

# **Taiwan's 2004 Presidential Election: Implications for Taiwan's Politics and Relations with Mainland China**

**By Elizabeth F. Larus**

The March 2004 re-election of Chen Shui-bian as President of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan reaffirmed the incumbent president as the choice of the people of Taiwan. China, however, viewed Chen's re-election as a major blow to its plans for unification of Taiwan with the Chinese mainland. China was hoping, and expecting, that Chen's rival would win the election, and China would then be able to press Taiwan for unification with the mainland. Chen's victory dashed the hopes of his political rivals as well as those of China. This article examines the election results and assesses their implications for Taiwan's domestic politics, and assesses the implications of Chen's victory for China-Taiwan relations. This article answers two questions. First, what is the political future of Taiwan's major political parties? Second, what are the prospects for peaceful relations between Taiwan and mainland China?

## **Results of the 2004 Presidential Election and Significance for Taiwan's Domestic Politics**

Chen's victory in the March 20, 2004 Taiwan presidential election came at the end of a tight race between incumbent President Chen of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and challenger Lien Chan of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, or KMT). With more than 80 percent of Taiwan's 16.5 million eligible voters casting ballots in the hotly contested race, Chen won a slim victory with 50.1 percent of votes cast to Lien's 49.9 percent. Four years earlier, Chen won 39.3 percent of the vote in a three-way race against Lien and independent candidate Soong Chu-yu (James Soong). Soong won 36.8 percent of the vote, far ahead of Lien Chan's 23.1 percent. In 2004, Soong -- who had created the People First Party after his 2000 defeat -- joined Lien on the challenger ticket as the Vice-Presidential candidate, putting up a strong challenge to the Chen-Lu ticket. The KMT and the PFP sensed victory in 2004 because Chen was weakened by high unemployment, a sluggish but reviving economy, hostile relations with mainland China, and the legacy of an earlier KMT impeachment attempt. Despite these problems, the 2004 presidential campaign was a horse race, with polls taken before the election showing the two tickets in a virtual dead heat. The March 20, 2004 election results revealed that Chen received 6,471,970 votes to Lien's 6,442,452, a difference of less than 30,000 votes, and a 0.228 percent margin of victory.

Immediately after the election results became public, the KMT disputed Chen's victory and called for a recount of all ballots cast. The KMT based its rationale for a nationwide recount on the grounds that Chen and incumbent Vice-President Lu Hsiu-lien (Annette Lu) had likely benefited from sympathy votes from a botched assassination attempt in southern Taiwan the evening before the election. Chen and Lu were slightly injured in the attempt. In response to the assassination attempt, Chen's government put security forces on alert and called out 200,000 military and police – traditionally believed to be KMT supporters – thereby preventing them from voting in the election. Lien-Soong followers, called the "Pan-Blue Alliance" of KMT, PFP and New Party supporters among others, carried out protests and a sit-in in front of the Presidential Office the night of the election results. They also filed a lawsuit with the Taiwan High Court to seek an annulment of the presidential election and to have all presidential ballots nationwide recounted. They protested on the grounds of the circumstances surrounding the unexplained assassination attempt against Chen and Lu, and they argued that the number of ballots certified invalid was unusually high. More than 330,000 ballots allegedly were spoiled. The ranks of protesters swelled to 10,000 people Sunday and Monday as people finished work and school. On Monday following the election, Taiwan's high court ordered all ballot boxes sealed to preserve evidence.

After a nine-day recount of all 16.5 million used and unused ballots, nearly 40,000 questionable ballots were discovered. Despite the number of questionable ballots, Chen was inaugurated for a second term on May 20, 2004. A High Court ruling on the ballots to determine the winner of the March 20 election was not possible before Chen's scheduled inauguration. Of the 13.5 million ballots cast, 23,000 ballots found disputable originally belonged to Chen and some 16,000 to Lien. DPP supporters argued that the number of Lien ballots would not be significant enough to change the election results.

Chen's victory ended his status as minority president. When Chen won in 2000, many people believed it was a fluke and attributed his victory to the three-way race. In the 2000 presidential race, the KMT ran then-Vice-President Lien Chan rather than James Soong, former governor of Taiwan and lieutenant to President Lee Teng-hui. Discouraged at being passed over by the KMT as the presidential candidate, Soong split from the KMT and ran for president as an

independent candidate. Despite warnings from challengers Lien and Soong that electing Chen would upset Taiwan's security and economic stability, Chen garnered nearly 40 percent of the vote in the March 2000 presidential three-way race, but only enough to make him a minority president. Many people attributed Chen's victory to the KMT split. Nevertheless, Chen's 2000 election marked an historic transfer of power after more than five decades of KMT rule of Taiwan. The DPP was established in the 1970s as an organization in opposition to the KMT that was ruling Taiwan under martial law. The ROC government viewed the DPP an illegal and subversive organization until 1986 when it recognized the DPP as a legal political party.

Throughout Chen's first term, the KMT-dominated legislature tried several attempts to frustrate Chen's policies, and even tried to impeach Chen. Despite this opposition, in the 2004 presidential race Chen increased his percentage of the vote from less than 40 percent to more than 50 percent, an increase of nearly 1.5 million votes. In 2000, the KMT was one of the richest political parties in the world with assets of more than \$20 billion. By 2004, its financial troubles were widely known. There were even rumors that the cash-strapped KMT would sell its luxurious headquarters building in Taipei in northern Taiwan and open smaller grassroots offices throughout southern Taiwan to better appeal to ethnic Taiwanese and minority Hakka voters.<sup>1</sup> Now that the DPP's Chen has won the presidency twice, there is little dispute that the DPP is the ruling party of Taiwan. The KMT had difficulty adjusting to the DPP as ruling party during Chen's first term because the KMT saw Chen's victory as a fluke and believed his presidency would last only one term. Throughout Chen's first term, the KMT-controlled legislature put up considerable resistance to Chen's initiatives, hoping to win back the presidency in 2004. Now that the KMT has again lost the presidency to the DPP, the KMT must recognize that it is now the official opposition party, not a ruling party merely sitting out one term of office.

The KMT could hold onto the notion of majority party because the Pan-Blue Alliance maintained a majority of seats in the separate December 2001 legislative elections. Although the number of seats held by the KMT actually dropped from 110 to 68 in the 2001 legislative election, it could count on the PFP's 46 seats and the New Party's (NP) one seat to cobble together a 115 seat majority in the 225 seat legislature. The Pan-Green Alliance of the DPP and

---

<sup>1</sup> Discussions with Taiwan scholars at the workshop "Taiwan After the Election," Yale University, New Haven, CT May 1, 2004

TSU captured only 100 legislative seats, five short of the Pan-Blue Alliance majority. This split government – the DPP as ruling party in the executive branch, and the Pan-Blue Alliance acting as majority coalition in the parliament – allowed the KMT to hold onto the fiction that it was Taiwan’s true governing party.

Following Chen's re-election, the KMT needs to learn how to be an effective opposition party. At the least, the KMT needs a new identity, and needs to find a niche issue that resonates with voters. Regarding identity, the KMT has long been associated with the Mainlanders who retreated to Taiwan from mainland China toward the end of China’s 1945-1949 civil war. In the first decade of the Nationalist government’s move to Taiwan, Mainlanders made up only about 12 percent of the population. After imposing martial law in 1947, the minority of Mainlanders governed the majority through the KMT. Despite gradually increasing its ratio of local Taiwanese in the general party membership and in the Central Standing Committee,<sup>2</sup> many ethnic Taiwanese continue to see the KMT as the party of the mainlanders (and particularly the party that imposed martial law in Taiwan from 1947-1986), and the DPP as the party of ethnic Taiwanese. The perception is only partly based on fact. Today, the majority of KMT membership is Taiwanese. Chen’s predecessor, the KMT’s President Lee Teng-hui, was ethnic Taiwanese, and actually lent a lot of support to Chen’s 2000 presidential campaign. Furthermore, the KMT still enjoys considerable support in Taiwan. Approximately 15 percent of the people living in Taiwan are considered Mainlanders, the group who migrated to Taiwan from the Chinese mainland in 1947-1949.

If all Taiwanese always voted for the Taiwanese candidate, it would be impossible for KMT candidates to garner significant support in presidential and legislative elections. But this is not the case. Moreover, if there were a true Mainlander party on Taiwan, it would be a small, permanent minority party because Mainlanders comprise only a small percentage of the electorate. In fact, Taiwanese do vote for the DPP, PFP and KMT. For example, in the 2001 legislative election, the PFP, headed by former KMT member James Soong, got about 20 percent of the vote. But the 20 percent of the vote is much larger than the percentage of Mainlanders on

---

<sup>2</sup> The KMT is a Leninist party in which apex of power is concentrated in the Central Standing Committee and its secretariat.

Taiwan. This means that there were plenty of Taiwanese who voted for the PFP.<sup>3</sup> Today, most members of the DPP are ethnic Chinese, but consider themselves to be Taiwanese. The concept of Taiwan ethnic identity resonates more strongly in the DPP than in the other political parties, and the issue of Taiwanese identity resonated in the 2004 presidential election much more than the 2000 and 2001 elections. The emphasis on Taiwan identity, epitomized by the DPP campaign slogan "Taiwan? Yes!", clearly benefited the DPP. Both the Chen-Lu and Lien-Soong tickets worked hard to prove that their respective ticket was more "Taiwanese" than the other, leading Lien and Soong to prostrate themselves and kiss the ground to demonstrate their love for Taiwan. For the first time in an election, the KMT courted the idea of permanent separation from mainland China, thereby acknowledging a distinctive Taiwan sovereignty. President Chen, after being shot in a botched assassination attempt, even claimed that he was protecting Taiwan's democracy with his own body. Many Taiwanese in southern Taiwan believe that Taiwanese should support fellow Taiwanese and should not allow outsiders (mainlanders) to rule again.<sup>4</sup> Despite the aforementioned cross-over votes of Taiwanese and Mainlanders, Taiwanese identity will remain a core issue in Taiwan's domestic politics. The KMT therefore needs to work harder, particularly at the grass-roots level, to appeal to ethnic Taiwanese voters.

The KMT has already begun this work by moving away from its unification platform by courting the idea of permanent separation from mainland China, thereby acknowledging a distinctive Taiwan sovereignty. The stakes for the KMT are high in the December 2004 legislative elections. The DPP and its Pan-Green supporter, the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU), have a good chance of obtaining more than half the seats (more than 113 seats) in Taiwan's legislature. Although the Pan-Blue's PFP seats might increase, it is likely that the KMT will lose seats, as it did in 2001. While the PFP's increase might offset the KMT loss, the DPP is looking at a Pan-Green legislative majority in late 2004. The stakes are high for Chen and the DPP as well. A Pan-Green majority would be more likely to support President Chen's proposed initiatives to revise the constitution and other legislation.

---

<sup>3</sup> Shelley Rigger, *Voice of America*, December 4, 2001, Washington, D.C.

<sup>4</sup> Liao Dachi, "No Pain, No Gain – A Look at Taiwan's Democracy after the 2004 Presidential Election," paper presented at the workshop "Taiwan After the Election," Yale University, New Haven, CT, May 1, 2004, p.3.

Even though the KMT has a good chance of losing more seats in the legislature, it does not mean it should be resigned to the dust heap of history. India's Congress Party made a dramatic political comeback in the spring 2004 parliamentary elections. The Congress Party appealed to impoverished Indians who felt left out of the economic advances enjoyed by other Indians throughout the early 2000s under the BJP-led coalition government. The KMT similarly needs to find its niche in an issue or set of issues. To regain the presidency or to maintain its legislative majority, the KMT needs to make that issue resonate with both Mainlanders and Taiwanese.

### **Significance for Cross-Strait Relations**

There was much nervousness on the part of China, the United States and Taiwan-watchers when Chen Shui-bian, former mayor of Taipei and supporter of Taiwan independence cast his hat in the ring for the 2000 presidential election. Immediately before the 2000 Taiwan presidential election, People's Republic of China (PRC) Premier Zhu Rongji, his face contorted with rage, angrily warned the people of Taiwan that they would pay if they chose the wrong candidate in the election. For much of its existence, the DPP has supported and advocated Taiwan independence from the Chinese mainland. Throughout his 2000 candidacy, however, Chen shied away from the issue of Taiwan independence, and instead pledged to travel to China soon after his inauguration, if permitted by Beijing, to seek dialogue with China's leaders.

Chen's first term largely avoided talk of Taiwan independence. China and Taiwan have been separated by a half-century stalemate. The government of the ROC on Taiwan considers the ROC to be a sovereign state. The government of the PRC, however, considers Taiwan a renegade province of the Chinese mainland. The PRC has never renounced the threat of the use of force in trying to unite Taiwan with China. As part of its unification efforts, China expects any leadership of Taiwan to accept Beijing's "one-China" principle. According to the principle, both sides of the Taiwan Strait must accept that there is one China, and the government of the PRC is the sole legal government of all of China, including Taiwan. Taiwan never has accepted this policy. The ROC government argues that the PRC's jurisdiction never has extended over Taiwan, Penghu (Pescadores), Kinmen, and Matsu, the area currently ruled by the government of the ROC.

In his first inaugural address, Chen pledged that as long as China had no intention to use military force against Taiwan he would not declare Taiwan independence, change the country's name, push for the inclusion of the so-called "state-to-state" description in the ROC constitution,<sup>5</sup> or promote a referendum to change the status quo in regard to the question of independence or unification.<sup>6</sup> Three days before his 2004 inauguration, China's cabinet-level Taiwan Affairs office issued a strongly worded statement warning Chen against any attempt to push for Taiwan independence. China demanded that Chen accept the "one China" principle as a precondition for cross-Strait dialogue.

Vice-President Lu interpreted the Chen-Lu victory as a proof that there is a clear Taiwan-centric consciousness in the mind of the majority of Taiwan's people. It is true that the past two decades have seen a significant rise in ethnic Taiwanese identity. Relevant public opinion polls showed that 60 percent of the people agreed that Taiwan and China are each its own distinct state on either side of the Taiwan Strait.<sup>7</sup> However, polls also indicate that people on Taiwan support the status quo of Taiwan's sovereignty rather than outright independence or unification. Under the status quo, which president Chen supports, Taiwan seeks neither unification with mainland China nor permanent separation from the mainland at this time. More than 70 percent of those polled in an April 2004 poll identify with and have emotional attachments to the current ROC name, flag, and anthem.<sup>8</sup>

Taiwan's voters are hesitant to embrace permanent separation from mainland China. President Chen called for a referendum to be held concomitant with the presidential election. The referendum had two questions. The first question asked voters whether they want Taiwan to seek talks with the mainland on a peace and stability framework. The second question asked voters whether they want to purchase more advanced anti-missile weapons to strengthen Taiwan's

---

<sup>5</sup> The "State-to-state" description means that Taiwan is not a renegade province of China, as China claims, but is a sovereign state since the ROC's founding in 1912, and that following the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait has been under divided rule and jurisdiction. The "state-to-state" concept was first raised by former ROC President Lee Teng-hui in an interview with *Deutsche Welle* [the Voice of Germany] in July 1999.

<sup>6</sup> For an analysis of impact of the Taiwan 2000 presidential election on Taiwan-China relations, see Elizabeth M. Freund, "Taiwan-China Relations since the Election of President Chen Shui-bian," in *Taiwan's 2000 Presidential Election*, Deborah A. Brown, ed. (St. John's University: 2001), pp. 201-215.

<sup>7</sup> *United Daily News*, October 16-18, 2003.

<sup>8</sup> *ERA News*, April 20, 2004.

defense. Fewer than half the number of voters who cast ballots in the concurrent presidential election bothered to mark a referendum ballot. The KMT encouraged a boycott of the referendum, but it is not clear if the failure of the referendum to garner the required number of votes was due to the boycott. Of those who participated in the referendum, however, ninety-two percent marked "yes" on both issues.

In his 2004 inaugural speech, Chen mollified the United States and China by ruling out Taiwan independence for the next four years and saying any kind of relationship with China was possible with the Taiwan people's consent. In particular, he pledged to make no changes to Taiwan's relationship with China, and said he would honor the promises made in his first speech four years ago.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps most significant, however, in his 2004 address, Chen reaffirmed his pledge to amend the ROC Constitution. The ROC constitution was promulgated in 1947 when the KMT still ruled the ROC on mainland China. The ROC moved to Taiwan in 1947-1949, and dropped its claim over the Chinese mainland in 1991. In 2004, the ROC claims jurisdiction over the islands of Taiwan, Penghu, Matsu, and Jinmen. Based on these changes, Chen in his presidential campaign race pledged that, if elected, he would amend the ROC constitution to reflect the ROC's current status. In particular, Chen has proposed to reduce the number of seats in the national legislature, eliminate two branches of government and adopt a three-branch system of government,<sup>10</sup> lower the voting age to 18, enshrine the rights of Taiwan's minority groups and phase in a professional military to replace the existing system of conscription.

While Chen did not propose amending the constitution to declare Taiwan independence or change the name of the country from ROC to Republic of Taiwan, China nevertheless views the idea of amending the constitution as inflammatory. China views Chen's plans as a separatist move because it would break the continuity of the ROC and represent the founding of a new Taiwan state. China especially balks at the prospect of changing the island's name and legally-

---

<sup>9</sup> "President Chen Strikes Pragmatic Tone," *China Post*, May 21, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> The ROC Constitution provides for a central government with five branches. They are the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch, the Judicial Branch, the Examination Branch, and the Control Branch. President Chen proposes to eliminate the Examination and Control Branches.

defined territories.<sup>11</sup> China views the Chen administration as illegitimate, and does not believe that Chen has the legitimate authority to amend the ROC constitution. Initially, Chen planned to hold a referendum on a new constitution in 2006. In his 2004 inaugural speech, President Chen appeared to have watered down his plans for a new constitution. He ended any speculation that he would attempt to change the national name, flag and anthem, by arguing that since the people of Taiwan are still divided over the preferred status of Taiwan's relation with China,<sup>12</sup> he would merely amend the constitution to create a streamlined and efficient government to better suit Taiwan's needs.<sup>13</sup> Chen appeared to have abandoned plans to hold a referendum, and stated that he would submit the amended constitution to the national legislature for passage instead. An ad hoc National Assembly<sup>14</sup> would then be elected to deliberate the new constitution. After deliberation, the National Assembly would be abolished. While he gave no timeline for the changes, Chen hoped to have a new version of the constitution enacted by the end of his presidency in 2008.<sup>15</sup>

The United States found Chen's inaugural address responsible and constructive. Before the election, the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly warned the Chen administration that U.S. pledges to defend Taiwan should not be perceived as a "blank check" for Taiwan to do whatever it wanted to do.<sup>16</sup> The United States is legally obligated under the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act to help Taiwan defend itself. What assistance is offered is left strategically ambiguous. The Bush administration indicated that the United States appreciated Chen's commitment not to take steps that would unilaterally change the status quo, was open to Taiwan's openness to seek accord with China. The United States found that Chen's address created an opportunity to restore dialogue across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The 1947 ROC Constitution claims jurisdiction over all of mainland China, as well as the territories claimed by Taiwan today. The ROC government in 1991 dropped its claim over mainland China, recognizing that it had not governed the mainland since 1949.

<sup>12</sup> The three forms of Taiwan's relationship with mainland China are status quo, unification or independence.

<sup>13</sup> "President Chen Strikes Pragmatic Tone," *China Post*, May 21, 2004.

<sup>14</sup> The National Assembly was an ROC government institution responsible for acting as an electoral college to elect the president and Vice-President, to impeach the president and Vice-President, and to amend the constitution. ROC presidents are now popularly elected.

<sup>15</sup> "President Chen Strikes Pragmatic Tone," *China Post*, May 21, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> "Inaugural Speech Welcomed at Home, Abroad," *Taiwan Journal*, May 28, 2004, p. 1.

## Prospects for Unification

China is clearly unhappy with Chen's victory. For the first time, a majority of Taiwan's voters cast their ballots for an avowedly pro-independence candidate.<sup>18</sup> Scholars and military personnel in China make it clear that China is not about to relinquish its claim over Taiwan, and is willing to use force, even military force in a war with the United States, to prevent Taiwan independence.<sup>19</sup>

The KMT's defeat in the 2004 presidential election, however, makes it less likely that Taiwan will unite with China. The recent pattern of presidential and legislative elections does not look good for unification. Since 2000, the KMT has lost two presidential elections and lost seats in the national legislature. It is likely to lose more legislative seats in December 2004. The KMT's defeat likely means that China has lost its final opportunity to press Taiwan for unification. In the coming months and year, China-watchers will be studying China's strategy for eventual Taiwan unification. There is good evidence that China is currently planning a rapid decapitation strike against Taiwan, to occur before U.S. assistance arrives in the region.<sup>20</sup> Less dramatically, China may hope that increased economic independence across the Taiwan Strait will eventually lead to unification. In 2002, there was \$65 billion cumulative foreign direct investment by Taiwan companies in the mainland. China is Taiwan's top trading partner. In 2003, shipments to China accounted for more than 25 percent of Taiwan's exports. Despite increasing economic integration between China and Taiwan, there is no evidence that the more than 500,000 Taiwan businessmen in China are an active pro-unification force. In fact, many Taiwan businessmen in China are owners of small and medium size businesses, which are often more sympathetic to the pro-independence DPP.<sup>21</sup> The experience of World War I demonstrates that trade and investment, or even economic interdependence, are not forces strong enough to

---

<sup>18</sup> According to Wang Jisi, Senior Researcher, Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Taiwan people voted for Chen not because of his pro-independence stance, but as a rejection of the corrupt KMT. Interview with Wang Jisi, China Foreign Affairs University, Beijing, China, June 11, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Interviews with academics and military personnel at China Foreign Affairs University, National Defense University, and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, June 7-11, 2004, Beijing, China.

<sup>20</sup> Michael D. Swaine, "Trouble in Taiwan," *Foreign Affairs*, 83(2), March/April 2004: 39-49.

<sup>21</sup> Tun-jen Cheng, "Doing Business with China: Taiwan's Three Main Concerns," in *Cross-Strait Economic Ties: Agent of Change, or a Trojan Horse?*, Asia Program Special Report, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, no. 118, February 2004, pp. 12-18.

prevent war. Economic affairs of Taiwan businesses in China will likely be negligibly small when Taiwan's independence and security are at stake.

### **Conclusion**

By June 2004, protests against the presidential elections had quieted down, and it appeared that the protesters accepted the inauguration of President Chen. China has been less accepting. China's response to President Chen's inaugural address was to accuse President Chen of being the "biggest threat" to regional peace and stability, and to accuse him of having a pro-independence agenda. China has repeatedly vowed to "crush the Taiwan separatists." Chinese scholars and military personnel in early June proposed that, before the end of 2006, China make preparations on political, military and economic fronts to oppose any move by Taiwan towards independence. China has also increased harassment of pro-independence Taiwan businesses in mainland China, causing some of them to consider relocating to Vietnam or India. The harassment of Taiwan businesses could backfire. Taiwan companies employ more than 10 million people in China. Forcing these companies to leave by creating a hostile environment would hurt millions of Chinese workers and exacerbate China's rising unemployment problem.

Despite China's objections to Chen's re-election and U.S. warnings to Taiwan not to rock the boat, the United States has once again warmed up to Taiwan. This has been evident by the way the United States allowed Vice-President Annette Lu to make transit stops in Las Vegas and San Francisco for her June visit to El Salvador; the way the Pentagon released a report warning about a massive military buildup on the mainland directly facing Taiwan; and by the way the United States applauded the recent decision by Taiwan to approve the purchase of US military items, including anti-missile systems, airplanes and diesel-electric submarines. It is also evident by the U.S. decision to allow the planned visit to Taiwan of a high-ranking US military officer, Major-General John Allen, to discuss the military situation. Allen is in charge of Asia-Pacific affairs at the Pentagon. In the past, the United States had restricted such trips to officers no higher than colonel so as not to upset China. For now, the warm winds are blowing in Taiwan's direction. However, they could blow away from Taiwan if the Chen administration stirs up trouble by pursuing independence. For now, President Chen seems willing to concede to U.S. pressure that he tone down inflammatory rhetoric. Evidence of this was his willingness to drop

from his inaugural speech a reference in to a referendum on constitutional reform. His Presidential Office also made it clear that Vice-President Annette Lu was speaking only for herself only when she proposed that the nation's name be changed to "Taiwan Republic of China" during her stopover in San Francisco.

The next four years may test China's patience, Taiwan's restraint, and U.S. diplomacy. Each of the parties appears serious about their respective commitments. China insists that Taiwan accepts the "one China" principle, Taiwan insists that it should be able to determine its own fate, and the United States insists that it will stand by its commitment to help Taiwan defend itself. Evidence of these commitments are the military exercises each party plans to carry out in the region this summer. China plans to carry out joint land-sea-air exercises in the Taiwan Strait to enhance its ability to control the sea zones in, and air space over, the Taiwan Strait. Taiwan plans to stage live-fire military drills around Penghu, which is 30 miles off Taiwan's western coast and speculated to be the target of Beijing's invasion and occupation campaigns. The Pentagon in spring 2004 announced that it would deploy six B-52 bombers on Guam, supposedly to deter North Korea but with the obvious dual purpose of curbing China. The United States in June conducted a joint exercise with Japanese air forces in Guam, the nearest U.S. military base to Taiwan. Also, the United States will carry out naval operations in the Asia-Pacific as part of its plan to demonstrate U.S. ability to provide credible combat power across the globe by operating in five theaters. With each of the parties demonstrating such resolve, the next four years will require great patience and diplomacy by China, Taiwan and the United States.