chen of "lacking sincerity" in accepting the One China principle, the ties between two sides, however, seemed to be warming up. In the first term, Chen's government allowed charter flights to operate and it also permitted the partial ferry schedules between the outlying islands Kinmen and Matsu between Fukien province, establishing the so-called "mini three links". Chen also adjusted the restricted investment policy of "be patient, don't rush" for Taiwan businessmen. In November, Taiwan lifted the 50-year ban on direct trade and investment in the Mainland. Nonetheless, the honeymoon period was short-lived.

Showing his pro-independence gesture and in a move to alienate the PRC, Chen argued that there was no consensus by Koo and Wang on the One China principle, instead there was only the "spirit" which encouraged the dialogues and negotiations which could facilitate the negotiations in future unification talks. In a public speech in August 2002, Chen stated that Taiwan and Mainland China were "each a country on each side of the Strait". This is no doubt another version of the Lee Teng-hui's "two states" theory. In November 2003, Chen announced his plan to hold a defensive referendum (on the position of Taiwan regarding the 1,500 missiles in China's coastal area pointing at Taiwan) on 20 March 2004, the date of presidential election. Then, the PRC published articles that claimed his defensive referendum was extremely provocative and aggravated the already tense cross-Straits relations.

¹⁴ Wang, however, asserted that his idea is purely his personal opinion and he did not know if it would be accepted by the Central Government. Moreover, he said that he had just seen the special envoy sent by Chen Shui-bien to discuss the issue, but it was denied by Chen (*Apple Daily*, 7 April 2000, A31).

On 20 May 2004, Chen began his second presidential term. This term was destined to be full of tensions as Chen implemented more pro-independence policies and the US President George W. Bush called him a “trouble maker” in cross-Straits relations. On 1 October 2004, Chen announced that “Taiwan is the ROC and the ROC is Taiwan”. China reacted by passing the Anti-Secession Law in the NPC in 2005. In February 2006, Chen abolished the *Guidelines for National Unification* and terminated the National Unification Council. In March 2007, Chen reiterated his policy on cross-Straits relations as “five wants”, including: “want independence, want rectification of the Taiwan’s name, want a new constitution, want development, and want no disparity between right and left but between unification and independence” (Cai, 2011, p. 347). Beijing had completely lost hope in Chen and was now hoping that the next president would be more conciliatory and, indeed, with the election of Ma Ying-jeou of KMT as President of ROC in 2008, cross-Straits relations entered a new era of rapprochement.

5. Rapprochement under President Ma Ying-jeou

In May 2008, Ma assumed his presidency, and his policy theme was “no unification, no independence and no use of force”. He resumed the contacts between the SEF and ARATS which had terminated for 10 years. Within one and a half years, the so-called “three big links” had materialized. In fact, within two years of his term, a comprehensive trade and investment pact, the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement was signed and, in fact, another more detailed trade and service pact was being discussed by both sides. Free travel schemes by Mainland tourists were arranged. Taiwan was more integrated with the PRC socially, economically and culturally. After his presidential victory, Ma stated that there would be no political talks on unification in his first term; “economics first, politics second” is his strategy of dealing with the PRC, a strategy shared by the PRC. However, privately, Beijing was not happy about that. On several occasions, the officials named Ma as a sort of “hidden independent-ist” in contrast to Lee and Chen’s open advocacy for independence. However, the contradiction is that Ma’s Mainland policies did not prevent the Taiwanese economy from decline and his popularity rating fell to its lowest point. The more integrated with the PRC the more unpopular he became. The Sunflower Student Movement was a revolt against his rapprochement policies with the Mainland.

6. Recent developments in the US–Taiwan–PRC relations

Ma stepped down after eight years of President and his dismal economic record enabled the DPP presidential candidate Tsai Eng-wen to be elected. Stressing the need to develop economy and hoping to maintain stable cross-Straits relations with the PRC, nonetheless, Tsai abandoned the One China policy and refused to recognize the principle of “one China, respective interpretations”. Beijing considered the recognition as the political bottom line upon which mutual relationships had been built. In retaliation, Beijing suspended all official and semi-official exchanges with the central government in Taiwan in Taipei, leaving only unofficial communications such as tourist visits, cultural and trade exchanges with the mayoral level cities or counties. Taiwan–PRC relations entered a period of stalemate.

On the other hand, Beijing’s unification offensive seems to be more aggressive after Xi eliminated the two-term limitation on his position as state president of PRC in March 2018. The two-pronged tactics (politics and economics separated) remain valid, however, politically, Beijing is becoming more aggressive. On 3 January 2019, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the delivery of the *Letter to the Taiwan Compatriots*, Xi proposed a five-point package to resolve the issue of unification. Besides it reiterated some previous points, such as aiming at peaceful reunification but not abandoning armed force if necessary, Chinese not fighting with Chinese, etc. The new element in the package is that, in emphasizing the formula “one country, two systems” is still valid, however, he went on to argue that the formula could be further enriched. In other words, the present forms of 1C2S as implemented in Hong Kong for 22 years and in Macau for 20 years might not be the finalized form of 1C2C and they could be refined. Expectedly from the Taiwan side, President Tsai immediately rejected the package with a six-point rebuttal, claiming that the appeal was nothing more than a fraud (*Apple Daily*, 3 January 2019, p. A1).

In the international arena, Beijing has been exerting diplomatic pressures as well as giving lucrative economic assistances to states that recognized Taiwan, hoping that these countries would turn away from Taiwan. The tactics have been successful and Taiwan’s diplomatic friends were reduced to less than 30 countries. However, an important friend comes to the Taiwan side—The US President Donald Trump. Besides imposing high tariffs on the Chinese goods and launching a trade war with China, the US’ long-standing One China position was beginning to change when President Trump made a phone call to Tsai Eng-wen as soon as he was elected in 2016, calling her President Tsai. To strengthen

the liaison with Taiwan, in 2017, the US Congress passed the National Defence Authorization Act to allow American warships to conduct port calls in Taiwan. Moreover, in March 2018, the Taiwan Travel Act was enacted to encourage visits between officials on all levels. In April 2018, the State Department announced the sale of a more advanced submarine to Taiwan, in an effort to reinforce Taiwan's defence capabilities. In a more stunning posture, on 24 May 2019, the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would change the name of the Co-ordination Council for North American Affairs, CCNAA, an agency which handles US–Taiwan affairs, into Taiwan Council for US Affairs, TCUSA. For the first time since 1979, USA is put on an equal footing with Taiwan. The two political entities carry equal weight. As such, the USA drastically modified its position of One China policy into “one China, one Taiwan” policy (*Apple Daily*, 26 May 2019, A7). As the US–China relations undergo a period of dramatic reversal of previous policies, its impact on the cross-Strait relations will be huge, and its future full of uncertainties.

7. Future scenarios

The CCP leaders have repeatedly said that the reunification issue “cannot be delayed indefinitely”,¹⁵ but political reunification is certainly not as easy as the CCP leaders think. The future of Taiwan depends on three factors: internal development of the PRC, internal development of Taiwan, and the role of the USA.

Inside the PRC, there might be moderates and hawks *vis-à-vis* the making of foreign affairs policies but there is no such distinction in cross-Strait relations: only one unified voice is articulated from Beijing. The central domestic tasks for the CCP leaders are to maintain social and political stability within, maintain a booming economy, keep pressure on Taiwan, lure Taiwan to the negotiating table by cultural, social, and economic exchanges and, in the meantime, expand military facilities and weapons, and thus extend its influence. Everybody can see that China's foreign diplomacy postures are now much more assertive than before. The CCP is brutal in crushing political dissents inside the country and despite thousands of so-called “collective incidents” (riots), social and political stability have been maintained. In terms of the total GDP, the PRC is now the second largest economy in the world, second only to the USA. To date, the “coming collapse” thesis for the PRC has disappeared (Chang, 2001).

¹⁵ The most recent case was the speech by Xi Jinping at the APEC meeting in October 2013, see Xi (2013).

The second set of factors is the internal development of Taiwan, including the party politics, economic situation, and national identity politics. Taiwan has become a routinized democracy in which rotation of party rule is a norm. It is expected that, after the Ma Ying-jeou's rule of incompetence, the DPP might be able to win back the presidency in 2016. However, with the socio-economic integration advanced with Mainland China so far, it is difficult to envisage a turning back of the clock to the era of Chen Shui-bien.¹⁶ Assuming the DPP will win the presidency, it is interesting to see how the DPP will adjust its Mainland policies, whether it will discard its "independence" posture or it will embrace Ma's formula of "no independence, no unification or no use of force". Or will the CCP accept this policy again after eight years of trial? Will the CCP change the time frame of unification from "indefinitely" to a fixed time span, for example 20 years? Or realistically speaking, will the Taiwanese economy be so dependent on Mainland China that Taiwanese simply support the reunification by CCP. However, would the young generation support reunification? Identity politics plays a significant part in democratic politics. Nowadays, the young population accounts for most of the turnout rate in democratic elections thanks to the mobilization factor of social media. Seeing what happened in Hong Kong in implementing "one country, two systems" more than 17 years after the Handover in 1997 (in the Sunflower Student Movement, there was a slogan "today Hong Kong, tomorrow Taiwan") (Lam, 2014). The young people in general were against unification with the PRC. It is obvious that democratically elected political leaders could not ignore the voice of the youth.

Therefore, it is doubtful if in the future either DPP or KMT presidency would support unification by "one country, two systems" principle. In fact, the polling over the past decades in Taiwan show that "one country, two systems" has been

¹⁶ The economic and social integration have accelerated since 2008. The total of 4.3 million Mainland tourists have visited Taiwan (until the end of August 2012), and the number of individual tourists coming to Taiwan (not joining tourist groups) has reached about 130,000. The applications by the Mainlanders coming to Taiwan handled by Taiwan government shot to more than 5,000 daily. The number of Taiwan tourists going to Mainland has reached 6.7 million since 1987. In economics, Mainland has become the largest exporter country for Taiwan, accounting for 28.1% in 2012, and the second largest importer country, accounting for 14.2%. According to statistics, Taiwan's dependence rate on cross-strait trade is more than six times than that of Mainland (Sun, 2011, p. 70) in the mid-2000s. However, experts have argued that the economic ties between the two sides are still functional rather than institutional. "Functional integration refers to close economic ties that are naturally established as a result of autonomous, close economic activities rather than institutionalized on the basis of official agreements between the parties involved." (Sun, 2011, p. 84). However, the tides might be changing with the conclusion of the ECFA in 2010 and also the Trade and Service Agreement in the future.

rejected by the landslide majority of Taiwanese. Internal turmoil uncontrollable by the political establishment is not possible in Taiwan. As a mature democracy it has devised effective mechanisms of conflict resolution. The pretext of attacking Taiwan on the grounds of internal turmoil simply does not exist.

In the long term, is it possible that an authoritarian PRC would launch an attack on a democratic Taiwan in order to achieve reunification? It could be suggested that the answer to this question is yes, but only if the PRC is sufficiently strong in military terms.

I believe that a military attack on Taiwan would be the only way to achieve unification by the PRC. However, the PRC is not currently prepared militarily. The contemporary CCP leadership does not care about democratic values, whereas it used to subsume all values to the political value of unification, which is the supreme value of Chinese political culture. Neither does it care about economic development in China. I believe that if the CCP could unify Taiwan at the cost of economic prosperity of half of China, they would do it. The key concern for the CCP is that whether it could win the war and take back Taiwan. The leaders are not sure. The main stumbling block is the US. The US's "pivot" to Asia is a welcome news to Taiwan and in addition, the US's continual sales of advanced arms to Taiwan guarantees Taiwan's national security. The PRC has repeatedly stated that the Taiwan issue is one of the core interests of the PRC. The PRC cannot afford to confront the US. In the meantime, China's growing military clout will one day finally enable the PRC's unification of Taiwan by force.

8. Conclusion

Having considered all the relevant factors, a war on reunification launched by the PRC perhaps cannot be ultimately avoided. Fortunately, for ordinary Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese, only the global superpower status of the US has the capability to stop it; war could be delayed indefinitely. It is generally estimated that the gap between the USA and China in terms of military weapon systems is about 30 years (Kazianis, 2013). China is making every effort to catch up. The question for the US is not whether it has the capability but whether it has the political will to defend Taiwan. If the US has the political will, then the issue of unification for Taiwan might linger for another 30 years. In a dialogue with Henry Kissinger at a meeting in 1973, the late Chairman Mao Zedong once said that "we can do without Taiwan for the time being, and let it come after one

hundred years” (Burr, 1998, pp. 186 & 392). In other words, PRC can wait for a hundred years. Now that more than 65 years have passed, the CCP leadership sometimes expresses frustration and impatience on the issue. Nonetheless, the solution is not yet in sight. Will the CCP leaders have to wait another 30 years? They are unwilling but the CCP leaders are pragmatists and unless they can win the war they will not attack Taiwan. For now, the medium scenario (10 to 15 years) would be preserving the status quo intact, with increasing contacts between two sides; sometimes slow, sometimes not, depending on which party is the ruling party in Taiwan. For the long-term scenario (15 to 30 years), the role of the US will be the deciding factor.¹⁷ The years 2049 and 2047 will be critical. The year 2049 is the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the PRC and 2047 is the year marking the completion of the historical experiment of 50 years (1997–2047) of “one country, two systems” for Hong Kong. By then, Hong Kong is to become part of PRC entirely (“one country, one system”). Is it possible that the CCP leaders may attempt to capture the renegade province militarily to celebrate the occasion? The answer is very likely yes. By 2049, if PRC could achieve unification of Taiwan, then “China Dream” would be fully realized.

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¹⁷ Richard Bush argued that in dealing with the cross-Straits relations, Washington has several approaches, including opting out, context creation, deterrence, intermediation. But opting out is not an option because it simply does not serve the national interest of the USA. (Bush, 2005, pp. 258–259).

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