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In Search for More Sun: Taiwan's International Space

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A Curvy and Murky Ride toward One China

Taiwan's visibility in the international community is crucial to its very national survival. To overcome the limitations imposed by China and the international system, Taiwan has been striving hard to prove to the world the inherent value of its nation, society and culture. While China's power and ability to internationally isolate Taiwan has been consistently increasing, Taiwan's space to manoeuvre is getting increasingly limited. After 65 years of the co-existence of the two countries – the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China (ROC), neither the two sides themselves nor the international community have managed to forge a consensus that would bridge the contradictory issues of sovereignty and self-determination. From the perspective of my own, Slovenian nation, throughout history its survival was also hanging by a thread. Prior to independence, Slovene nation and Slovenhood was frequently labelled with words like "question" and "problem". Similar to Taiwanese, Slovene identity has also been shaped in a gradual process and the more it was suppressed, the more distinct it grew.¹ Notwithstanding the international opposition, Slovenes opted to invoke the right to self-determination, well aware that the war would not be avoidable. A declaration of Taiwan's independence would instantly instigate a war of major international proportions that neither side is willing to risk. Whether the international community would uphold China's principle of national sovereignty and territorial integrity or the Taiwan's principle of national self-determination depends on a multitude of legal and political parameters. Nevertheless, the widely shared international legal and political norms of self-determination continue to provide Taiwan the most valued assets for cultivating the international support and thus the most powerful tools that it can employ in resisting China's diplomatic

¹ Upon the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, Slovenia, in order to survive Germanic and Romanic pressures had but to form the Yugoslav alliance in which Slovenes shared both Slovene and Yugoslav identity. When given a chance to choose sides, Slovenes have always opted for the former, what first crystallized in the aftermath of the Second World War, which brought Slovenes the formal statehood and sovereignty but in the context of a Yugoslav federation. Next two steps were made in the early 1990s with a referendum and declaration of formal independence, whereas the needed recognition by the international community followed soon after. Nevertheless, prior to 1990, no one would even dare to speak of an independent Slovenia, as it was never mentioned on the foreign powers' agenda. Even few days before declaring independence, the U.S.' and other political leaders tried to convince the Slovene politicians to abandon the idea, while some others threatened to never recognize its statehood (see, Dimitrij Rupel, 2011, "Galerija večjih slik (slovenska državnost, zunanja politika in diplomacija)," in *Diplomacija med teorijo in prakso*. Ljubljana: FDV, 51-75).

containment. Consequently, the principle of self-determination constitutes an integral component of Taiwan's soft power.

Both the KMT and the DPP leaderships have firmly endorsed the Taiwanese people's right to determine their own nation's future. When the Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson Fan Liqing (范麗青) reminded Taiwanese of Beijing's position that the island's relation to China should be decided by all 1.3 billion Chinese, the statement evoked a strong reaction in Taiwan's social media. The sovereignty issue continues to remain the major obstacle on the political roadmap of "one China", a destination toward which Beijing and Taipei have been travelling since 2008. The road however, remains very steep and curvy, with high cliffs to the sides. In spite the sun, layers of clouds are reducing the visibility and impede a speedy drive. A particularly dark shade is cast by Beijing's enduring international marginalization of Taiwan and has been one of the factors which stimulated Taiwanese youth in March 2014 to collectively raise voice for more sunlight. The Sunflower movement (太陽花學運 / 318學運) drew a sharp curve on the "one China" roadmap. Foremost, it raised concerns about the implications of greater economic interaction with China for Taiwan's national security and Taiwanese lives in general. It also revealed that the Taiwanese people's mistrust is still enormous and that the younger generations in particular, do not intend to sit idly and passively observe their own future but that they are ready to defend the ideals of their country's democracy and freedom and ready to fight against injustices.² Increasingly, Taiwanese younger generations reject unification with China and are much more inclined to identify themselves less as Chinese and more as Taiwanese.³ Public opinion polls have consistently shown that whenever Beijing blocked Taipei's diplomatic initiatives, the support for pro-independence policies increased.⁴ It may thus be reasoned that the more the Beijing denies Taiwan's state-like stature and marginalizes Taiwan in the international arena, the more vigorous and politically salient anti-China sentiment and independence movement on Taiwan will become. The Sunflower movement has reinforced the issue of Taiwan's sovereignty, which will certainly captivate the 2016 elections, hand in hand with the pressing socioeconomic issues.

² Richard Chiou-yuan Lu, "China, We Fear You," *Foreign Policy*, March 21, 2014.

³ See f.i., Taiwan Indicators Survey Research (TISR 台灣指標調) poll of February 2014 http://www.tisr.com.tw/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/TISR_TMBS_201402.pdf; and "Fewer Taiwanese consider themselves to be Chinese: survey," *CNA*, June 5, 2014.

⁴ See, Da-Chi Liao, Boyu Chen, Chi-chen huang, 2013, "The Decline of 'Chinese Identity' in Taiwan?!-An Analysis of Survey Data from 1992 to 2012. *East Asia* 30: 273-290.

Shadow by Limited Access to International Organizations

Taiwanese people are not immune to reoccurring setbacks in the international arena and still do not see enough tangible benefits. They are utmost frustrated as most decisions related to Taiwan's participation in international organizations depend on Beijing. Beijing's predominant role is particularly lucid whenever Taiwan attempts to access the world major bodies. In 2009, Taiwan could only access the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) by bending to China's demand of accepting the terminology that denies Taiwan's sovereign and equal status; Taipei acquiesced to a footnote which basically stated that names of Taiwan's central government entities (such as "Office of the President," "Ministry of Foreign Affairs") used in the Agreement have no implications for sovereignty.⁵ Another significant concession was made for the inclusion in the activities of the World Health Organization's (WHO). Not only, is Taiwan's participation in any of the WHO activity under the permission of Beijing, the WHO's communication with Taiwan is delayed by routing through Chinese authorities in Beijing or Geneva. Moreover, in spite of the agreed designation "Chinese, Taipei", the WHO internal documents continue to term Taiwan as "Taiwan, China" or even "province of China" in compliance with the internal WHO-PRC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).⁶ Beijing has not revoked this demand imposed to the WHO in 2005. Instead, it has drafted an additional document which was circulated within the WHO in 2010 to regulate the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) in Taiwan which evidently instructs all WHO staff to address Taiwan in official internal documents as "Taiwan Province of China".⁷ In spite the strong protest on behalf of Taiwan's government, the WHO has yet offered no official response. Although this May (2014), Taiwan's delegation headed by Minister of Health and Welfare was invited to attend the World Health Assembly (WHA) meeting under the name "Chinese, Taipei" without any obstructions, no mentioning was made regarding the downgrading terminology in the WHO's internal communications. Many Taiwanese fear that such "one China" nomenclature on Beijing's terms might set a damaging precedent for Taiwan's sovereignty in other international organizations.⁸ Although Taiwan's invitation to attend the triennial International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Assembly in September 2013 under the name "Chinese, Taipei" was a notable achievement, it still fell short of Taiwan's long-term goal of attaining an observer status in all of the meetings of ICAO. Taiwan was invited to attend the Assembly merely in a

⁵ For a detailed negotiation process and terminology, see Björn Alexander Lindemann, 2014, *Cross-Strait Relations and International Organizations*. Wiesbaden: Springer, 129-146.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "世衛密件曝光 我列中國一省," 自由電子報 (*Liberty Times*), May 9, 2013.

⁸ Huang Chi-hao, "No dignity without use of nation's real name," *Taipei Times*, June 19, 2014.

capacity of “a guest”. Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has pledged that such designation will not set a precedent for other IGO’s and that it will continue to endeavour to achieve desired observer status. Beijing continues to argue that Taiwan’s motives for the ICAO’s membership are not about safety and functionality since Taiwan already has an access to all important ICAO information through Beijing. According to Beijing, Taiwan’s sole aim is to elevate its international status and profile. Taipei on the other hand, stresses the need to promptly receive updated information related to flight safety directly from the ICAO’s database and the need to regularly attend all relevant ICAO meetings. Similar to Taiwan’s functional importance in the WHO, access to ICAO cannot be easily dismissed as the consequences of Taiwan’s exclusion are provable. However, up to date, ICAO’s innovative “invited guest” formula did not yet lead into increased participation of Taiwan’s delegates at the ICAO nor has Taiwan’s future participation been ascertained. Although major campaign efforts since 2009, were directed at ICAO, Taipei has also sought the international support for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) observership. At present, Taiwan can only attend the UNFCCC’s peripheral activities via its three NGOs, as a nongovernmental observer. However, these NGO’s continue to be listed as belonging to “China” on the UNFCCC website.⁹ The failed formal application in 2010 conveyed that the entry will be difficult as China’s role looms even larger than the one at ICAO. The UNFCCC’s support for Taiwan might risk China’s refusal to abide to the international climate regime in alleviating climate change. Since China is the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases, such loss is certainly undesirable.

Shadow by a Fragile ‘Diplomatic Truce’

Arguably, the major diplomatic setback for Taiwan was its loss of a diplomatic ally, Gambia, which was the first upon the adoption of the so called ‘viable diplomacy’ by President Ma Ying-jeou’s leadership in 2008. The ‘diplomatic truce’ has ceased the diplomatic rivalry between Beijing and Taipei and diplomatic wrangling has become less discernible. Previously, the competition for winning diplomatic allies entailed millions of dollars as the economic incentives seemed to be the most efficient way to entice countries into an official relationship with either Beijing or Taipei. Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Liberia, Senegal, the Central African Republic and other countries, switched their official ties between Taiwan and China several times, with the major determinant being the amount of the bid offered by either of the two governments. During the DPP administration, China has been particularly forceful in applying its economic resources to pressure

⁹ UNFCCC, <http://maindb.unfccc.int/public/ngo.pl>.

Taiwan's allies to switch sides. Between 2000 and 2008, Taipei had lost 9 allies to China (Macedonia, Nauru, Liberia, Dominica, Grenada, Senegal, Chad, Costa Rica, Malawi), while winning two (Kiribati and St. Lucia) and regaining one (Nauru). The lower the aid level was, the higher was the probability of losing an ally.¹⁰ However, given China's growing clout in the world, Taiwan has been gradually losing its economic advantage in the diplomatic arena. In 2009, China surpassed the United States to become Africa's largest trade partner. In 2012, the total bilateral trade between Taiwan and Gambia amounted to approximately US\$6 million and decreased to US\$2 million in 2013, while the volume of trade between Gambia and China in 2012 already scored over US\$342 million.¹¹ Thus, when Gambia announced to sever 18-year-long official diplomatic ties with Taiwan on November 14, 2013, it cited "national strategic interest" as the main reason. Taipei was shocked and attempted to restore relations by promptly sending a delegation to meet the Gambian president Yahya Jammeh. However, the visit failed and Taipei had but to officially acknowledge that ties were cut.¹² According to Taiwan's MOFA, the loss occurred due to Taipei's rejection to pay heed to Gambian president's request for additional financial aid of US\$10 million proposed in January and again in May 2013.¹³ Apparently, MOFA was aware of President Yahya's intentions but chose not to take any actions. That is why it has been viewed as partially responsible.¹⁴ Even though this time Beijing indeed did not lure Gambia, the cut has harmed the 'diplomatic truce' between Taipei and Beijing and highly alarmed Taiwanese authorities.

For the time being, Beijing has opted not to accept Gambia's offer to resume ties and harm cross-Strait relations as it could set a dangerous precedent for other states tempted to do the same. Any further diplomatic setbacks would severely damage the KMT administration and bring about negative consequences for Beijing's own unification agenda. In spite of some unexpected costs and complications due to forsaking the official ties with Gambia, the situation actually works well for Beijing, as it empowers the CCP leadership with a potential source of future leverage over Taiwan, regardless of which party secures the presidency

¹⁰ Czeslaw Tubilewicz and Alain Guilloux, 2011, "Does size matter? Foreign aid in Taiwan's diplomatic strategy, 2000-8," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 65/3: 322-339; Wei-chin Lee, 1993, "Taiwan's foreign aid policy," *Asian Affairs: An American Review* 20/1: 43-62; Linjun Wu 1995, "Does money talk? The ROC's economic diplomacy," *Issues and Studies* 31/12: 22-35; Gerald Chan, 1997, "Taiwan as an emerging foreign aid donor: developments, problems, and prospects," *Pacific Affairs* 70: 37-56.

¹¹ Figures obtained from the websites of the Bureau of Foreign Trade (BOFT) and the China Customs Statistics (CCS).

¹² Joseph Yeh, "Lessons must be learned from Gambia-Taiwan rift," *The China Post*, July 7, 2014.

¹³ "Gambia got too greedy, says Taiwan's foreign minister," *CNA*, November 26, 2013.

¹⁴ 吳家翔, "甘比亞斷交案報告揭露 大使竟半年未見賈梅," 台灣蘋果日報, June 3, 2014; and Joseph Yeh, "MOFA respects Control Yuan's report on The Gambia rift," *China Post*, June 5, 2014.

in 2016.¹⁵ The opposition DPP believes that Gambia is merely the first casualty of the future domino effect which will pull down other allies and argues that the current ‘viable diplomacy’ risks Taiwan’s total isolation from the international community.¹⁶ Although Beijing has refused to establish ties with several of the remaining Taiwan’s allies, it can’t reject them perpetually. Paraguay, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador have all hinted their interest in switching sides, or have been showing hesitance in affirming their ties with Taiwan.¹⁷ Panamanian president waited for 6 months before he finally recognized Taiwan’s new ambassador.¹⁸ Similarly, the embassy of Taiwan’s Central American ally Honduras called back its ambassador over a year ago and has still not appointed a new one.¹⁹ Another African ally, São Tomé and Príncipe, has recently also raised Taipei’s eyebrows. First, in November 2013, announcing China will open a trade mission in the country to promote investment projects and next, in June 2014, as President Manuel Pinto da Costa announced to visit China for a week to solicit investment in a US\$ 500 worth deep-water port project that is reportedly going to be built in the vicinity of the São Tomé’s capital. Although both China and São Tomé tried to soothe Taipei that the visit is of a purely business nature and the president won’t engage in any official activities, MOFA was highly alert as the visit included a politically sensitive stay in Beijing.²⁰ The lack of diplomatic relations with China does not hinder the flow of business as most visible in the trade volumes of Gambia, Burkina Faso, Solomon Islands and Panama.²¹ In fact, the Holy See (Vatican) remains Taiwan’s sole diplomatic ally which bases its recognition on explicitly ideological grounds.²² As the diplomatic tide is turning in Beijing’s favour and Taipei’s voice in the United Nations is weakening, Taiwan’s international position will become increasingly difficult to sustain. That is why nurturing informal substantive relations with the United States, Japan and other political and economic powers will be of even greater importance to Taiwan.

¹⁵ See, Jessica Drun, “China-Taiwan Diplomatic Truce Holds Despite Gambia,” *The Diplomat*, March 29, 2014.

¹⁶ Tseng Wei-chen and Jake Chung, “Detente blamed for decline in international presence,” *Taipei Times*, June 7, 2014.

¹⁷ See, for instance, “FM ‘cautiously optimistic’ of China diplomatic truce,” *The China Post*, May 7, 2009; Wikileaks, “No recognition for PRC anytime soon - Panama sticks with Taiwan,” February 23, 2010.

¹⁸ Joseph Yeh, “Panama recognizes Taiwanese ambassador after six months,” *The China Post*, July 25, 2012.

¹⁹ Joseph Yeh, “Honduras may send new ambassador to Taiwan: MOFA,” *The China Post*, August 8, 2014.

²⁰ “Sao Tome president’s visit to China has Taiwan concerned,” *CNA*, June 11, 2014; “African ally says president’s visit to China ‘non-political’,” *CNA*, June 16, 2014.

²¹ See, CIA 2014, *The World Factbook*, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/.

²² Beijing has not stopped urging the Holy See to switch diplomatic ties however, as long as the CCP will reject Rome’s influence and regard its own government-appointed pope and not a pope in Rome as the leader of all Chinese Catholics, the recognition is unlikely.

Shadow by Tensions in Non-Political Sphere

Surprising incidents in cultural, academic, sports and other non-political international events in which both Taiwanese and Chinese participate, have also not ceased to occur. The latest most resonant incident took place in Portugal this end of July on the occasion of the biennial conference of the European Association of Chinese Studies (EACS). The Vice-Minister and Director-General of the Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban 漢辦), which co-sponsored the event, issued a mandatory request that a page which contains information of the Taiwanese major long-term sponsor of the EACS conferences, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (CCKF), was to be torn out of all the Conference Programme brochures before they would be further distributed to conference participants. This was the first time in history of this major European academic sinological event that its programme had been censored. The arbitrary action has stirred an immense condemnation among hundreds of scholars attending the conference, whereas the EACS, CCKF, Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) and MOFA all expressed their deepest regret and disappointment.²³ Such unreasonable censorship at an international event only damages cross-Strait relations and backfires on China's own international image. Beijing's actions which humiliate Taiwan will only contribute to the international sympathy for Taiwan, further underpin the growing popular understanding in Taiwan that unification with China means control by Beijing and consequently stimulate Taiwanese opposition toward unification. Such incidents which continue to take place on a regular basis actually very clearly reveal that neither side is satisfied with the diplomatic status quo.

Conclusions

Struggles to ensure Taiwan's presence in the international arena and preserve Taiwaneseess continue to remain fierce. Despite some notable progress, Taiwan remains isolated and its status downgraded. Taiwanese politicians are still unable to officially visit any of its non-ally countries and approvals of transit stops are precarious.²⁴ The efforts to have meaningful participation and substantive role in UN affiliated organizations have so far had little success. In essence, Taiwan's progress in global outreach and its functional cooperation seem somewhat superficial as concessions have mostly been of symbolic nature. Since there is no

²³ See, "China's obstruction at conference hurts cross-strait ties: Taiwan," *CNA*, July 28, 2014; EACS, *Letter of Protest at Interference in EACS Conference in Portugal, July 2014*, <http://www.chinesestudies.eu/index.php/433-letter-of-protest-at-interference-in-eacs-conference-in-portugal-july-2014>; "朱雲漢：政治箝制學術 中國在歐洲漢學界栽跟頭," *自由時報*, August 4, 2014.

²⁴ See Shih Hsiu-chuan, "Chinese pressure forces minister to change plans," *Taipei Times*, June 4, 2014.

consensus on Taiwan's status and designation, disputes regarding nomenclature issues have continued unabatedly. To underline its claim of sovereignty over Taiwan, Beijing has persuasively applied its "one China" policy on nearly every matter concerning Taiwan. Basically, any time Taiwan has attempted to enter international organizations that require statehood, China's legal claims over Taiwan only got re-confirmed, whereas majority of the titles Taiwan carries in other international organizations imply that Taiwan is a part of "China". As their homeland is designated with undesirable and awkward nomenclature, Taiwanese are extremely aggravated. Naturally, Beijing does not want to set a precedent that could encourage international perception and even endorsement of Taiwan's independence. The Ma government has agreed to consider any pragmatic solution as long as Taiwan is not downgraded to a part of the PRC. By compromising its legal sovereignty and applying to international governmental organizations (IGOs) with a downgraded status of an "entity" Taipei is displaying it has honest intentions and strives only for functional sovereignty. Taipei urges China to understand that the IGO membership would not imply that member states recognize Taiwan neither would it challenge China's sovereignty claim. It is hoped that Beijing would show more flexibility in forging a terminology that would allow Taiwan to enter IGOs without extinguishing its state-like structure. The current consensus reached on the "one China" model remains intentionally vague, with the two governments agreeing to disagree as to who represents "one China". If a model of "one China" that would entail *de facto* recognition of the co-existence of two existent governments of the PRC and ROC, could be negotiated, cross-Strait relations would have a stable and secure framework for the future. For Taiwan, greater international space would provide the essential foundation for such future political agreement between the two sides, whereas for China such an agreement would be a precondition for it to grant Taiwan more international space. The Ma government has already identified Taiwan as part of "China" and significantly adjusted its diplomatic strategies. However, regardless of the less confrontational diplomacy, Beijing continues to hold a tight grip on Taiwan's international breathing space. Accordingly, the diplomatic achievements are seen as pyrrhic victories. If Beijing continues to insist in squeezing Taiwan's international space by entrapping it in a "one China" agenda on its own terms, Taiwanese people will consider Chinese intentions hostile and see no other alternatives but to support the independence movement more vigorously. The majority of Taiwanese and young generations in particularly already regard Taiwan as an independent and separate state from China and are not willing to accept a sub-sovereign status. They strongly believe they should be given same right as other countries to participate in the international arena. Various public opinion surveys have shown that allowing Taiwan to participate in the international community would be most effective way to gain trust of the

Taiwanese people.²⁵ Once Taiwanese acquire security guarantees from the international community, they will be reassured that their autonomy could be preserved even after unification.

As a matter of fact, Taiwan is faced with a very grim reality. The major problem is that in the international arena “the PRC” is equated with “China”. It is difficult to assess, to what extent has emphasising the “Chineseness” of Taiwan and stressing that Taiwan’s identity is part of a greater cultural Chinese identity since 2008 actually affected Taiwan’s international profile. When the violent riots occurred in Vietnam in response to Beijing’s placement of an oil rig in disputed South China Sea waters in May 2014, Vietnamese anti-China protesters damaged facilities owned by Taiwanese businesses and attacked Taiwanese people as they mistook them for Chinese.²⁶ In this case, embracing the Chinese identity and stressing the “Chineseness” has worked against Taiwanese and has only emboldened the Taiwanese to even more passionately defend their “Taiwanese-ness”. The incident also brought forward the side effects of the awkward terminology Taiwan has to adopt in the international arena to comply with the “one China” policy. Taipei’s compensation to using “Chinese, Taipei” and other demeaning names certainly do not boost Taiwan’s sovereignty. It goes without saying that it is very difficult for an international audience that is not intimately familiar with the history of the ROC and the PRC to understand why greater international space should be given to an island whose own government appears to agree to be a part of “China”.²⁷ Accordingly, the international community might start perceiving Taiwan’s improved relations with China as Taiwan’s acceptance to sacrifice its sovereign status in diplomacy.²⁸ With China’s expanding participation in international governance mechanisms, Taiwan is getting increasingly absorbed into China’s orbit. Beijing’s nascent global agency might gradually integrate the “one China” pattern into an international consensus that conditions Taiwan’s development.²⁹ Some traces of such trend have actually already started to appear.³⁰

²⁵ Nien-chung Chang Liao, 2012, “Building Trust across the Taiwan Strait: A Strategy of Reassurance,” *Issues and Studies* 48/3: 105-45.

²⁶ Taiwan’s Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) reported that a total of 408 companies and factories owned by Taiwanese businessmen were affected by the protests. Property and financial losses are between US\$150 million and US\$500 million (Lauly Li, “Taiwan may ‘adjust’ relations with Vietnam: Premier Jiang,” *The China Post*, July 25, 2014.

²⁷ See, Christopher R. Hughes, 2014, “Revisiting identity politics under Ma Ying-jeou,” in J.P. Cabestan and J. deLisle (eds.), *Political Changes in Taiwan under Ma Ying-jeou*, pg. 133.

²⁸ See, Tseng Wei-chen and Jake Chung, “Detente blamed for decline in international presence,” *Taipei Times*, June 7, 2014.

²⁹ See, Lin, Scott Y., 2013, “Reorienting Taiwan into the Chinese Orbit,” *Korean Journal Of Defense Analysis* 25/2: 257-280.

³⁰ See, Shih Hsiu-chuan, “INTERVIEW: Ma’s policy undermining Taiwan: Danielsen,” *Taipei Times*, July 6, 2014.

To summarize, there are still many curves on the road toward “one China”. No one can see ahead of the curve and should they steer off the road to the edge of a cliff, no one would know how to react. Balancing Taiwan’s international standing, national identity and self-determination with cordial relations with China will continue to be challenging. Any rash decisions taken will have dire consequences. Therefore, reading signs on the way is of crucial importance. It is vital for both sides to be politically and diplomatically creative and to keep seeking for mutually acceptable form of political autonomy for Taiwan. Taiwan requires its separate international personality and needs Beijing to react more positively to Taiwanese demands for greater international recognition. Expansion of Taiwan’s international space will not enhance the island’s status to statehood. Nevertheless, Beijing’s rigidity will only hurt the feelings of Taiwanese people and negatively affect the unification trend: Taiwanese nationalism will intensify and calls for national self-determination will get louder. The unification will only be possible when Taiwan’s sovereignty is respected. Only then can the political roadmap of “one China” become a reality.