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TAIWAN'S 1995 LEGISLATIVE YUAN ELECTION
John F. Copper

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John F. Copper*

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I. INTRODUCTION

On December 2, 1995, voters in Taiwan cast ballots to select 164 delegates to the nation's lawmaking body, the Legislative Yuan.¹ This was Taiwan's seventh competitive national election since its first in 1980.² It was the country's third non-supplemental election and the second non-supplemental (plenary) election of the Legislative Yuan. It may be considered Taiwan's second three-party election.

Senators, or Legislative Yuan delegates, were chosen in two different ways. Approximately 13 million voters in Taiwan's 29 electoral districts (including Quemoy and Matsu and some other small islands off the coast of mainland China) elected 128 lawmakers. The remaining 36 seats (designated on the basis of pro-

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1. The Legislative Yuan is the nation's primary lawmaking organ. The National Assembly amends the Constitution.

2. It was the eighth if one assumes the 1994 election of the provincial governor, the provincial assembly, the metropolitan city mayors and city councils to be a national election. For an assessment of Taiwan's previous elections, see John F. Copper and George P. Chen, Taiwan's Elections: Political Development and Democratization in the Republic of China, Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 1984; John F. Copper, Taiwan's Recent Elections: Fulfilling the Democratic Promise, Baltimore: University of Maryland School of Law, 1990; John F. Copper, Taiwan's 1991 and 1992 Non-Supplemental Elections: Reaching a Higher State of Democracy, Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1994; and John F. Copper, "Taiwan's 1994 Gubernatorial and Mayoral Elections," Asian Affairs (Summer 1994).
portional representation) were appointed by the three political parties according to their share of the popular vote: 30 at-large or national seats and 6 seats representing the Overseas Chinese.

A total of 334 candidates registered for the 128 district seats: 105 representing the ruling Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT), 71 from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and 36 standing for the New Party (NP). In addition, there were 117 independent candidates, 2 candidates representing the Labor Party and 1 candidate each from the Non-Party League, the Party for Chinese Taiwan Aborigines and the Citizens Party. Fifty-five were nominated by the parties for the at-large seats: KMT—29; DPP—18; and, NP—8. For the Overseas Chinese seats, the KMT nominated 6, the DPP 5, and the NP 1. The number of candidates competing was down somewhat from the last Legislative Yuan election, held in 1992, when 403 contestants (a much larger number than usual) vied for 161 seats. The 1995 election campaign had 123 incumbent candidates competing for re-election, while 30 standing delegates did not seek re-election. In addition, there were 8 vacancies due to six resignations, one death and one expulsion. Going into the election, the KMT held 92 seats, the DPP 50 and the NP 7.

This election was a test for a large number of new legislators that were elected in Taiwan’s first plenary Legislative Yuan election in 1992. Most ran in 1992 on a platform of change, calling for new blood and new ideas. They could not say this in 1995. Voters were aware of their performance in office and to some extent considered them insiders. Clearly, they had to run on their record and as incumbents.

This election was also seen by observers, and probably a sizeable portion of the electorate, as a critical run-up to Taiwan’s first popular or direct presidential election that was scheduled for just three months later, in March 1996. Presidential candidates had already declared their candidacies and were campaigning, informally at least. They had a considerable impact on this election.

The fact that this election was a three-party contest added to its complexity and accentuated differences in views and platforms. Moreover, voters had a greater range of choices in this Legislative Yuan election than they had in previous one- or two-party contests. This seemed to have hurt independent candidates and candidates of

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minor or small parties. It also evoked a debate about the nation’s party system.

The 1995 election was the first that another country deliberately tried to influence the results by using such means as threats, intimidation, and warnings. The People’s Republic of China sought to dampen the independence issue; and, it probably can be judged to have succeeded. In so doing, Beijing helped the New Party and hurt both the Kuomintang and the Democratic Progressive Party.

The KMT was also disadvantaged by slow economic growth (for Taiwan at least), charges of links with criminal elements, corruption and vote buying, and generally inauspicious pre-election events. In short, what happened in the months leading up to the election as well as events during the campaign damaged the ruling party’s image and weakened its ability to appeal to the electorate.

Notwithstanding the unprecedented three-party race and the unwarranted intimidation from Beijing, voter interest in the election was less than in previous elections, at least as reflected in the voter turnout. Changes in campaign rules and the fact that the newness had worn off of the elections in Taiwan may help to explain this. The intense publicity about corruption and negative campaigning likewise may have been factors that discouraged voters from going to the polls.

The fact there were fewer antics and less violence reflects the institutionalization of voting and campaigning, and seems to indicate that Taiwan, in terms of election politics at least, has come a considerable distance in becoming a full-fledged democracy.

II. PRE-ELECTION POLITICS IN TAIWAN

The months leading up to the campaign were filled with events that generally did not work to the advantage of the ruling Nationalist Party (or Kuomintang). The government and the KMT (which many people still view as synonymous or closely related despite KMT endeavors to de-link the two) were blamed for a number of incidents that were construed as reflecting poor governance and, in some cases, malfeasance and corruption. There was also voter disenchantment with politics in general. Meanwhile, a number of events seemed to collide with KMT campaign strategies. Pre-election events likewise helped the two parties not in power: the Democratic Progressive Party and the New Party. The New Party in particular benefitted.

The KMT started the year having just won an overall victory in the country’s gubernatorial, provincial assembly, metropolitan may-
oral, and city council races. However, the ruling party lost the Taipei mayorship and most of the seats on the Taipei city council—races some say are a bellwether to future election contests. Clearly, it was an embarrassment for the ruling party inasmuch as the KMT would no longer control the city government in the capital city. Moreover, the KMT seemed to be advantaged in this election by good campaign strategies and good candidates; otherwise the ruling party may not have done as well as it did. In addition, ethnic voting was not so strong and foreign policy was not high on the agenda of items discussed during the campaign. Developments in the latter realm tended to shed a negative light on the ruling party, so the lack of emphasis there favored the KMT.4

In February 1995, the military in Taiwan learned that Beijing had redeployed an artillery division with M-9 surface-to-surface missiles from Zhejiang to Fujian Province, thereby putting Taiwan within their range of fire.5 This came just after the Chinese People's Liberation Army seized an island in the South China Sea claimed by the Philippines, and after President Jiang Zemin, in his New Years speech, warned Taiwan of its intransigence. In short, a period of better or improved relations between Taipei and Beijing seemed to reverse course or come to an end. Meanwhile, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific, Winston Lord, said no to the question of selling submarines to Taiwan.6

That same month there was a horrible restaurant fire in Taichung that cost the lives of 64 people. The restaurant operators had flagrantly violated safety codes, and possibly the government did not properly inspect or simply ignored the hazards that caused the tragedy. The populace blamed the government and the KMT. After the fire, moreover, the government was accused of protecting rather than punishing culpable officials. The public reaction to this incident seemed to reflect a widespread perception that nobody was in control and that the government was incompetent and venal.7

On March 1, 1995, President Lee publicly apologized for the Nationalist Chinese military killing of a large number of native Taiwanese in February 1947 (the 2-28 Incident). Coinciding with

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4. For details, see John F. Copper, “Taiwan's 1994 Gubernatorial and Metropolitan Mayoral Election,” Asian Affairs (Summer 1995).
Lee's apology, the KMT-controlled government agreed to offer NT$ 8 million (over U.S.$300,000) in compensation to the families of the victims. But opposition to the offer grew in the party, with many feeling that Nationalist military actions were justified and that the Taiwanese were not the only victims. The promised payment was reduced to NT$ 6 million. The DPP charged the KMT with insincerity and with a failure to honor its pledge. A well-publicized pushing and kicking incident in a Legislative Yuan session followed.  

The amount of compensation should have been seen as generous. But, it appeared a trifling amount when the KMT, for the first time ever, reported that it had assets of NT$ 37.7 billion (and this was not even a complete disclosure). The DPP said the KMT had accumulated so much money because it had monopoly businesses and was able to buy property cheaply through its incestuous connections with the government.  

Meanwhile, the Legislative Yuan passed a bill to provide universal health care to all citizens and certain resident aliens, and the resulting health care plan was set for implementation. Since this had been designed and promoted by the KMT, it should have dampened the DPP's calls for more social welfare and burnished the ruling party's reputation for caring for the people. In short, it should have helped it win votes in the December election. But there were so many delays along the way that final passage was anti-climatic. Moreover, there were bitter complaints, provoking heated public debate, about the health care plan's costs, and what share of costs should be borne by employers, employees and the government. There was also controversy over how the poor should be treated. After its implementation, stories circulated about doctors asking for additional, under-the-table payments from patients before treating them, or suggesting to patients that they would not receive the best care during an operation without paying more money.  

On April 1, 1995, Beijing rejected Taipei's offer to host talks between negotiating organizations on both sides. Officials cited President Lee's "Six Points," which he had pronounced in response to President Jiang Zemin's "Eight Points" regarding cross-strait relations earlier in the year. Especially objectionable were Lee's men-

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9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
tion of Taipei having sovereignty, his proposal that both sides participate in international organizations, his suggestion that Beijing should renounce a military solution to the “Taiwan issue,” and his call for democracy in Hong Kong. President Lee subsequently blamed Beijing for “stagnating the pace of reunification” and for failing to recognize the sovereignty of the Republic of China. A few days later, the military in Taipei reported a clash between fishermen from the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Relations between Taipei and Beijing were further strained by President Lee’s visit to Jordan and the United Arab Emirates—the first such visit since President Yen Chia-kan’s in 1977. The trip was labelled an effort to break the isolationism imposed on Taiwan by Beijing. Beijing, clearly not happy with the trip, successfully put pressure on Israel to have that part of Lee’s trip canceled.

In early April, the KMT witnessed what appeared to be the worsening of an already serious party split. On the 20th anniversary of Chiang Kai-shek’s death, his son Chiang Wei-kuo, speaking before a crowd of Mainland Chinese, accused President Lee of “abandoning Sun Yat-sen’s three principles” and of “stealing Chinese territory by creating a new country on Taiwan.” The crowd yelled epithets at Lee, calling him a thief and a dictator. A few days later, Sun An-ti, a member of the KMT Central Committee, called on “real KMT members” to hand over their membership cards to his group, the Committee to Save and Reform the KMT, and to support a new presidential nomination procedure—a democratic decision-making process that would allow others to more easily challenge President Lee for the nomination. Sun also called President Lee a traitor. Sun was expelled from the party for his actions but refused to depart, saying that he had been elected by the grassroots of the party.

Within days, the KMT called a plenary session of the 14th Party Congress in an effort to bring mainstream and non-mainstream factions together and to discuss Constitutional amendments that would alter the powers of the president and make Taiwan’s political system clearly a presidential one. Differences were sharp

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and efforts by the mainstream to foster harmony in the party and/or to enlist DPP cooperation failed.\textsuperscript{14}

In May 1995, a section of the Taipei Mass Rapid Transit System was opened conditionally. This drew attention to the fact that finishing it had been delayed many times and that there had been huge cost overruns, making this subway the most expensive in the world. There were repeated charges of graft and corruption relating to the very expensive contracts awarded to contractors. Voters were thus reminded of an issue which undermined KMT credibility in 1994 and, in part, explained why the DPP's candidate won the Taipei mayorship.\textsuperscript{15}

Then came an event that should have helped the KMT's image immensely: President Lee Teng-hui's unofficial visit to Cornell University, his alma mater, in the United States in June. This was the first Republic of China president to ever visit the U.S. and the first trip by a high official from Taipei since the break of diplomatic relations in 1979. The visit made the KMT look good in the face of the fact that the DPP had long criticized the ruling party about foreign policy setbacks and lack of coherency. The visit also gave Taipei good publicity abroad and seemed to be a major victory for the government and the KMT in breaking Beijing's efforts to isolate Taiwan. In short, it appeared that Taipei had made a foreign policy breakthrough.

However, the visit was not viewed quite this way by many political insiders in Taiwan. As the trip was handled out of the Presidential Office and not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, critics of President Lee pointed to this as another example of the president not consulting with his top advisors, and of making decisions in a dictatorial manner. Arranging the logistics for the trip also evoked accusations of financial misconduct and even kickbacks when it was learned that Cassidy & Associates, a public relations firm in Washington, D.C., had been paid US$1.5 million to handle the trip on the U.S. end and to ensure good press and a favorable impression aimed at the U.S. Congress.

Compounding these problems was Beijing's response. The People's Liberation Army subsequently conducted missile tests in the Taiwan Strait, just 100 miles from Taiwan, to express its anger.


over Lee’s U.S. visit. The tests involved all three branches of the military and was accompanied by boisterous saber rattling in Beijing. On July 1, Beijing accused President Lee of “wrongdoing,” saying that he had “seriously damaged” relations across the Taiwan Strait in making the U.S. trip. The Xinhua news agency (the official press agency of the PRC) went even further, saying that China should “use fresh blood and lives” to prevent Taiwan from rejecting reunification. Not wanting the feud to escalate and cause public panic, government officials in Taipei called on news organizations to play down the story. The presidential office even ordered officials not to comment on the matter. But this did little to calm a jittery public.16 Citizens recalled Cheng Lang-ping’s prediction that China would invade Taiwan during the intercalary month of 1995 in his best-selling book published a few months earlier, I-chiu-chiu-wu Jun-pa-yueh (T Day: The Warning of Taiwan Strait War). The events caused the stock market and the housing market in Taiwan to tumble. As a consequence, instead of precipitating a major backlash (though it did to some degree), many in Taiwan felt the trip had been too provocative.17

Meanwhile, in what otherwise may not have been shocking news, one of Taiwan’s locally built, high-performance jet aircrafts crashed. This drew further attention to problems and delays in building the plane and even the quality of what is the most expensive jet fighter in the world. It similarly fostered more controversy over Taiwan’s military budget problems.18 More importantly, it cast some doubt on whether Taiwan’s military was prepared to defend the island in case Beijing decided to follow through with its threats.

At almost the same time, KMT and DPP Legislative Yuan delegates traded punches and engaged in “hair pulling” during a debate on limiting prosecutors’ powers in issuing warrants. Another fight followed discussions about the government’s right to supervise the collection of signatures by independent presidential candidates

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17. In a poll taken in June 1995, 38.3 percent (as opposed to 35.5 percent holding the opposite view) of respondents said they did not favor the trip if it risked military confrontation in the Taiwan Strait. See Christopher Bodeen, “Lee's U.S. Visit Supported by Big Majority in Taiwan,” China Post (international edition), June 6, 1995, p. 1.

and over election laws being written for the March presidential election in 1996.\textsuperscript{19}

In early August, the Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics lowered its projection of 1995 economic growth from 6.9 percent to 6.6 percent, citing weakening private consumption and shaky confidence in the economy. Some analysts, however, cited fear of China, a huge embezzlement scandal at the Changhua City's Fourth Credit Cooperative, and a forged securities incident at the International Bills Finance Corporation as the reasons for the economic slowdown. Others mentioned ballooning imports, inflation in retail prices (4.7 percent) and higher unemployment (1.96 percent in July, a high rate for Taiwan). In response, the government cut reserve requirements and lowered interest rates.\textsuperscript{20}

In late August, just before a plenary meeting of the 14th KMT Party Congress, Chen Li-an, President of the Control Yuan, announced that he would seek the presidency in order "to open up a new path." This was a clear statement that Chen wanted to offer an alternative to President Lee. The KMT's Vice Chairman, Lin Yang-kang, without any formal announcement, all but said he was running too. This seemed to compel President Lee to announce his candidacy, which he did at the Party Congress meeting.\textsuperscript{21} President Lee, in his announcement, spoke of building a "Great Taiwan" and of "developing the Taiwan political miracle." Some took these comments as an affront to the non-mainstream faction of the party. Former Premier Hau Pei-tsun immediately voiced his opposition, saying that "people in power should not hold power too long."\textsuperscript{22}

Beijing responded in a very negative manner to Lee's announcement, expressing its hopes that Lee would decide not to run. \textit{People's Daily}, the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party, called Lee a "schemer and a double-dealer." The paper blamed Lee for unstable bilateral relations and called his father a "100 percent traitor" for having served in the Japanese colonial government.\textsuperscript{23} The Xinhua news agency, in an even angrier tone,

\textsuperscript{21} "Raising the Stakes," \textit{AsiaWeek}, September 8, 1995, p. 28.
\textsuperscript{23} "Raising the Stakes," \textit{supra} note 21.
said: “To sweep Lee Teng-hui into the trash bin of history is the common, historical responsibility of Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.” This kind of harangue had not been heard from Beijing for many years and had never been directed at President Lee.

President Lee responded in kind, charging that China had slandered him. He then repeated his pledge to build a “Great Taiwan.” He further stated that the Republic of China was a “democratic country” and that China’s missile tests “increased opposition from the people of Taiwan.” Some experts and polls analysts suggested the “war of words” helped Lee’s popularity, while others claimed it had the opposite affect. The Tzu-lih Tsao-pao (Independence Morning Post) reported an opinion survey that gave President Lee only 36 percent of the vote for president and 23.4 percent for Chen. Viewed in the context of the high popularity ratings that President Lee had been used to receiving, this did not look good. Some newspapers speculated about a Chen-Lin ticket, saying it would do even better. Lin meanwhile spoke of boosting Taiwan’s defenses and avoiding actions that would antagonize Beijing. Supporters said that Lin would “steady Taiwan’s heart.” The Lien-ho Pao (United Daily News), one of Taiwan’s two largest newspapers and an anti-Lee establishment, said that Lee had caused “serious public anxiety.” It went on to declare: “Unless the threat of war is dispelled, economic anxieties will lead to political chaos. By then, Taiwan will have to face an internal crisis whether war breaks out or not.”

At this juncture, a number of second-generation Mainland Chinese left the KMT to join the New Party, including deputy chairman Hau Pei-tsung’s son who had announced that he was seeking a seat in the Legislative Yuan. A dozen KMT members of the Legislative Yuan also refused to sign a petition supporting President Lee.

KMT morale, as a result of this and many other difficulties, was quickly becoming a serious problem. The ruling party also seemed very apprehensive about increasing public fear of Beijing and widespread public disgust with politics, both of which had the potential to hurt KMT candidates in the December election. Some top-ranking and highly visible KMT government officials even re-

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27. Ibid., p. 14.
sorted to dancing and reading poetry in public places, attempting to perform what one observer labelled a "political exorcism." To alleviate public apprehension produced by Beijing's threats, the government organized a parade of 11,000 troops, put weapons on public display, and advertised both events on all three government-owned television stations. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense went public with a debate about a 20 percent increase in the defense budget, the largest increase in many years. Still, according to a Chung-kuo Shih-pao (China Times) poll, 33 percent of the populace lacked confidence in the Taiwanese military's ability to defend itself.29

In late October, the Legislative Yuan failed to pass a bill to provide money for housing for retired soldiers and their families, a total of 580,000 people. A lack of party discipline and too many distractions prevented the ruling party from concentrating on this legislation so important to some KMT candidates. KMT legislators representing districts in which these people lived predicted that this would cut their vote in half in these areas.30

Looking at Taiwan's economy as the campaign was about to begin was similarly not a cause for optimism or confidence in the government. Industrial production was up only 5.4 percent—behind the 7.6 percent in Singapore and the double-digit growth in China, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and India. Among the ten stock markets in the region, Taiwan's showed the worst performance up to that point in 1995, placing it even behind Japan which was in recession.31

III. PARTY PLATFORMS AND STRATEGIES

The strategies of the three largest parties (the others being insignificant in this election) can be discerned prima facia from their campaign literature and the tenets of their party platforms. Some effort, however, also needs to be made to assess how they planned to win, what they saw as their best chances for getting votes, and their election tactics and strategies which they did not openly discuss.

29. Ibid.
In a Nationalist Party brochure printed for the election, the KMT declared that it espoused an adamant policy of anti-communism, anti-Taiwan independence, and preservation of the Republic of China. The brochure guaranteed protection of the nation’s security, stability and happiness. Also, it listed five objectives: clean government, economic growth, social justice, cultural pluralism, and international participation.

Elaborating on these points, the ruling party stated that it supported better defense policies that included enhancing science and technology as applied to upgrading weapons systems, training, and reaction time. It also declared, however, that the party wanted better cross-strait relations, meaning more friendly and broader ties with Beijing. It stated that it would push for a government that was more efficient both in its service to the people and in its efforts to help the poor. It asserted that it would improve social welfare through expanding unemployment benefits and developing an overall social security system. It spoke of promoting economic development by creating an environment for fair competition and putting Taiwan at the center of East Asia’s economic expansion. The ruling party also promised changes in the tax system and stock market rules. It said, in addition, it would aggressively pursue participation in the United Nations and other international organizations to improve the global position of the Republic of China. It cited as important objectives the promotion of culture, education and broad educational reform. It vowed to improve the nation’s transportation system and the environment. And, it listed among the party’s goals the need to upgrade individual security by the means of effective measures to maintain social tranquility. The KMT brochure also asserted it would do the following: help youths, farmers and fishermen; equalize city and rural health; and, promote science and technology.

The Democratic Progressive Party’s campaign brochure described Taiwan as an “economic miracle.” However, it also described Taiwan as a nation that had no voice in the international community, one that had been shunned by the United Nations, and one which lacked an identity. It cited five party goals: full-fledged

32. The KMT’s brochure was entitled “Leading a Stable Ship to Cross the Century,” (my own translation from Chinese) and was published by the Cultural Work Committee.

33. The DPP’s bulletin was simply entitled “The Democratic Progressive Party” and was published by the DPP Headquarters.
democracy, an independent and sovereign Taiwan, a new constitution, a free economy, and social welfare.

Elaborating on its objectives, the DPP called for the decentralization of the government and the depoliticization of the military and the police. It also proposed independence on the part of the judiciary and the electronic media. The party further asked for a referendum to determine whether Taiwan was a part of China and stated that it opposed any “One-China Policy” whereby Taiwan was eternally and inexorably a part of China. It described the present Constitution as “archaic,” and called for a new constitution which would fulfill the people’s “democratic aspirations and address today’s political realities.” The brochure also cited stable economic growth with full employment, the privatization of state and party-owned enterprises, as well as protections for labor rights and the environment as DPP goals. Finally, the party called for a “comprehensive welfare system” that would guarantee living standards and protect women, minorities and the underprivileged.

The New Party’s campaign literature focused on corruption, crime (especially citing organized crime’s support of and ties with politicians), vote-buying, educational reform, social welfare, taxation and finance, and relations with China. In its thirteen-point manifesto, the New Party stated that it: adheres to Sun Yat-sen’s political ideals, including social justice and a society free of corruption; declares that all ethnic groups should be equal and individual rights protected; calls for implementation of Taiwan’s Sunshine Law; opposes the use of money in politics; objects to parties controlling the media; advocates clean government and the strict enforcement of regulations applying to public officials; declares a policy of equal opportunity in government employment; supports a clean judicial system; rails against violence, specifically gangsters and prostitutes; condemns factional politics and says it will not recommend a candidate who amasses riches illegally; promises to help aspiring politicians without money; calls for better political administration, specifically the creation of six special municipalities; and, supports the plebiscite bill to respect the theory of sovereignty residing in the people.

The KMT’s platform, being longer and more detailed, reflected the fact that it was the ruling party and had to deal with a broader range of issues. In some ways, its goals seemed too broad and in

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34. This is taken from a New Party pamphlet entitled “New Party.” No publisher is listed.
some instances vague. Furthermore, some of the party's goals seemed to draw attention to areas where it had not performed well, such as creating a cleaner government and getting rid of crime. These were widely seen by the electorate as serious problems that had become worse on the KMT's "watch." The KMT's portrayal of itself as a moderate party (with the DPP on its left and the New Party on its right) and one that would likely maintain political stability and ensure continued economic growth, was the most effective and credible of all its pronouncements.

The DPP's call for depoliticizing the military and police and preserving the independence of the judiciary and media were credible. However, the judiciary under the leadership of Minister of Justice Ma Ying-jeou had quite a good image and the appearance of cable TV and other electronic media outside of KMT control had altered the situation of which the DPP had complained. The DPP's call for decentralizing the political system was in consonance with global trends, but it seemed to contradict these trends with its call for expanded social welfare. The DPP could take credit for promoting Taiwan's representation in the United Nations and other international organizations (since the KMT had adopted its program), but what to do next was unclear. Its opposition to a "One-China" policy sounded good, but the United States (the key to Taiwan's future in terms of whether or not it will protect Taiwan in the event of a PRC invasion) espoused such a policy and was unlikely to change it. The DPP's call for a free economy was also appealing in terms of privatizing state- and party-owned enterprises, but not insofar as the DPP had gone on record advocating more public spending. The party's accusations of the KMT as being a party of corruption, vote-buying, and criminal elements stuck; however, this was not entirely favorable for the DPP because of its image as a party that promotes violence and chaos, not to mention its street-policing antics. Many people responded by asking which was worse, the DPP or the KMT.

The New Party's calls for addressing money politics, corruption and vote-buying, and its criticism of gangsters' influence in politics, certainly had resonance. Although less attention catching, its mention of individual rights and its criticism of ethnic politics also attracted voter approval, or so it appeared during the campaign. Its party platform was seen by most observers as proof that the NP was in touch with the middle class, the educated and the youth. The party seemed to the electorate to be progressive and enlightened. However, its mention of Sun Yat-sen's ideals probably was taken
less seriously and did not attract much attention. The same may be said of its specifics about a balanced budget and its suggestion for six special municipalities.

In terms of election strategy, the KMT sought to concentrate its voting strength on fewer candidates and to not spread its votes too thinly. Thus, it nominated and supported fewer candidates: 85 regular candidates (compared to 125 in the 1992 election) and 20 affiliated candidates (as opposed to 43 three years earlier). This followed logically from the fact that Taiwan has a multi-seat, single-vote electoral system.\textsuperscript{35} Nationalist Party leaders also assumed fewer "iron votes" from military personnel because of competition from the New Party and resorted less to vote-buying because of public concern and the fact that the government was cracking down on the practice. It relied more on its experience, good management and the use of its enterprises to finance candidates.\textsuperscript{36}

KMT leaders realized that their hopes for making gains in the December election were slim, and thus sought to avoid losing ground, especially losing the party’s majority. Thus, the KMT set a goal of 85 seats. KMT leaders hence scaled back their earlier optimistic predictions, but still forecasted that the ruling party would win a majority. Party spokespersons refused to discuss coalition politics, wanting to give the impression that there was little or no doubt the KMT would win sufficiently to avoid this while trying obliquely to warn the voter not to vote for the other two parties. KMT spokespersons often cited the loss of a majority as likely to cause political and economic instability and other dire consequences. They specifically mentioned revolving door cabinets, diminished administrative efficiency, a more politicized civil service and gridlock in a Legislative Yuan that could produce little legislation.\textsuperscript{37} They also linked a healthy economy to continued KMT rule. KMT planners sought to give the impression that Beijing was trying to influence the vote because of President Lee’s visit to the United States in June. They pointed out that the alternative was not to do anything about Taiwan’s isolation. They also condemned Beijing’s interference in Taiwan’s domestic affairs. In some specific races, KMT campaign specialists targeted districts held by DPP legislators and, in particular, DPP leaders, seeing some vulnerabilities and

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
some possibilities of big upsets. They clearly saw the DPP, and not the NP, as their main competitor.

DPP strategists also entered fewer candidates. Instead, they focused on organizing votes better, knowing that some popular candidates had taken too many votes in the past and that the party should have had a higher percentage of winners. Party leaders also aimed at winning enough seats to deny the KMT a majority; consequently, its candidates, before and during the campaign, talked about democracy being facilitated by power-sharing and compromise. They endeavored to refute the KMT's statements to the effect that multi-party politics would engender instability and chaos. DPP spokespersons even discussed the advantages the KMT would gain by not having a majority: It would be transformed from an interest-oriented party to a policy-oriented party and would become a truly "liberal, democratic party." The DPP spoke less about Taiwan's independence than in previous elections, apparently perceiving that China's intimidation had influenced voters. DPP planners also tried to focus more on public policy issues and to use the party's newly gained advantage coming from the liberalization of the electronic media; but, both of these stratagems proved difficult to put into practice.

The New Party, in contrast, entered a larger number of candidates, calculating that it would expand its representation in the Legislative Yuan by doing so. Also, as the two big vote-getters, Jaw Shau-kong and Wang Chien-shien (the two largest winners in 1992), were absent from the race, this would be easier. New Party strategists aimed at expanding to areas outside of Taipei to rid the party of the images of being a "regional party" (meaning the Taipei area) and an ethnic or Mainland Chinese party. It also targeted its campaign efforts at intellectuals and the middle class, aiming to attract people who would influence others and think about the future. It likewise aimed at those most concerned about problems with government and politics in general. Like the DPP, it denied the KMT charges that without a KMT majority Taiwan would not have a stable political system. In fact, two New Party slogans were: "If no party wins a majority, the president will not dare make a mess of things," and "If no party wins a majority, the country will prosper and the people will live in happiness." New Party leaders, seeking

38. These words were spoken by Chen Wen-chien, Director of the DPP's Information Department. See "Possible KMT Split Would Clarify Party Politics: DPP," China News, November 24, 1995, p. 2.
to take advantage of new innovations in campaigning, conducted joint campaigning and used political forums better than the New Party had in the past and probably better than the other two parties did in their campaigns. NP strategists tried to play down the unification issue, yet convey the message that Taiwan had to deal with China in that the two were in the same economic bloc and that Taiwan could not be isolationist. The New Party leadership generally tried to present an image of progressive conservatism.

In general, fewer party members ran without their party’s approval, and there was no meaningful umbrella organization for non-approved candidates or independents to join the campaign as had existed in previous elections. The minor parties published platforms, but they attracted little attention. The fact that greater competition seemed to be ensured by the presence of three parties, and the fact that small parties and independents could not get television time, made their campaign platforms less effective.

IV. THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign began officially on November 22, 1995, and lasted for a period of ten days. Candidates were, of course, posturing and trying to gain favorable publicity and reputations in a variety of ways long before the election began. Candidates and their campaign workers and supporters also held political discussions, debates and various other kinds of meetings and rallies before the campaign started. Because of the increasing impact of television and the electronic media, fewer candidates put great effort, compared to earlier campaigns at least, into the government-sponsored rallies and debates, and fewer people attended such events. Resorting to attention-getting activities and sensationalism, however, remained popular. Challenging, accusing and even suing other candidates was also prevalent.

Some viewed the election campaign as beginning on November 18th, when candidates drew their numbers for the campaign and the ballot box. On that occasion, a DPP candidate arrived in a tank and fired smoke from its cannon. Another DPP candidate came with a New Party flag, which he spit on. A KMT candidate was accompanied by six horses (six being a lucky number in Chinese). A New Party candidate came clothed in traditional Chinese dress accompanied by an actress posing as a heroine of folklore. Trong Chai, the DPP’s candidate in Chiayi, challenged the KMT’s Vincent Siew to a debate on Taiwan’s independence. Candidates who received the number one or six celebrated; candidates who got
number four (an inauspicious number because its pronunciation is the same as the word for "death") showed displeasure.\textsuperscript{39}

The Ministry of Interior announced on November 22nd, the official beginning of the campaign, that it would take special measures to guard against violence during the campaign. Minister Huang Kun-huei, also head of the Central Election Commission, said that a task force of police and election supervision officials had met for several days and had worked out measures to prevent violence. Meanwhile, the National Police Administration announced that police officers would not have any vacation days until after the election and that special units had been formed to investigate vote-buying and hooliganism. The latter was in part a reaction to DPP charges that 60 percent of KMT candidates were connected with the underworld or money politics, but it also reflected concern about election violence.\textsuperscript{40}

The campaign began on a negative note for the KMT. The next day, on November 23rd, reflecting KMT internal factionalism, hundreds of party members protested against Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun running for president and vice-president respectively, without the party’s approval. Approximately 300 riot police were called and an 80-year old man was injured. Several KMT Legislative Yuan members led the rally that coincided with a Party Central Committee meeting.\textsuperscript{41} Lin and Hau were also criticized for openly campaigning for New Party candidates in this election, with one party member calling their actions “evil.” The KMT’s legislative whip, Liao Fuw-teen, said the party should take immediate action against Lin and Hau. According to a local newspaper, President Lee even admonished them to “behave themselves.”\textsuperscript{42}

Lin and Hau responded by saying that they would soon issue an “open letter” criticizing KMT Chairman Lee Teng-hui. They suggested that in the letter they would delineate actions by President Lee that have “betrayed the nation and destroyed the party.” In response to President Lee’s admonition that they “behave them-


selves.” Lin and Hau stated that they would use Sun Yat-sen’s thoughts to attack Lee for his “misbehavior.”

That same day the first case of vote-buying in the campaign was reported. Four campaign workers were arrested and one confessed to buying 136 votes for a KMT legislative candidate in central Taiwan. Elsewhere, the vice-president of a KMT-owned company was accused of fraud over a forged certificate-of-deposit, while news broke of several other big companies being implicated in fraud and bribery cases. Also making headlines was a kidnapping case in Chiayi, drawing voter attention to the growing crime problem.

On November 24th, attention was diverted temporarily from the KMT’s problems when members of the Democratic Progressive Party and the New Party clashed in Kaohsiung, resulting in some minor injuries. Simultaneously, however, in another headline story, the Taiwan Provincial Assembly speaker was acquitted of vote-buying charges, while several others were convicted and sentenced to 18 months in jail (seven were KMT, and one was DPP). The next day, the implicated KMT members withdrew their support of the KMT leadership and asked a number of fellow KMT members to do the same. They maintained that the money in question constituted legitimate donations and that the party should have supported them.

Having an even bigger impact on the election at this juncture than these events, a Hong Kong paper reported that the People’s Republic of China would hold military exercises just before the election on December 2nd, with the intent of influencing the election. This caused the Taiwan stock market to drop 54.44 points (1.18 percent of its value) and the NT dollar to fall due to a rush to

buy U.S. dollars.50 Two days later, state television in China showed army, air force and navy units taking part in combined exercises in nearby Fujian Province adjacent to Taiwan. A commentator said that the exercises were conducted to “safeguard the nation’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” a comment viewed as aimed squarely at Taiwan. Almost everyone in Taiwan saw the move as aimed at hurting pro-independence candidates in the election, which to Beijing included the KMT mainstream.51

Although Beijing’s actions were viewed in Taiwan as possibly having an impact, opinion polls seemed to indicate this would not be the case. A poll released on November 24th indicated that 57 percent of the population favored maintaining the status quo on the national identity issue, while only 15 percent favored unification and only 14 percent favored independence. Also, 32 percent perceived President Lee as supporting the status quo, 27 percent saw him as promoting unification, and 20 percent said he was working for independence. According to the same poll, the KMT was seen as most likely to preserve the status quo, followed by the NP and the DPP.52

In response to the confrontation in Kaohsiung between the DPP and the NP, DPP leaders condemned the violence while promising to punish their own members that had participated in the clash.53 But soon after this, DPP supporters battled Kaohsiung police, whom they said were protecting New Party candidate Ju Guangjeng (“Taiwan’s Rambo” who was formerly a member of the DPP).54 Later, DPP spokespersons said that Ju’s bodyguards were illegally carrying guns.55

On November 27, midway through the campaign, Chen Li-an officially registered as a presidential candidate. Chen announced his intention to run in August and renounced his membership in the KMT. Chen, the son of former Vice-President Chen Cheng and a member of the KMT for 42 years, had served as Secretary-General of the Central Committee for four years, Minister of Economic Af-

fairs for two years, Minister of Defense for three years and President of the Control Yuan for two years. Chen, a devout Buddhist, was admired by many Buddhists and others as well for his religious views and his attitude on good and clean government.\textsuperscript{56} His departure from the KMT was a shock to the party at that time and drew attention to the problem of money politics and corruption; his decision to run in the March 1996 election re-focused public attention on these issues.

The next day, Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun registered to run as a team as presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Their campaign slogan was: "Running the Country with Trust and Integrity; Protect Taiwan and its People." Lin, formerly President of the Judicial Yuan, had held the posts of Taipei Mayor, Governor of Taiwan, Minister of Interior and Vice Premier. Some have called him the most charismatic of Taiwanese politicians. Hau became a hero in the defense of Quemoy in 1958 and was Chief of the General Staff from 1981 to 1989, after which he served as Minister of Defense. From 1990 to 1993, Hau was Premier. In response to the announcement, some KMT members carried white flags and called the two "traitors who should be expelled from the KMT."\textsuperscript{57}

The two announcements clearly portended difficulties for the KMT, hurt the party's image and no doubt weakened its appeal to some blocs of voters. Especially noticeable was the impact on the military vote. In a subsequent KMT Central Standing Committee meeting, resolutions were passed to strengthen services for retired military personnel, while Taiwan Governor James Soong, Kaohsiung Mayor Wu Den-yih, and John Chang, Chairman of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, all made efforts on behalf of the party to win back support of the military community.\textsuperscript{58} Lin and Hau announcing their candidacies also badly hurt KMT unity. On November 28, approximately 100 KMT members in Taichung protested Lin and Hau campaigning for New Party candidates and threatened to quit the party if the two were not punished.\textsuperscript{59}

KMT's Central Committee called on Lin and Hau to "restrain themselves."  

Meanwhile, the New Party held a music concert that was attended by 15,000 people, in what appeared to be a very successful effort to attract young people to the party. Approximately 900 KMT members held a parade at nearly the same time. Both were the largest campaign rallies to date, but by comparison the KMT's parade looked small.

On November 28, another vote-buying scandal broke, this time implicating KMT candidate Chan Yu-jen. The New Party seized this opportunity to attack the KMT for vote-buying and to demand more and better efforts to catch and prosecute perpetrators. One New Party candidate at a news conference produced what was said to be evidence of KMT vote-buying. Subsequently, Minister of Justice Ma Ying-jeou, a well-known and respected KMT member, warned against vote-buying and called for a life ban from politics for those convicted. This may have sent a positive signal and convinced some that government and KMT leaders were sincere about stamping out the practice; but clearly damage had been done. The KMT subsequently adopted a different stance when top party leaders accused the prosecutor's office in Taichung of "targeting" KMT candidates. Making this tack less credible, however, presidential candidate Chen Li-an declared publicly that the KMT's leadership "overlooked and even promoted buying votes to win elections."

In still another challenge to the KMT, former Minister of Communications and the first popular mayor of Taipei, Henry Kao, announced he was running for the presidency, saying that the KMT was "in a mess" and that he could run a better administration than President Lee. He predicted that he, as an independent, could "coordinate differences" in a "hung Legislative Yuan" better than Lee. Though Kao, at 82, did not appear to present a serious challenge to Lee, his criticism of the KMT, on top of Lin and Hau an-

nouncing their candidacies and a substantial amount of bad publicity, had to hurt the KMT at a critical time.

Meanwhile, Beijing appeared to escalate its threats against Taiwan once again. A Hong Kong paper reported, in an item which was carried in Taiwan newspapers as a front page story, that China had broadened the conditions that would prompt it to attack Taiwan to include “covert independence moves” and “deliberate efforts to delay reunification talks.” The paper said that Beijing regarded the previous terms as “too narrow” since they did not include the possibility that President Lee would pursue an undeclared independence policy.68

Just two days before the election, Hau Pei- tsun, in an interview on cable television, said the KMT needed to experience being an opposition party “if it is to learn administrative impartiality.” He called on President Lee to resign as Chairman of the KMT because of “rampant corruption and money politics in Taiwan.”69 In response, KMT delegates in the National Assembly and in the Taipei and Kaohsiung city councils called on the Party to expel Lin and Hau.70 Supporters and opponents of Lin and Hau subsequently clashed outside a party Central Standing Committee meeting, though the event did not result in any violence.71 Lin and Hau were later “ousted” from the party by the way of “membership cancellation,” a lesser degree of punishment than “expulsion.”

During the last two days of the campaign, the People’s Republic of China stepped up its pressure. Two days before the election, Beijing announced that it would hold another military exercise, its largest ever, during the run-up to the March presidential election and that the exercises would include large-scale attacks and bombing runs. People’s Liberation Army spokespersons further noted that they had found many blind spots in Taiwan’s radar network during earlier drills. Beijing simultaneously announced that it would not reopen talks with Taipei. This news sent the already troubled Taiwan stock market down 65.81 points, or 1.38 percent of its value.72 The next day a Hong Kong newspaper reported that China

had drawn up a strategy for capturing Taiwan "should its president refuse to make major concessions." Though many discounted the story or felt it was merely an attempt by Chinese leaders in Beijing to influence the December election, it nevertheless got the attention of people in Taiwan.

Meanwhile, in the final days of the campaign, the government continued its crackdown on vote-buying, which, according to observers, was dampening the KMT's campaign. These efforts were continued, and the Minister of Justice reported that no KMT officials had pressured him to slow down the campaign. An opinion survey taken at that time indicated that 43 percent of voters would not sell their votes, 20 percent would accept money but vote for another candidate, and 15 percent said they would report any attempt at vote-buying.

In the last days of the campaign, there were incidents of grandstanding or what some called acts of desperation. Stella Chen of the Democratic Progressive Party beat a toy figure of Premier Lien Chan with a hammer at a campaign rally. Labor Party supporters burned American flags and threw eggs at an effigy of Uncle Sam outside the American Institute in Taiwan offices, saying that the United States had split Taiwan from China. Hsu Hsiao-tan, the well-known stripper who ran unsuccessfully in two previous campaigns (but nearly won in 1992), ran again on the Labor Party ticket and attracted audiences with her antics and criticism of the system and the KMT.

As in previous campaigns, some candidates were under indictment while running for office and some even asked voters to support them so they would not have to go to jail (since holding office is a form of protection against arrest or incarceration for essentially all crimes). The number of such candidates was up because of the fact that four-fifths of Taiwan Provincial Assembly deputies and a high percentage of county and city officeholders had been indicted for vote-buying in recent months, and a sizeable number of these

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77. The police must get permission from the Legislative Yuan before arresting one of its members. Since permission is seldom given, this means a delay during the individual's tenure in office from being arrested.
officials ran in the December election. For the first time, several candidates openly admitted "Taiwan mafia" connections and some even claimed to support the underworld. Candidate Tsai Kung-lin, the ex-head of the Four Seas Gang (which claims 10,000 members in Taiwan, Hong Kong, China and Japan), told voters that gangs in Taiwan have no representation and are "often bullied."79

V. ELECTION RESULTS

As for the parties, the winners and losers in the December election were not absolutely clear-cut; however, most observers, all of Taiwan's newspapers, and a majority of the foreign reporters stationed in Taiwan called it a victory for the New Party with less-than-hoped-for results for the KMT and the DPP. Assessing the election results presents a clearer picture.

The ruling Nationalist Party won 67 of the 128 elected seats, plus 15 at-large seats and 3 seats representing Overseas Chinese. This gave the KMT a total of 85 seats or 51.5 percent of the delegates to the Legislative Yuan. This constituted a bare majority. KMT leaders, including President Lee Teng-hui, proclaimed a KMT victory. This was accurate in one important sense; voters and observers alike, more than anything else during the weeks leading up to the election, were concerned about whether any party would win a majority and, if not, what kind of coalition would rule the nation. In addition, they worried about whether there would be political stability without a one-party majority.

The KMT also performed well considering the political and economic situation in Taiwan leading up to the election. And, one could certainly say that the KMT was more successful than ruling parties in other democratic nations which, at a time of vast global change, have been voted out of office over the last several years. Nationalist Party leaders also pointed to specific important victories for the ruling party; for example, Vincent Siew won in Chiayi, where the DPP had been in control, and handily defeated a well-known DPP candidate, Trong Chai. KMT Secretary General Hsu Shui-teh said after the election that he was pleased with the outcome.80 He pointed out that the voters had rejected the idea of "no

79. Ibid.
majority for any party" and that the people had supported the
KMT's "stable leadership."^81

From a number of other perspectives, however, the KMT did
not perform so well. In fact, many called the election another defeat
or setback for the ruling Nationalist Party. Going into the election,
the KMT had 92 seats; thus, it suffered a net loss of seven seats. Its
percentage of the popular vote fell to 46 percent, compared to over
53 percent which it had received in 1992. In fact, this was the first
time the KMT's popular vote had fallen below 50 percent in a ma-
jor election. This could hardly be seen as evidence for a KMT vic-
tory. As critics were quick to point out, one or two more per-
formances like this one, and the KMT would become a minor
party in the Legislative Yuan.

Moreover, looking at the popular vote figure, it was clear that
the KMT would not have won a majority of seats had it not been
for the over-representation of the Aborigines (to give them special
representation) and the voters of the Offshore Islands (because of
the disparity in the size of voting districts). In addition, the KMT's
ability to use money and superior organizational skills enabled it to
win votes in rural districts, giving it a clear, but some say unfair,
advantage. Hence, some have said that the claim that the KMT
"won a majority" was spurious, or true only because of inequities in
the system.^82

Also, the KMT generally performed poorly in Taipei and in
other big cities, and in major counties for that matter, losing 20 to
30 percent of its support in Taiwan's two metropolitan cities.83 Of
the nine seats in Taipei City North and Taipei City South, the KMT
won only two in each, while its candidates failed to rank among the
top three vote-getters in either district. The KMT even lost to the
DPP in the popular vote column for Taipei, and was almost bested
by the two-year-old New Party.84 KMT candidates did not score the
highest number of votes in either the Kaohsiung City, Taichung
City, or Tainan City districts. In a large number of county races,

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81. "Coverage of 2 Dec Legislative Yuan Elections: Election Results," Foreign
Broadcast Information Service—China (FBIS), December 4, 1995, p. 51.

82. The Aborigines districts are very small in terms of the number of voters, so they
are dramatically over-represented. The KMT won in all Aborigine districts. The same
may be said of Quemoy and Matsu.

83. Leslie Chang, "Taiwan Election Deals a Blow to Kuomintang," Asian Wall

84. "KMT 'Setback' Suffered," Foreign Broadcast Information Service—China
(FBIS), December 4, 1995, p. 51. The DPP won 35.95 percent of the popular vote in
Taipei, the KMT won 30.71 percent, and the New Party won 28.62 percent.
KMT candidates similarly failed to win the largest number of votes. In fact, the KMT would have failed to win big anywhere had it not persuaded or pressured some of its "big guns" (i.e., noted central government figures such as Vincent Siew) to run.

Even the KMT's "majority," in the sense of being able to pass legislation, is questionable. Though it has two more seats than the 83 needed to rule, many of its representatives have been absent during votes in recent sessions. Moreover, party discipline has been weak, causing some KMT legislators to break ranks on a number of bills. Thus, one might predict that the KMT will have to get votes from one of the other parties or independents to pass some bills. In short, there will be coalition politics in some form at times, or on certain issues at least, in the next Legislative Yuan session.

With 33 percent of the popular vote, the Democratic Progressive Party won 41 of the elected seats, plus 11 at-large seats and two seats representing the Overseas Chinese for a total of 54 seats, or 32.9 percent of the chamber. This was up from the previous election. It held 50 seats in the Legislative Yuan before the election. Since this election increased the DPP's representation by 4 seats, the DPP could say that it won the election. DPP Chairman Shih Ming-teh said that the DPP demonstrated that it is "capable of being the ruling party" and "could provide modern, democratic and responsible leadership." He also noted that his party was unified, in contrast to the fractionalized KMT.

However, there were second opinions about the DPP's "win." Juxtaposed beside what party leaders said in 1989 after their Legislative Yuan election "victory" (that they would win if all of the seats were picked by the electorate) and what they said following the 1992 election (when some said they expected to be in power in 3 or 4 years), the DPP did not do well. It made only a small gain in this election. Certainly few would predict that the DPP will soon become the ruling party judging from its performance in this election. In addition, in what was formerly a two-party system, or an evolving two-party system, the DPP could convincingly say that it would eventually be in power; it can no longer say that. Its best hope now seems to be to rule by coalition; alternatively, much more time and different conditions will be needed before it can rule the country.

Even more telling is the fact that a number of the DPP's most well-known candidates went down in defeat. Former Party Chair-

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man Chiang Peng-chien lost, incumbent Trong Chai was defeated by Vincent Siew, and incumbent Stella Chen, a well-known participant in Legislative Yuan brawls who on one occasion threatened Premier Lien Chan with a baseball bat, was defeated. One observer noted that DPP activists that had gained a reputation in 1979 during the “Kaohsiung Incident” were all gone; Chiang and Chen were part of this group, in addition to Yao Chia-wen who also lost. In short, a generation has passed. That the DPP’s self-victimization no longer worked was also the conventional wisdom.\(^{87}\) The Formosa faction, the DPP moderates on the independence issue who advocate self-determination rather than independence, performed well.\(^{88}\) The New Tide faction (the more radical DPP members on the issue of Taiwan independence) and the \textit{Fu Li Kuo} (welfare state) faction, in contrast, did poorly in returning their incumbents. These results suggest that the voting base of the DPP has become more moderate. This may mean that the DPP must redefine itself.

The DPP also failed to seriously challenge the KMT in rural Taiwan. It likewise did not, perhaps could not, exploit ethnic voting very well, certainly not any better than in the past, and probably less so. It made a special effort to win votes on Quemoy and Matsu by sending party leaders there and making concessions on issues important to voters there but failed miserably: It won only 2.8 percent of the vote on Quemoy and 1.1 percent on Matsu (whereas the New Party, also making a bid for the first time, got 43 percent of the popular vote).

The New Party won 16 seats in the district elections, four in the proportional representation category and one representing Overseas Chinese, for a total of 21 seats. With only seven before the election, the NP gained 14 seats, a tripling of its representation. This, by almost any account and according to nearly all observers, was a major victory. New Party candidates won 12.8 percent of the seats with 13 percent of the popular vote. A New Party spokesperson said the party would have been happy with 15 or 16 seats and was “ecstatic” with 21.\(^{89}\) Another New Party representative noted that the party is now a national party.

The New Party performed especially well from two other perspectives. First, a political party only two years old and with little

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money or organization became a party to reckon with while it transformed what appeared to be a two-party system into a three-party system. Second, the New Party with gains down-island (meaning south of Taipei) is no longer regarded as a regional party (of the Taipei area) and is no longer seen as a party representing the 15 percent Mainlander Chinese population, as was the case in the past.

The New Party also won big in a number of districts: Its candidates got the largest number of votes in Taipei City South and in Taichung City, and received the second largest vote count in both Taipei City North and Kaohsiung City North. Also, it did well in appealing to female voters: Two of the top vote-getters in the election were female New Party candidates.

Explaining why the New Party did so well and, conversely, why the other two parties did not, is not easy. In fact, there is controversy over whether certain circumstances or issues mattered or not and, if so, how much.

The first issue is Beijing’s influence on the voter. Clearly the People’s Republic of China sought to influence the election. Their leaders and press unabashedly and, at times, viciously attacked those who advocated independence. Beijing flexed its muscle to intimidate Taiwan, both its government and its population, and suggested what dire steps China might take if Taipei continued to flirt with independence. This was aimed at both the DPP and the KMT (or at least the KMT mainstream) and Lee Teng-hui personally. A number of observers, however, denied that Beijing had much, if any, influence on the election.90 Others opined that the “Chinese factor” was important and did influence the electorate.91

DPP and KMT officials generally played down Beijing’s influence on the electorate. This, however, is natural since they would not want to admit to being intimidated or having to change their policies in line with Beijing’s wishes and would certainly not want to be accused of this in the future. Also, it would seem that they would also be predicting harder times in coming elections, notably in the March 1996 presidential election, if they admitted to the impact of China’s actions on the voter. Even New Party officials de-

90. See, for example, Julian Baum, “Politics Is Local,” supra note 87, pp. 14–15. Baum cites a number of scholars in Taiwan that agree with his view. Also, see Frank Ching, “China Impact on Taiwan Election,” Far Eastern Economic Review, November 9, 1995, p. 59. Ching predicts, in fact, before the election that Beijing was creating a backlash with its intimidation.

clined to say that Beijing had been a factor, probably because they wanted to paint the other parties as corrupt, and such an admission would have weakened that argument. Furthermore, the NP had to be apprehensive about what Beijing might do in the future, and proclaiming such a view would make it appear that the party was under China’s control or at least beholden to it.

However, it is hard to imagine that Beijing did not have an impact on the voter, either positive (i.e., causing the voter to at least eschew candidates and parties supporting independence and possibly increasing voter support for the New Party), or negative (i.e., increasing voting for those supporting independence). During the campaign, DPP candidates played down the independence issue, suggesting that they perceived that Beijing had intimidated the electorate so that voter support for Taiwan independence had declined. One certainly would not expect them to admit that they were intimidated or that Beijing had influenced them to alter their platform, but there seems to be no other explanation. Nevertheless, the vote tally definitely suggested a positive Beijing influence in that the DPP (which was still identified with the pro-independence movement) was upstaged by the New Party.

On the other hand, it is difficult to say how much this factor helped the New Party, weakened the appeals of the other two parties, or even to what extent it influenced the election overall. It seems reasonable that Beijing, at minimum, had at least a significant indirect impact on the election results; that is, its actions caused the stock market and the housing market to fall and emigration applications to increase, all of which affected voters. These factors patently caused uncertainty, and thus it is hardly possible they did not have some impact on the way voters thought.

The New Party, however, seemed to find considerable success in painting the KMT, and the DPP to a lesser degree, as parties of vote-buying and corruption, and the DPP as a party of radicals which engaged in ethnic politics and violence. New Party candidates also managed quite well to portray the KMT as having ties with the underworld and being influenced by organized crime. Its charges against the KMT were substantiated by DPP charges, while its candidates could cite evidence that piled up during the months before the election. Similarly, the KMT helped give credibility to New Party criticism of the DPP. Contrarily, attacks on the New Party as

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92. Kao Hui-yu, who was elected on the New Party ticket in Taipei, for example, stated that China had little impact. See Baum, “Politics Is Local,” supra note 87, p. 14.
a party of ultra-conservative, hard-liner Mainland Chinese did not stick very well. If the New Party was a “bunch of conservatives,” meaning not being in touch or not progressive, the party’s platform of including Taiwan in a Pacific Rim economic bloc or in a Greater China, a position which seemed to be much more forward looking than the views of the other two parties, belied this charge. Furthermore, the New Party made very successful appeals to younger people and to intellectuals. Also, by supporting the independent ticket of the Taiwanese Lin Yang-kang and the mainlander Hau Pei-tsun, who were running for president and vice-president respectively, the New Party demonstrated that it was not an exclusive, mainland party. Neither the KMT nor the DPP had a mixed ticket. All of these factors may well have been more important than Beijing’s influence on the election results.

Another factor explaining the performance of the three parties was the serious split in the KMT. This had been apparent for months and did not heal before the election. In fact, it got worse. Many in the ruling party opposed President Lee’s alleged flirting with independence and what they called his dictatorial, closed-minded style. Clearly, the problem of antagonistic mainstream and non-mainstream factions in the KMT had not been resolved with the creation of the New Party from the non-mainstream faction, since many in that faction had remained in the KMT.

The upcoming presidential campaign was also a major factor influencing this election. It amplified the split in the KMT and brought it squarely into Legislative Yuan election politicking. This was especially apparent when presidential candidates registered or announced their candidacies and criticized President Lee, which was natural and legitimate since they were going to compete against him. Opposing candidates, in fact, were quite unabashed in their condemnations of the President, and this affected KMT mainstream candidates running for office. This was important since President Lee had helped a sizeable number of KMT candidates win seats in previous elections but was less effective in doing so in this election. The criticism of Lee also affected party discipline and caused a decline of morale in the KMT. Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun, in particular, hurt the KMT by assailing President Lee while campaigning for New Party candidates. Both are talented, popular (among certain groups particularly) and charismatic politicians seemingly with a large and committed following. Chen Li-an, who is viewed by many as a devout Buddhist and a very honest politician and who also has a sizeable following, no doubt also damaged the
KMT’s reputation and hurt its candidates running for seats in the Legislative Yuan when he criticized President Lee and the KMT. The totality of the KMT’s problems and the variety of sources of criticism no doubt had a strong cumulative impact. The fact that the KMT was overall psychologically “down” was reflected in the fact that many of its candidates did not carry party flags or insignia during the campaign and, in some cases, did not mention their party affiliation.

The fact the New Party was indeed new, only two years old, may have helped its candidates. It was not tainted with money politics; in fact, most voters were cognizant of the fact the New Party had little money. It was not seen as corrupt or “in bed” with criminal elements: it had managed well to keep clear of such charges. Nor was it viewed by the public as a party of radicals who taunted Beijing, challenging it to invade the island. These things being so, the New Party was obviously the beneficiary of voters casting negative votes.

The New Party may also have gotten what political scientists call the “protest vote” (those who oppose the government and ruling party for whatever reasons) which had previously gone to the DPP. The DPP, to some extent, was now viewed as a party of insiders since its members had, for some time, occupied a number of important positions in government. Finally, KMT-DPP cooperation or collaboration was on the minds of some; the New Party, along with many in the media, had portrayed President Lee as agreeing with the DPP on the issue of independence and there had been talk of a KMT-DPP coalition in the event that the KMT did not win a majority.

Finally, the New Party planned its campaign and organized its supporters well in terms of vote distribution among NP candidates. NP supporters were urged to vote for NP candidates assigned to them according to their national identification numbers or birth dates instead of voting for individual NP candidates themselves. This strategy successfully distributed votes evenly among the NP candidates, thus avoiding the problem of certain popular NP candidates taking away votes from other, less-favored NP candidates. Undoubtedly, this strategy helped the NP.

The New Party may also have had some edge because of the liberalization of the media and the fact that cable television, talk shows and political debates of a new and different kind influenced voters much more than in previous elections; the older kinds of
political advertising which both the KMT and the DPP used were less effective.

Other parties and independent candidates meanwhile fared poorly. The Labor Party fielded two candidates who both lost. Its radical leftist policies did not appeal to labor and its pro-Beijing stance, which made the New Party look moderate by comparison, did not help either. Other minor parties suffered from both out-of-the-mainstream views and an inability to get attention and attract voters. Independents and others, including party candidates that were not nominated, won only 4 seats (2.4 percent of the chamber) compared to 15 in the 1992 election, and less than 8 percent of the popular vote as compared to almost 16 percent in 1992. Independents and minor parties performed poorly for a variety of reasons, but one cause seemed to stand out—in the past they were an alternative to the KMT and the DPP, but this time the New Party assumed that role.

The voter turnout was 67.56 percent, 4.38 percent below the 1992 election. The typical or usual variances were present: Quemoy and Matsu with 72.32 percent of the electorate voting and Kaohsiung with a 71.76 percent turnout, ranking much above the average, and Taipei, with 61.67 percent, falling below the average.\(^93\)

Among the incumbents who ran, 22 were not reelected: 11 were DPP delegates, and the rest were KMT. Among the 128 district election winners, 48 were new; of the total 164 delegates, 68 (one-third of the total), were new. This was quite a high turnover rate. The percent of "new blood" was the highest in the big cities and the metropolitan counties. In Taipei, it was especially high. Among the 18 representatives elected in Taipei city, 10 (the highest percentage of any district) were new.\(^94\)

In terms of the percentage of candidates winning among those nominated by the various parties, the KMT did the best with a victory rate of 63.4 percent. The DPP was second with a success rate of 57.4 percent. Part of the explanation is that both parties sought to support fewer candidates and to distribute votes better. The NP was third with a 44.4 percent win. It calculated it needed more candidates in order to win more seats. Party candidates without their


\(^94\) Yang Sheng-ju, "22 Incumbents Lost; 11 DPP," Tzu-yu Shih-pao (Liberty Times), December 3, 1995, p. 3.
parties' nominations, along with independents and others, performed very poorly as a group, with only a 3 percent win ratio.\textsuperscript{95}

Of the new members of the Legislative Yuan, 141 are male, 23 (14.02 percent) are female. 32 have Ph.D. degrees, 41 have master's degrees, 78 are college or vocational school graduates and, 11 are high school graduates. Thus, 44.51 percent of the winners have graduate degrees, and 92.07 percent are college graduates or the equivalent thereof. In terms of age, 13.41 percent are 30–39, 47.56 percent are 40–49, 32.32 percent are 50–59, and 6.71 percent are 60 or over. There are no new members under the age of 30. The average age of the winning candidates was 47.35.\textsuperscript{96}

**VI. CONCLUSION**

Nearly every observer of this election, including President Lee and other top KMT leaders along with stalwarts of the other parties, judged this election to be an important contribution to the process of democratization in Taiwan. In fact, some said this election offers "final" proof that Taiwan is a democracy.

In a sense, this election was the most democratic election in Taiwan to date in that it was the first in which there was a real challenge to the ruling party. During the campaign, most pundits as well as the electorate felt that the KMT might lose its majority in the most important elected body of government. There was sober talk about coalition building and coalition rule in the next session of the Legislative Yuan, with the KMT having to get support from either the DPP or the NP, at least temporarily or on certain issues. There was even mention of cooperation between the DPP and the NP, making the KMT a party out of power. None of this had ever been heard of before.

The consensus was that the New Party "won" the election in terms of the vote tally. Beijing seemed to help, either directly or indirectly. The NP also "won" on the issues of vote-buying, corruption, criminal activities and influence in politics and good government. It was advantaged by an effective campaign strategy and by the nature of the electoral system. Also auspicious for the New Party were events that happened during the months leading up to the campaign and during the campaign itself. Particularly important

\textsuperscript{95} See data chart in \textit{Tzu-yu Shih-pao} (Liberty Times), December 3, 1995, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid. Also, see data chart in \textit{Tzu-yu Shih-pao} (Liberty Times), December 3, 1995, p. 4.
were problems within the ruling party; issues and personalities split the KMT, diverted its attention, and sapped its morale.

Will these factors persist to help the New Party in the next election? That is difficult to say. There is already talk of changing the electoral system. The multi-member, single-vote system is an unusual one. It was copied from Japan, but it has since been supplanted there by another system, because this system was found wanting. Furthermore, the KMT will not likely be so fractionalized in the future, and events will probably not be so unfavorable for it leading up to future elections.

However, other factors may help the New Party in the next election. For example, the Beijing factor may remain. Also the New Party was supported by intellectuals and the middle class which suggests a good future for the Party. The same may be said about its image regarding good government, unless, of course, it succumbs to corrupt practices itself. The same may be said of the New Party breaking the “regional party” image, particularly if it does well outside of Taipei in future elections. Global trends are also likely to continue to favor the New Party. Taiwan is part of a regional Pacific Rim bloc (in a world of economic blocs) which includes the People’s Republic of China. The DPP and, to a lesser extent, the KMT advocate reducing ties with China. This does not seem to fit patterns of global change and may indeed not be possible. Ties with the United States will inevitably be of relatively less importance to Taiwan in the future. America is a declining power in Asia. Might links with Japan become more meaningful in the future? Probably not as much as links with China. Links with Japan also seem less promising if one believes the world is evolving in the direction of cultural or ethnic groupings or blocs. Better relations with Japan would certainly seem to contradict the idea of a “Greater China” which seems to be a very potent force now.

According to most commentators, the KMT “lost” the election. In the sense of not getting as many seats as in the previous election, this is certainly true. And this is after a setback in the last Legislative Yuan election and the one before—three straight defeats! Moreover, the KMT must now think about coalitions. At a minimum, it will have to seek support, i.e., votes from members of one of the other parties, on some vital issues of legislation in the next three years. This, of course, assumes that the KMT cannot maintain good party discipline, but this is a reasonable view given the recent past.
However, the KMT did maintain a majority of seats in the Legislative Yuan. Many had predicted it would not. It remained in power at a time when ruling parties all over the world have been voted out of office. It also lost only marginally at a time when the party had been experiencing difficult times and was badly split. In short, it did not lose big even though events seemed to dictate that it should. The KMT may be said to have stayed the course “against all odds.”

KMT officials’ opinions about the election included anticipations that things will be better in the next election, and lamentations that they cannot get worse. The KMT was clearly in a “down” phase prior to and during this election; it will likely be able to cure that. The KMT lost much of the military vote; it can win that back. With the government taking a tough line on corruption, KMT candidates will run cleaner campaigns in the future. They have learned a lesson. The KMT is clearly the moderate party and the majority of voters are moderate. Finally, the NP may not be able to further bridge the “ethnic gap.”

Many said the DPP did not perform well at the polls and, therefore, also “lost” the election. Certainly it did not live up to expectations or predictions over the last six years—including its own rosy predictions. Many, in fact most, of its leaders and well-known candidates were defeated. Some say that the voters had seen the DPP in power and did not like what they saw. Others labelled the DPP as socialist and isolationist and thus out of touch or behind the times. Some said the DPP had become corrupt and dependent upon money to win. Many felt its radical stance on independence was needlessly provocative and courted trouble, thereby being destabilizing if not dangerous. Finally, the DPP can no longer say that Taiwan’s is a two-party political system or that the DPP is the opposition and consequently, it will be in power in the future if the country continues to democratize.

Yet the DPP gained seats, giving it more influence in the new Legislative Yuan that convened in February 1996. It is closer to someday being the ruling party. Furthermore, in view of the fact that the KMT (President Lee and the mainstream faction at least) saw their challenge on the left, meaning the DPP, and acted to co-opt DPP positions and views, one can say that the DPP “won” the election.

Did money politics, vote-buying, links with the criminal underworld, antics, and such behavior mar the election? Hardly, in the view of this writer, at least. Vote-buying was less frequent than in
previous elections. Several wealthy "golden ox" incumbents did not run, apparently thinking that they could not win. Few new ones joined the campaign, unlike previous elections where many very wealthy candidates were seen as having "bought" Legislative Yuan seats. Money and the influence of money to some degree are present in all democratic elections and can hardly be eliminated from Taiwan politics. Taiwan has gotten rich faster than other nations and it seems corruption is much worse than in the past. But, in many ways, this is only a perception. Politicians did indeed spend a lot of money campaigning, more per seat than in many Western countries. But this does not necessarily indicate dishonesty or that those who won office will be corrupt. Many spent large sums of money for what they considered a good cause and nothing more.

The KMT benefits from having more money than the other parties. But so do many parties in Western democracies. It has been argued that the KMT is also advantaged by a number of other factors, including control of the media and labor. This claim is not true about any party in any Western democracy. For example, in the United States, the Republican Party has more money, but the Democratic Party has more influence over the media and has the labor vote. The KMT may have had too many advantages in the past, but this is not true now. The print media are not controlled by the KMT. One of Taiwan's two biggest papers, the Lien-ho Pao (United Daily News), is clearly against and hostile toward President Lee. The other, the Chung-kuo Shih-pao (China Times), is generally neutral. The DPP controls one or two newspapers. New television stations and certainly underground TV don't follow the KMT line. Television, in any case, is less of an influence politically in Taiwan than in most Western democracies. Radio talk shows and political forums of other kinds have recently reflected the increasingly plural nature of Taiwan's society and politics.

Does Taiwan now have a three-party system? As far as the December election is concerned, it looks like it, even though a two-party system seemed to have evolved and taken root after the last Legislative Yuan election in 1992. But, that was then. In other words, it is too early to say. It looks like Taiwan has a three-party system now; yet, most intellectuals, and likely most political leaders in theory at least, favor a two-party system. Perhaps the New Party will return to the KMT fold. Perhaps it will grow very fast resulting in a KMT-DPP alliance. Perhaps the KMT will split, with one part forming a coalition with the DPP, and the other joining with the NP. Alternatively, perhaps both the DPP and NP will fail to grow,
the KMT will recover, and a one-party dominant system will result. Japan had this kind of system for many years. The U.S. has had periods where one party was in control. Many in Taiwan are nostalgic about the past when there was more stability.

Did the election foretell, or will it influence, the March presidential election? It no doubt will have some impact. President Lee’s chances were no doubt influenced negatively by the KMT “loss,” or perceived loss, in this election. His popularity, according to one poll at least, hit a record low following the election. Incumbents did poorly, suggesting that the public is impatient and seeks change, both of which are not auspicious for President Lee. But the effect of these factors may be little more than marginal. Few predict President Lee will lose in March because of what happened in this election. Furthermore, many of Lee’s favorites won (in fact, faring better than in 1992). There was considerable concern among the electorate about stability and certainly Lee is in most respects, save relations with Beijing, seen as a moderate, stabilizing force. Finally, there is little indication as to whether he has lost his influence, and whether his popularity will not rebound or even fall further.

Does this mean that the new Legislative Yuan, and consequently the government in general, will be more friendly toward Beijing? Although this is likely, much more depends upon Beijing’s attitude. If Beijing continues to try, in the aggressive fashion it has used recently, to influence Taiwan politics, there will be little point in Taiwan trying to be nice. Most voters understand this. Counterpointwise, Beijing may change its policy toward Taiwan. Its hostility seems in large measure to be the product of a succession crisis.

How does this election look in the context of recent elections in Taiwan? The KMT losing ground in the previous two Legislative Yuan elections would seem to indicate a permanent decline and a likely loss of its majority in the election three years hence. However, factoring in the KMT’s “win” in the 1991 National Assembly election and the 1994 gubernatorial and metropolitan mayoral races, it appears that election victories are more cyclical.

What about professionalism in politics? It did not seem to matter much in this election. Yet, looking at either past elections or elections in other countries, it is important. What about ethnic voting? It was not so much a factor in this election. Does that mean it

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is diminishing in importance and that it may not be a factor in future elections? Again the experience of other countries suggests otherwise.

Did the New Party win a significant amount of what might be called the protest vote? And did that come at the expense of the DPP? It seemed so. But the protest vote was different in this election than in previous elections; it was more about money politics and failed government than simply a vote for democracy or the opposition. Is crime a permanent campaign issue? Probably, but it is difficult to say who benefits from this. Both the DPP and the NP were critical of the KMT’s handling of crime. Yet the KMT is seen as a party which can best foster social stability. What about the economy? The same may be said about the KMT in this regard, although on both issues the New Party made some inroads. Did a low voter turnout hurt the KMT as some KMT leaders contended? Perhaps. But it is difficult to argue that this was crucial in terms of the election results.

Is the KMT now a party of rural Taiwan? It lost quite significantly in terms of voter support in Taipei and Kaohsiung, Taiwan’s two metropolitan cities, and it has been losing support in the cities for some time. Its conservative views are more appealing in the rural areas, and its professional management of campaigns works better there. If this is so, the KMT will increasingly become a Taiwanese party and will compete more with the DPP than with the NP.

Overall, however, Taiwan politics seem quite fluid, capricious, and evolving. Future elections, thus, will be difficult to predict or analyze. Yet the bottom line seems to be this: Taiwan’s democracy seems to be firmly planted and change can proceed on a steady course.
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