CONVERGENCE AND THE FUTURE
OF REUNIFICATION BETWEEN
MAINLAND CHINA AND TAIWAN:
A DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW
Wen-Hui Tsai
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CONVERGENCE AND THE FUTURE OF REUNIFICATION BETWEEN MAINLAND CHINA AND TAIWAN: A DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW*

Wen-hui Tsai**

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  earlier draft.

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  versity-Purdue University at Fort Wayne.
I. CHINA SEPARATED

China is one of the few great civilizations that has been ruled continually by a centralized government. Yet, throughout China’s long history, there were times when China was separated and divided. Long periods of diversions were found in Chinese history, notably the Three Kingdoms period, the Five Dynasties and Ten Nations period, and the period at the end of the Sung Dynasty. Even great dynasties like the Han, Tang, Ming and Ch’ing all experienced internal division at one time or another during their respective period. The Republican revolution in 1911 and the subsequent establishment of the Republic of China in 1912 were unable to unite all China as well; there were periods of conflicts between South and North, regional fights among numerous warlords, and the civil war between the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists.¹

A divided China still exists today. The victory of the Chinese Communists on the mainland and the retreat of the Nationalists to the island of Taiwan in 1949 has in reality created two coexistent political governments ever since: the People’s Republic of China (PRC hereafter) on the mainland and the Republic of China (ROC hereafter) on the island of Taiwan. These two Chinas are different in many significant ways. Economically, Taiwan and mainland China have taken different paths in their developmental strategies: a socialist approach by the PRC mainland China and a capitalist approach by the ROC on Taiwan. Politically, both the ROC on Taiwan and the PRC on the mainland have maintained their respective political administration with each claiming the sole representation of China. Culturally, Taiwan is more open to the world culture, as characterized by its active international trade and cultural exchange, while mainland China was closed to the outside world in total isolation for nearly forty years.²

The apparent consequence of the above differences between mainland China and Taiwan has kept the two sides apart since their separation in 1949. In reality, mainland China and Taiwan have been distinct political entities for the past fifty years. Military hostil-


ity and psychological warfare between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits occupied the central stage of activities until the late 1980s. However, the two sides have shown signs of conciliation in the 1990s, with the exception of a few minor incidents in the spring of 1996. As mainland China is moving toward economic modernization and rejoining the international arena, contacts with the ROC on Taiwan have increased steadily. The seed of convergence and reunification between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits has begun to take its roots and grow.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the current status quo of relationships between the PRC and Taiwan and to discuss the future of socio-economic convergence and possible reunification in the future. The essay will begin with an analysis of economic convergence that has been the center of the contacts between mainland China and Taiwan since the late 1980s. Then, people to people contacts in social and cultural exchanges between the two sides will be examined. Problems of political contact between the two sides will also be addressed. Finally, the issue of reunification between the two sides in the coming new 21st century will be discussed to explore its feasibility.

II. ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE

The most impressive development between mainland China and Taiwan since the mid-1980s has occurred in the sphere of economic activity. Economic convergence is currently in full bloom between the two sides.

Taiwan’s “economic miracle” is well known around the world, for Taiwan has built itself into one of the great economic powerhouses in the world since the 1970s with a steady economic growth rate, surplus in international trade, an impressive accumulation of national wealth and an enviable volume of foreign capital reserves. Taiwan has been hailed as a model for developing nations in the third world. To mainland China, Taiwan’s successful economic development strategies, surplus of capital and technological and managerial skills are invaluable to them at the time when the PRC on the Chinese mainland is in great need of capital, technol-

3. As retaliation for ROC President Teng-hui LEE’s visit to Cornell University in 1995 and an attempt to intimidate Taiwan’s first presidential election held in 1996, mainland China held a number of military exercises in East China Sea and fired several rounds of missiles into the Pacific Ocean near the island of Taiwan.
ogy, and managerial expertise for its current push toward economic reform.

A. Learning From Taiwan’s Economic Miracle

Within the PRC’s political propaganda machine, Taiwan had been portrayed as a poverty-ridden place with “people eating banana peels.” But in 1979, YU Qiuli, then Vice-Premier, admitted for the first time that Taiwan’s standard of living was “many times better than that of China.” 4 Since then, several measures have been taken to “learn from Taiwan.” They include: (1) the establishment of a Taiwan Economic Research Institute in Xiamen, to collect information on Taiwan’s economy; (2) the publication of a series of monographs on Taiwan’s management skills; and, (3) the allowance for open discussion in magazines and newspapers on the economic developmental experience in Taiwan. Economic planners in the PRC have since then openly called for adopting certain features of the Taiwan model to “learn from Taiwan.”

In his study of the economic reform in the PRC during the past decade, Professor Chu-yuan CHENG found several important features that have been adopted from the Taiwan model. 5 Cheng lists these steps taken by mainland China as evidence of its desire to “learn from the Taiwan model.” They include the establishment of “special economic zones,” the promotion of small private economies, the institution of a new farm policy, the revision of the PRC’s developmental strategies and the adoption of an “open door” policy. Let us further elaborate on the PRC’s “learning from Taiwan” efforts:

(1) The establishment of “special economic zones” and its expansion. Cheng argued that this was an imitation of Taiwan’s “export special zone” strategy. Until the adoption of this policy, the PRC’s economic planning basically was built upon a principle of self-reliance, a principle that avoids any foreign economic involvement. But, in the early part of 1980, DENG Xiaoping and his economic planners decided to establish four “special economic zones” in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantao and Amory to allow foreigners alone, or in cooperation with governmental agencies, to do business in these four zones. The goal is to encourage foreign capitalists (in-

cluding those from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and other overseas Chinese) to invest in processing goods for export purposes. In contrast to other regions in mainland China, these "special economic zones" allow foreigners to hold sole control and ownership of a business, to employ foreigners in managerial positions, to hire or dismiss workers freely and to enjoy tax exemptions. By 1984, fourteen additional "special economic zones" had been established. Since then, the program has been expanded to many parts of the interior and coastal China.

(2) The promotion of small private economies. One of the most significant features in Taiwan's economic developmental process has been the contribution from a vast number of small businesses; they are alert, flexible and very competitive in the international trade market. In 1981, the PRC's State Council made a policy decision to allow families to conduct private business activities with a limited number of hired hands. Then, in 1983, families with private business enterprises were allowed to operate jointly. In recent years, joint ventures between government-controlled business and private business have been promoted heavily. There are more than twenty million small business households in the PRC today and they are an important part of China's current economic liberalization campaign.

(3) The institution of a new farm policy. Taiwan was able to move into its early stage of industrialization partially because it practiced a mild land reform policy that allowed farmers to keep their own crops; the land-to-the-tiller program in Taiwan, on the one hand, encouraged farmers to increase crop production to increase wealth, and on the other hand, to transfer capital from the landowner to industrial investment. In mainland China, the collective farm system did not work to increase farm production. Thus, the PRC changed its policy in 1979 to allow farmers to sign a contract with their production unit for a guaranteed quota to be submitted to the production unit, while they could keep the surplus amount above the quota outlined in the contract.

(4) The revision of mainland China's developmental strategies. Since the failure of the Stalin model of developmental strategy that had favored heavy industry, the mainland Chinese planners have changed their strategies in favor of a Taiwan model which is characterized by balanced growth in agriculture, light industry and heavy industry. As a result, we have seen the growth of mainland China's production of consumer goods and electronic components, which in
turn has helped to improve the people's standard of living in mainland China.

(5) The adoption of an "open door" policy. As it is well known, the success of Taiwan's economy was built upon its open trade policy with foreign nations. Mainland China had closed its doors to all major economic powerhouses in the West. However, in recent years mainland China has made several policy revisions that encourage bilateral trade with foreign nations; active involvement in international banking and trade organizations; foreign investment in mainland China; the export of cheap labor to Hong Kong and Taiwan; and, joint ventures in tourism enterprises.

Mainland China claims that it is building a new China under socialism with a Chinese spirit. The leadership of mainland China may not want to admit to influence from Taiwan. But judging from its current economic development, its economy is without any doubt full of the "Taiwan spirit."

B. Bilateral Trade Between the Two Sides

Ever since the relaxation of the tension between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits in 1987, mainland China has become a fascinating place for the Taiwanese to visit and to do business. Mainland China's attraction to Taiwan is twofold. First, Taiwan's economic developmental strategies have proven to be successful, which gives mainland Chinese economic planners a chance to "learn from Taiwan." Second, Taiwan's tremendously large national wealth and well-trained technological and business personnel are needed by the mainland Chinese. Consequently, it is no surprise to see the rapid growth of trade and economic exchange between Taiwan and mainland China during the past ten years.

Both domestic and international developments have made trade between mainland China and Taiwan possible, if not necessary, in the 1980s and 1990s. Domestically, mainland China is opening its door to economic reform that encourages trade with outsiders, including Taiwan. In Taiwan, martial Law was abolished in 1987, which allowed "indirect" contacts with people on the mainland. Internationally, mainland China needs to re-enter the world economy to support its economic reform, and thereby create an environment conducive to international trade. The Taiwanese, on the other hand, view mainland China both as an investment target and as a market for surplus goods. As world protectionism and the ever-increasing wage demanded by laborers in Taiwan have slowed Taiwan's international trade expansion, declining international mar-
ket size and increasing production costs have made it necessary for Taiwanese businessmen to look for alternatives. The Chinese mainland is an ideal place for low-cost labor and market expansion. As a result, economic and trade relations across the Taiwan Straits have developed rapidly since mainland China initiated its economic liberalization policy in 1979.

Indirect trade between Taiwan and mainland China has been conducted through Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and other countries. Among them, Hong Kong remains the most active location for economic exchange between the two Chinas. According to statistics compiled by the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, indirect trade between Taiwan and mainland China through Hong Kong was only U.S.$46.8 million in 1978, but increased to U.S.$11.3 billion in 1996. If we take this indirect trade through other countries, the total volume definitely would be even higher. Table 1 shows indirect trade through Hong Kong between Taiwan and the PRC from 1978 to 1996.

Table 1 also shows several important points. First, the growth rates between Taiwan and mainland China have been steady in indirect trade during the period in both imports and exports, with only a brief period of interruption. Indirect trade has begun to account for a continually rising proportion of the total trade turnover for both sides. For example, according to one report, the volume of Taiwan’s indirect exports to the PRC was only 0.1 percent of its total exports in 1979, but by 1996 this figure had risen to 8.4 percent. On the other hand, the volume of imports from mainland China climbed from 0.4 percent of Taiwan’s total imports to 1.6 percent in 1996 during the same period. The situation in mainland China is similar. Mainland China’s indirect exports to Taiwan were 0.4 percent in 1979 and 1.1 percent in 1996, while indirect imports from Taiwan were 0.1 percent in 1979 and 7.0 percent in 1996.6 Growing mutual trade dependency is evident. Taiwan is now the sixth largest trade partner of mainland China, while mainland China is ranked fifth on Taiwan’s list.

Second, the impact from the student demonstration movement and the subsequent Tiananmen Square incident in June 1989 has had little impact on indirect trade between the two Chinas, as the volume in both exports and imports continues to grow. Trade with

---

Table 1. Taiwan-Mainland Indirect Trade via Hong Kong, 1978–1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trade Turnover</th>
<th>Indirect Taiwan Imports</th>
<th>Indirect Taiwan Balance</th>
<th>Taiwan’s Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>-46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>-34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>311.2</td>
<td>235.0</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>158.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>459.4</td>
<td>384.2</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>309.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>278.5</td>
<td>194.5</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>110.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>247.7</td>
<td>157.8</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>553.3</td>
<td>425.5</td>
<td>127.8</td>
<td>297.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1,102.7</td>
<td>986.8</td>
<td>115.9</td>
<td>870.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>925.5</td>
<td>811.3</td>
<td>114.2</td>
<td>696.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1,515.4</td>
<td>1,226.5</td>
<td>288.9</td>
<td>937.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>2,718.0</td>
<td>2,239.3</td>
<td>478.7</td>
<td>1,760.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>3,483.4</td>
<td>2,896.5</td>
<td>586.9</td>
<td>2,309.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>4,043.0</td>
<td>3,278.0</td>
<td>765.4</td>
<td>2,512.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>5,793.2</td>
<td>4,667.2</td>
<td>1,126.0</td>
<td>3,541.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>7,406.9</td>
<td>6,287.9</td>
<td>1,119.0</td>
<td>5,168.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>8,689.0</td>
<td>7,585.4</td>
<td>1,103.6</td>
<td>6,481.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>9,810.7</td>
<td>8,517.3</td>
<td>1,293.4</td>
<td>7,223.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>11,457.0</td>
<td>9,882.8</td>
<td>1,574.2</td>
<td>8,308.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>11,300.0</td>
<td>9,717.6</td>
<td>1,582.4</td>
<td>8,135.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Taiwan was badly needed by mainland China at the time when the PRC was under economic sanctions imposed by the United States and other Western nations.

Third, indirect trade has favored Taiwan heavily, with Taiwan enjoying the largest trade surplus. Consider 1996 as an example: Taiwan’s indirect exports to mainland China through Hong Kong were U.S.$9.7 billion, while its imports from mainland China were only U.S.$1.5 billion. This reflects a surplus of U.S.$8.2 billion for Taiwan. Taiwan’s exports to mainland China are about five times its imports from mainland China. Thus, mainland China is more an export market to the Taiwanese businessmen than an import source.

According to a recent news release from the Xinhua News Agency, Taiwan’s indirect exports to mainland China consist chiefly of industrial materials, and parts and components. For instance, man-made fibers account for 39.5 percent of the total value of Tai-
wan's indirect exports, followed by electronic parts and components (11.4 percent), plastic raw materials (10.9 percent) and machinery and equipment (8.1 percent). Herbal medicines remain Taiwan's leading indirect import from the mainland, followed by food products, tobacco and fuel.  

Finally, the increasing volume of indirect trade between the two Chinas also reflects the need for direct trade. Governments on both sides of the Taiwan Straits have taken steps to encourage trade between them. Taiwan is currently planning to designate two sea ports for limited direct trade with the mainland. It is generally expected that trade between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits will show continuous growth in the years ahead.

The steps that have been taken reflect a significant change for both sides, and even more so for the ROC on Taiwan. Since the 1949 withdrawal to Taiwan, the ROC has regarded any contact with the mainland, be it personal or business, as "supporting the rebels," and thus within the purview of sedition. But the government stance suffered a major setback in late 1989, when the ROC Supreme Court acquitted two local businessmen of a government sedition charge for directly doing business with the PRC. The Court ruled that such activities did not constitute treason or aiding rebels to overthrow the ROC government.

The relaxation of the travel ban to the mainland, approved by the ROC government in November 1988, represents one of the most significant turning points in relations between the two Chinas, both sociologically and economically. It is estimated that Taiwan travelers have infused some U.S.$2 billion of foreign exchange into the mainland each year. Moreover, such travel has given Taiwan businessmen an opportunity to survey the mainland Chinese market and establish direct business negotiations with their Chinese counterparts on the mainland. According to one statistic reported by mainland Chinese officials, Taiwanese businessmen invested close to U.S.$16.68 billion on the mainland between 1979 and August 1997. In 1996 alone, for example, investment accounted for U.S.$3.5 billion, with more than eight hundred joint business ventures with mainland China, and 10,584 individual Taiwanese running businesses.  

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8. See Philip LIU, "Investment Showdown," Free China Review, Vol. 41, No. 1 (January 1991), pp. 48-49; Kung-lian KAO, supra note 6, p.62; Mainland Affairs Coun-
As mainland China has become more and more dependent upon investment from Taiwan and as the ROC has relaxed its ban on trade with mainland China, direct trade between the two sides likely will be possible in the near future. It was reported recently that mainland China has established four industrial parks for Taiwanese investment; five more such parks currently are being planned. At the same time, Chinese merchant ships registered under foreign flags have been reported to be conducting direct shipping between Taiwan and the mainland.9

Judging from the development of the past ten years, mainland China and Taiwan have established strong economic ties. Although political and ideological differences still exist, the two sides have found economic convergence through bilateral trade mutually attractive and beneficial. As long as such economic exchange does not compromise Taiwan's security, the ROC government will not only allow indirect trade to continue to flourish, but may also consider direct trade with mainland. The two old enemies may now become business partners.

III. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTACTS

Sociologically speaking, Taiwan and mainland China are now two different societies; they are on different levels of societal growth. Taiwan is an open society that is characterized by higher education, freedom of travel, economic prosperity, advanced healthcare and a social welfare system, and political democratization. Mainland China is still a totalitarian society in which people's lives are tightly controlled by the state; uncertainty and poverty still characterize mainland society.

Although official political contact between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits is still nonexistent, contact between people from both sides is now permitted. The breakthrough emerged on November 2, 1987, when the ROC government in Taiwan allowed its citizens to travel to the mainland to visit their relatives.10 For the first time in almost forty years, those family members who were forced to separate because of the civil war in 1949 were permitted to see each other again. Since then, the ROC government has extended visitation privileges to tourists and academicians and certain

other professionals. The ROC also has accepted a limited number of visitors from the mainland. Although political disputes remains a severe obstacle between Taiwan and mainland China, contacts in social and cultural exchanges across the Taiwan Straits have increased in both quantity and quality significantly since 1987.

The earliest sign of people to people contact between two sides of the Taiwan Strait occurred in July 1987 when Taiwan’s Bureau of Entry and Exit began to accept applications from Taiwan residents for indirect tourist travel to mainland China by way of Hong Kong and Macau. The travel permission thus enabled Taiwan residents of those who were born in mainland China to pay a visit to their relatives who were residing on the mainland. Then, in April 1988, The Taiwan Red Cross Society began forwarding mail from Taiwan residents to the mainland. Members of private organizations were allowed to participate in international academic conferences, sports, and cultural activities held in the mainland and a limited number of distinguished mainland residents and overseas mainland Chinese scholars and students were permitted to visit Taiwan.

In December 1988, a Taiwanese soldier who was left behind on the mainland during the civil war was permitted to come to Taiwan to visit his family in Taiwan and in March 1989 the visitation privilege then was granted to include the relatives of this soldier. Indirect telecommunication links across the Strait began and simplified mailing procedures were adopted for correspondence destined for the mainland. Elected officials at all levels were permitted to pay private visits to the mainland during holidays and recesses. Cultural, educational and civilian organizations were allowed to send representatives from Taiwan to the mainland for visits in April 1990. Travel to Taiwan was approved in June 1990 for mainland residents noted for their academic, cultural or sport achievements.

Legislation was established to regulate cross-strait contacts. In November 1990, the Executive Yuan of the Republic of China on Taiwan approved the revised draft of the “Draft Statute Governing People-to-People Relations Across the Taiwan Straits”\(^{11}\) and the Strait Exchange Foundation was established in Taiwan as a quasi-government unit to act on behalf of the government.\(^{12}\) The Foundation was designed to assist the government in handling civilian af-

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\(^{11}\) National Editing and Translation Bureau, ed., Draft Statute Governing People-to-People Relations Across the Taiwan Straits, Taipei: National Editing and Translation Bureau, 1993, pp.40-41.

fairs across the Strait. The first talks between the Strait Exchange Foundation and its counterpart on the mainland, the Association of Strait Relations was held in April 1993 in Singapore to discuss issues related to social and cultural exchange between Taiwan and mainland China. Several such talks, which are commonly known as the Koo-Wang Talks, were held between 1993 and 1995. However, the Koo-Wang talks have been suspended after mainland China’s military threat during Taiwan’s Presidential election in March 1996.\textsuperscript{13}

According to a report by the ROC government, there were 243,500 individuals who applied to visit their relatives on the mainland during the first year after the policy change on mainland visits in 1987. Among them, 209,036 persons, or 85.87 percent, actually did visit the mainland. Central Bank statistics show that between January and September 1988, Taiwan travelers to the mainland had requested U.S.$3.1 billion in foreign exchange for the purpose of traveling to the mainland. Among them, U.S.$2.17 billion, or 70 percent of that amount, was spent on gifts for relatives on the mainland. A survey of those who returned from the mainland shows that 18.74 percent spent NT$50,000 (approximately US$1,800) or lower, 43.34 percent spent between NT$60,000 and NT$100,000, 23.48 percent spent between NT$100,000 and NT$150,000, and 13.44 percent spent NT$150,000 or more. The survey also reported that 36.22 percent would like to visit the mainland again, 57.09 percent were undecided and 5.55 percent would not want to visit again.\textsuperscript{14}

ROC’s Mainland China Affairs Commission in 1998 reports that the government has adopted a total of 250 item measures to encourage contacts between two sides of the Taiwan Straits since 1987.\textsuperscript{15} With a more relaxed atmosphere, people-to-people contacts between Taiwan and the mainland have expanded from family visitations to cultural and athletic exchanges. In the ten years since the ROC government on Taiwan opened its door to visitations between Taiwan and the mainland, the number of applications to the mainland has been impressive. According to government statistics, more than 1.8 million (1,829,947) Taiwan residents were granted

\textsuperscript{14} TSAI, supra note 2, pp.242-247.
\textsuperscript{15} Mainland Affairs Council, ed., Open Measures in Cross-Strait Contacts by the Government and Case Examples of Communist China’s Unfriendly Acts in Recent Years, Taipei: Mainland Affairs Council, 1998, p.4.
permission to travel to China between 1987 and June 1997. However, the number reported by the China Travel Agency in Hong Kong, which acts on behalf of the People’s Republic of China in accepting applications from Taiwan travelers, was five times larger than Taiwan’s official statistics; in the past ten years the China Travel Agency in Hong Kong had issued 10,665,400 permits to Taiwan residents for traveling to the mainland. As shown in Table 2, the figures reported by the China Travel Agency in Hong Kong show a steady growth of Taiwan visitors that reached its peak of 1,526,000 in 1996, while Taiwan’s official statistics have shown a decline since 1994. Moreover, the data collected by the China Travel Agency in Hong Kong is about five times more than Taiwan’s official figures. Such a discrepancy apparently is the result of the large number of illegal and/or unauthorized visitations via Hong Kong by Taiwan residents. If we take into account Taiwan residents visiting mainland China through Japan, the total number of Taiwan residents who have visited mainland China would be even higher than the statistics reported in Table 2.

Meanwhile, the number of mainland Chinese residents to visit Taiwan has also shown an increase. ROC government statistics reports a total of 220,368 residents of the Chinese mainland have visited Taiwan since 1988. The number of visitors from the Chinese mainland is much smaller than those from Taiwan to the mainland due to the ROC government’s tighter control of mainland Chinese visitations. Table 3 shows the growth pattern of the visitations to Taiwan taken by mainland Chinese since 1988.

In addition, there have been an increasing number of illegal immigrants from the mainland to Taiwan in search of employment opportunities. According to a recently published report, the Nationalist authorities in Taiwan captured 1,712 illegal immigrants from the mainland in 1989; it increased to 5,646 in 1990, and 3,981 in 1991. It is generally agreed by Taiwan authorities that the actual number of illegal immigrants was larger, because many of the mainland Chinese immigrants successfully entered Taiwan undetected.16 These illegal immigrants from the mainland have come to Taiwan in search of a better life. No one knows the actual number of these illegal immigrants who are now residing in Taiwan, but it is estimated to be more than 500,000. The Red Cross groups on both sides now are handling exchanges of illegal immigrants and criminals between Taiwan and the mainland.

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Table 2. Number of Applications from Taiwan Residents for Visitation to Mainland China, 1987–1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number Approved by Taiwan Authority</th>
<th>Number Accepted by PRC China Travel Agency in H.K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>27,911</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>236,839</td>
<td>430,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>195,235</td>
<td>530,534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>60,001</td>
<td>925,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>14,346</td>
<td>995,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>6,965</td>
<td>1,511,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>420,948</td>
<td>1,541,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>431,283</td>
<td>1,150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>273,748</td>
<td>1,265,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996*</td>
<td>126,459</td>
<td>1,526,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997*</td>
<td>36,212</td>
<td>788,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,829,947</td>
<td>10,665,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data for January 1 to July 31, 1997.
(Source: http://www.mac.gov.tw)

As Taiwan still does not open its tourism to mainland Chinese, the majority of those legally entering Taiwan come to Taiwan for the purpose of social and cultural exchanges. Academic exchange is a major part of these exchange programs. According to an ROC government report, a total of 28,427 permits for visitation has been granted to mainland Chinese residents to enter Taiwan for activities in cultural and academic exchanges since 1987. Among them, more than half of the visitors (60.96%) are for academic exchanges, while 39.04% are engaged in cultural exchange activities. Among those who are engaged in academic exchanges, the largest group consists of those academics who travel directly from the mainland. Overseas mainland Chinese scholars and students account for 7.75%. Table 4 gives a detailed breakdown of these academic and cultural exchanges.

Academic and cultural exchange activities include attendance at academic conferences and workshops, visitations and touring of academic institutions, public speeches and professional presentations, joint academic and research projects, and public performances for theater and music groups. In addition, scholars and experts from both sides of the Taiwan Straits have also attended professional conferences overseas which were sponsored by Taiwanese-backed foundations and foreign organizations. The best-known example of cooperation is the joint discovery of the oldest
Table 3. Number of Mainland Chinese Entering Taiwan, 1987–1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>4,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>7,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>11,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>13,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>18,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>23,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>42,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>56,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997*</td>
<td>42,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>220,368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* data for January 1 to July 31, 1997
(Source: http://www.mac.gov.tw)

known fossils of complex animal embryos by scholars from Taiwan and mainland China. In February 1996, Professor LI Chia-wei of National Tsinghua University in Taiwan and Professor CHEN Junyuan of Nanjing Institute of Geology and Paleontology published their findings in U.S.-based Science and in the British journal Nature. Many scientists around the world have hailed the discovery as one of the most important evolutionary breakthroughs of the twentieth century. Both Li and Chen said their personal friendship has blossomed into a rewarding example of scientific cooperation between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits.17

As part of people-to-people exchange, reporters from the mass media from both sides of the Taiwan Straits have engaged in reporting special events that occurred in Taiwan and mainland. Many of Taiwan’s newspapers, radio, and television stations have also stationed their reporters on the mainland on a regular basis. Although reporters from the mainland do not have permission to be stationed in Taiwan on a regular basis, about one hundred mainland reporters have visited Taiwan since 1991 according to the Taiwan-based

Table 4. Visitations by Mainland Chinese to Taiwan for Cultural and Academic Exchanges Since 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of Visits</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Academic Visitors</td>
<td>28,427</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Exchange Visitors</td>
<td>11,099</td>
<td>39.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Exchange Visitors</td>
<td>17,328</td>
<td>60.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainland Chinese from overseas</td>
<td>2,204</td>
<td>7.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academics from Mainland</td>
<td>13,946</td>
<td>49.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainland Chinese Students</td>
<td>1,103</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientists and technicians from Mainland</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/mainland/ass_aaf.html)

Straits Exchange Foundation. Such media exchange is expected to grow in the years ahead.

IV. ISSUES OF POLITICAL REUNIFICATION

The biggest bottleneck in interaction between two sides of the Taiwan Straits is political: Taiwan’s insistence on its political sovereignty in refusing to accept the PRC’s term for “one nation, two systems.” When MAO Zedong and his Chinese Communist Party celebrated their victory against CHIANG Kai-shek and the Nationalist army in 1949, the goal of China’s unification under one rule was in sight. Although CHIANG Kai-shek still occupied Taiwan, the liberation of Taiwan through military means did not seem to present a problem. However, the attack by the People’s Liberation Army on Quemoy and other Nationalist-held offshore islands failed later that year.

Then came the Korean War in 1950, which propelled the decision by President Truman of the United States to send the Seventh Fleet to protect Taiwan as a corollary to the defense of Korea. Three years later, the United States and the ROC on Taiwan signed the Mutual Defense Treaty to protect Taiwan from any PRC military aggression. Although mainland China initiated another attack in August of 1958 with the shelling of Quemoy, it failed to defeat Chiang and his Nationalist Army.

Between 1950 and 1970, Taiwan continued to receive support from the United States and continued to occupy the Chinese seat in the United Nations. But the General Assembly of the United Na-

tions in October of 1971, by a tally of 59 to 55 with 15 abstentions, voted against the U.S.-sponsored procedural motion that would have allowed Taiwan to keep its UN seat. The General Assembly then voted to grant that seat to the People's Republic of China. The Republic of China thus withdrew from the United Nations.

The most damaging blow to the ROC on Taiwan came in February of 1972 when United States President Richard Nixon traveled to Beijing for an official visit to the PRC and a meeting with Chairman Mao. A joint communique was issued by the two leaders on February 28, 1972. The so-called “Shanghai Communiqué” summarized both the American and Chinese points of view on global politics. On the matter of Taiwan, the communique stated that there is only one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. With the signing of the Shanghai Communiqué and the later U.S. withdrawal of diplomatic recognition from the ROC in 1979, the ROC on Taiwan was isolated further from the international arena and felt threatened by the PRC's intention to rule Taiwan. The door was tightly closed between Taiwan and the PRC for the entire decade of the 1970s.

The 1980s were a turning point in relations between mainland China and Taiwan. With the PRC's urgency to implement its Four Modernizations policies, military aggression against Taiwan seemed to be too costly at the time. Calls for political negotiation and peaceful reunification were sent by Beijing to Taiwan. As a result, there has been increasing contact between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits throughout the later part of the 1980s and into the 1990s, even though the ban on official and direct contact with the PRC is still imposed on Taiwan by the ROC. Each side continues to claim sole representation of China.

A. The Call from Beijing

The call for political unification was initiated by Beijing. On January 1, 1979, when the United States cut off its diplomatic relations with the ROC, the PRC's Standing Committee of the National People's Congress issued a “Message to Compatriots on Taiwan,” asking the people of Taiwan and the Taiwan authorities to allow contacts and exchanges between the two sides in order to pave the way for eventual reunification. This was followed by the so-called, “three links and four exchanges.”¹⁹ The “three links” were bilateral

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¹⁹ Maria CHANG, “Taiwan's Mainland Policy and the Reunification of China,” published by Strategic Studies from the Asian Studies Center of the Claremont Institute of California, 1990, p. 2.
mail, trade and transport/shipping links, and the “four exchanges” included bilateral visits by relatives and tourists, academic groups, cultural associations and sports representatives.

Then, on January 14, 1979, DENG Xiaoping said Taiwan could keep its existing socioeconomic systems, continue its relations with America, Japan and other foreign countries on a people-to-people level, and even maintain its own military. But Deng insisted Taiwan must change its national flag and turn over its sovereignty to Beijing. Two weeks later, Deng said, the PRC would no longer use the term “liberation of Taiwan” and would not use military force against Taiwan in the immediate future.

The most concrete proposal was made by Marshal YE Jianying on September 30, 1981. Ye outlined nine working principles for reunification talks with Taiwan. The so-called “Ye’s Nine Principles” were: (1) the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang should begin negotiations with equal status; (2) the two sides of the Taiwan Straits should agree on exchanges for mail, business, shipping, visitation, tourism and such activities as academic, cultural and athletic events; (3) Taiwan would be given a special region status with its own military and political autonomy and the central government from Beijing would not interfere with Taiwan’s internal affairs; (4) Taiwan’s current social and economic systems need not be changed and its people’s life style would not be altered. Private ownership of property, house, land, business and inheritance would be allowed in Taiwan. Taiwan could continue its economic and cultural relations with foreign countries; (5) Taiwan’s leadership would be recruited to occupy key national positions in the PRC to participate in government administration; (6) the central government from Beijing would assist Taiwan if Taiwan ran into financial hardship; (7) Taiwan residents who were willing to reside in China would not be discriminated against and would enjoy freedom of travel between Taiwan and the mainland; (8) Beijing would protect the investment interests of Taiwanese business on the mainland; and, (9) China’s reunification is the responsibility of every Chinese, and therefore China would welcome any suggestions from Taiwan and any other person toward the final goal of reunification.20

As Taiwan was not impressed by “Ye’s Nine Principles,” the PRC’s leader, DENG Xiaoping, made another attempt at reconciliation in 1983. On June 26 of 1981, Deng outlined his five “opin-

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ions” with respect to the reunification issue. These were: (1) after reunification, China would not send its military or administrative personnel to Taiwan; (2) Taiwan would enjoy its own independent legislative authority and adopt its own laws; (3) Taiwan could maintain its own military so long as it did not threaten the mainland; (4) Taiwan could maintain some of its rights in dealing with foreign affairs; and, (5) Taiwan could adopt a special flag and call itself “the Chinese Taiwan.” Such a position was later confirmed by JIANG Zemin in January 1995 in his “Eight Point Policy” on the Taiwan issue, in which Jiang indicated that anything would be negotiable under the one China principle.

As the best solution to the Taiwan problem and to reunify China, the official position of the leaders from the PRC was clearly in favor of the “one country, two systems” policy. Although China reacted violently to Taiwan’s President Lee’s visit to the United States in June 1995 and to Taiwan’s presidential election held in March 1996 by staging several rounds of military exercises, China’s position has not changed drastically from reunification through peaceful means to a military invasion. The PRC signaled to Taiwan that everything was negotiable so long as Taiwan would not seek independence and reclaim its membership in the United Nations. Mainland Chinese leaders often told friends on Taiwan who visited Beijing, “Just come to the negotiation table; then we will talk.” With the Hong Kong issue settled, mainland Chinese leaders now are eager to lure Taiwan back and to unify China.

B. Taiwan’s Response

Taiwan, however, has not warmly received the offers of Deng and other leaders from mainland China, and has stubbornly refused to negotiate with the Chinese Communist Party for possible reunification between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits. Taiwan insists that mainland China must abolish Communism in favor of Dr. SUN Yat-sen’s doctrine of the Three Principles of the People before it will talk to the PRC. During the Kuomintang’s 12th National Congress held in Taipei in 1981, the party resolved to seek “reunification of China under the Three Principles of the People.” President CHIANG Ching-kuo, who was also the chairman of the


22. For a detailed discussion on Beijing’s unification initiatives, see Cheng-wen TSAI and Chia-cheng LIN, Political Relations Between the Two Sides of the Taiwan Strait, Taipei: Institute for National Policy Research, 1989, pp. 11-116.
Kuomintang, supplemented this resolution with a “three no’s” policy: no contact, no negotiations and no compromise. Chiang later said, the “one country, two systems” policy proposed by mainland China was a conspiracy to “eat up” Taiwan and that it cheated people from the free world.\textsuperscript{23}

Although Taiwan still officially imposes its “three no’s” policy toward the PRC, it started to show some flexibility after the death of CHIANG Ching-kuo in 1987. Restrictions on unofficial contacts with mainland China gradually have been relaxed since. A series of new policies toward mainland China have been initiated, which has led to a \textit{de facto} thaw between Taiwan and mainland China. The ROC government on Taiwan also said it would consider a policy of “one China, two governments” in working toward final reunification.

Perhaps the most significant breakthrough in contact between the two governments occurred in May 1989 when the ROC’s Ministry of Finance, Dr. Shirley W. J. KUO, led a delegation from Taiwan to the 22nd Annual Asian Development Bank Meeting in Beijing. Although the ROC claimed that Dr. Kuo attended the meeting not as the Minister of Finance from the ROC, but as a board member of the Bank, Dr. Kuo’s attendance was significant because she became the first high-ranking ROC government official to attend an international meeting held in the PRC and to meet with PRC officials face to face.

It has become evident that the ROC on Taiwan under its new president, Dr. LEE Teng-hui, has taken a more liberal policy toward the reunification issue, allowing more contacts between people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. Several semi-official agencies also have been established to handle contact with the PRC. These include the formation of the Mainland Affairs Task Force in August 1988, the establishment of the National Unification Council by the Presidential Office in October 1990, the appointment of Vice Premier Chi-yang SHIH as chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council under the Executive Yuan in the same month, and the inauguration of the Foundation for Exchanges Across the Tai-

Convergence and the Future of China's Reunification

wan Straits in November 1990. A government publication calls the new policy toward the PRC a "pragmatic adaptation."²⁴

Judging from past developments, the stickiest point in the political reunification process is the sovereignty of the ROC on Taiwan. On one side is the PRC's refusal to permit Taiwan to continue to call itself the Republic of China. On the other side is Taiwan's insistence that the ROC is still a legitimate political entity representing twenty-one million people in Taiwan, and thus must be treated equally as a sovereign government if any negotiation is to take place. In his inaugural speech in May 1990, President LEE Teng-hui of the ROC on Taiwan stated the official position that if the Chinese Communist authorities can implement political democracy and a free economic system, renounce the use of military force in the Taiwan Straits, and not interfere with Taiwan's development of foreign relations on the foundation of a one-China policy, the ROC would be willing, on the basis of equality, to establish channels of communication.²⁵

Since both sides thus far have been unable to negotiate reunification, several alternatives have been proposed to spin compromise. Among several models that have been proposed by scholars and politicians from both sides of the Taiwan Straits as a compromise solution, the "one country, two systems" model seems to be most popular to the mainland Chinese. It is in fact the official position of the PRC on the reunification of China. In this model, there is only one China, i.e., the PRC. Taiwan would be under the PRC's rule, even though it may continue its current capitalist economy and way of life. The ROC on Taiwan, however, insists that it will not be ruled by the Chinese Communists and that any reunification negotiation must be between the two governments on equal grounds.

Figure 1 gives a graphic summary of the evolution of relations between mainland China and Taiwan. During the period before 1987, there was a total separation between mainland China and Taiwan. No contact was permitted by either side. Then, mainland China began to call for Taiwan to return to the motherland and Taiwan responded to that call with indirect non-political contacts. However, the goal for future unification is still unsettled. Taiwan is calling for a policy of "one China, two governments," that would allow its existence as a political entity in the international area to be

²⁴. Lo, supra note 23, p. 18.
Figure 1. The Evolution of Mainland China and Taiwan Relations

Pre-1987  
T  C

1987-Present  
T  C

Taiwan’s Goal  
One China, Two Governments

China’s Goal  
One Nation, Two Systems
continued. Mainland China on the other hand has insisted on a strategy of “one nation, two systems” that would absorb Taiwan into its political jurisdiction.

We so far have touched on the positions from the governments on either side of the Taiwan Straits. But what about the feeling of the people toward reunification? Since the people in Taiwan have more at stake than the people on the mainland, let us examine a few public opinion polls taken recently on the issue of China's reunification.

A public opinion poll taken by Gallup's Taiwan branch in the last quarter of 1990 found that most people in Taiwan are very uninformed about the current political developments in PRC-ROC relations. About two-thirds of the 1,013 surveyed, all over twenty years of age, said they had no idea what shape Taiwan-mainland relations would take in the next decade. Half of those surveyed agreed that party-to-party talks between the CCP and the KMT should be held. Over 56 percent of the respondents also saw nothing wrong with government-to-government talks between the PRC and the ROC. Subsequent opinion polls in the 1990s have consistently found a strong resistance to immediate reunification with mainland China under Communist rule. Until now, as we have demonstrated, one of the major obstacles to negotiation between mainland China and Taiwan has been Taiwan’s insistence that any talk with the mainland must be on a government-to-government basis, not between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang as the leaders from the mainland have proposed. However, the findings from the public opinion polls seem to suggest that this is not the issue in the minds of ordinary people in Taiwan. Moreover, people surveyed are not supportive of the Taiwan independence movement either. The general sentiment seems to be in favor of maintaining the current status quo, i.e., one China and one unofficial Taiwan. Majority of those surveyed does not believe that the “One Country, Two Systems” formula is the solution to the problems across the Taiwan Straits.

United States' “Three No’s” policy and mainland China's new “Four Shall-Not’s” policy in 1998 on the Taiwan issue have made the reunification even more difficult. In June 1998, President Clinton of the United States, under the heavy pressure from Beijing while vis-

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iting mainland China, openly enunciated a "Three No's" policy on the issue of Taiwan. They are (1) No support for Taiwan independence, (2) No support for one China one Taiwan or "two Chinas," and (3) No support for Taiwan participation in organizations based on statehood. This "Three No's" policy was not well received in Taiwan. Mainland China's new "Four Shall-Not's" announced in August 1998 were seen by Taiwan as further evidence of mainland China's hostility. The "Four Shall-Not's" are: (1) Taiwan shall not reject reunification on grounds of competition between social system, if Taiwan wants to expand cross-strait exchange and promote prosperity of both sides; (2) Taiwan shall not beef up military preparations or provoke combatant sentiment; (3) Taiwan shall not continue to advocate wider international space and membership in the United Nations; and (4) Taiwan shall not block three direct links and cross-strait economic exchange and cooperation.29 Public opinion polls have consistently found that a large proportion of people in Taiwan regards mainland China as hostile toward ROC government as well as hostile toward people in Taiwan.30 Figure 2 is a graphic summarization of the public opinion polls conducted since 1994.

V. MAINLAND CHINA AND TAIWAN ENTERING THE 21ST CENTURY

Entering the 21st century, mainland China and Taiwan face difficult challenges. In Taiwan, we have seen the healthy growth of political democratization, the continuation of economic prosperity, the expansion of social welfare coverage to all citizens, and the emergence of a pluralistic society. Taiwan is not perfect, but it is definitely a more matured and modernized nation than mainland China.31

In late 1988, on the tenth anniversary of the Third Plenum that made DENG Xiaoping the PRC's paramount leader, mainland China's leadership faced daunting economic and political difficulties. Defensively, the leaders pointed to the tremendous gains of the previous decade as proof that the direction of the PRC set by DENG Xiaoping and his proteges was the only correct program for

Figure 2. Hostility of Beijing Perceived in ROC

Mainland Affairs Council, Executive Yuan, Republic of China

Survey Conducted by:  
(a) Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, Taipei  
(b) Burke Marketing Research, Ltd., Taipei  
(c) China Credit Information Service, Ltd., Taipei  
(d) Center for Public Opinion and Election Studies, National Sun Yat-Sen University, Kaohsiung  
Respondents: Taiwan Adults Aged 20–69 Accessible to Telephone Interviewers
the future. This tactic was reminiscent of most post-1949 Chinese politics: using comparisons with China’s dismal past to highlight the benefits of current policy, and thereby buttress the authority of the current regime. Leaders also typically have used visions of a bright future to spur the Chinese people to greater efforts and sacrifices.

But as everyone knows, mainland China’s future progress will not be judged by a utopian fantasy or political propaganda, but by its transformation from an underdeveloped and totalitarian country to a non-socialist and technologically-advanced nation in which economic prosperity, political stability and social harmony are part of the people’s way of life.

Mainland China is at the crossroads today. The recent economic prosperity in mainland China has led many western observers to suggest that China today is better than it was ten years ago. For example, Al Neuharth, the founder of the USA Today newspaper outlined the following impressive gains in his newspaper column in June 1998 on the eve of President Bill Clinton’s visit to China:

- Then (1988) most of the 900 million people were dirt poor, and many went hungry. Now most of the 1.2 billion are well fed, and a large and growing middle class enjoys gadgets and luxuries.
- Then no dissidence was allowed. Now there is open criticism of lower-ranking officials.
- Then the atheist communist government denied any practice of religion. Now, 132 million people worship as they wish.
- Then China’s culture and mores were inbred and centuries-old. Now hundreds of thousands of young Chinese who have studied or traveled abroad have introduced Western values.
- Capitalism rapidly has replaced socialism in most segments of the economy.

Mr. Neuharth concluded that “one-fifth of the world’s people is far better off than it was 10 or 20 years ago. If you read or hear otherwise, you are being misinformed.”

But such a positive appraisal is not shared by everyone. James R. Lilley, the former U.S. Ambassador to China, disagreed partially in a feedback column. Lilley said, “today things are better for most Chinese. But there is another side of the picture. Many Chinese still

live in poverty. There are great disparities in wealth which concern the regime greatly. The banking system is flawed, and corruption and favoritism thrive. Richard Madsoen even questioned the freedom Chinese people seemingly have gained in recent years. He argued that “the freedoms enjoyed by the Chinese people are the corruption and ineffectiveness of their government.” He called it a freedom “outside the law.” James Cox goes even further in stating that mainland China is a “nation of a million rules and 1.2 billion rule breakers.”

Carol Hamrin believes that mainland China will have to deal with four major obstacles in achieving its dream of restoring its historical greatness: the accelerating development gap caused by international economic trends; mainland China’s resource/population pinch and highly uneven regional and sectorial development; the highly rigid authoritarian Leninist leadership structure and the political culture of dependency; and, a severe moral-cultural depression characterized by friction between generations and among social groups, and alienation from the regime.

It will require tremendous effort to overcome these four obstacles. The problems in mainland China today are deeply rooted in China’s past. Clearly, life in mainland China today is better than life before, signified by its recent economic growth. Although mainland China has started to pattern its economic structure after that of Taiwan, it needs to develop a social and political structure that is conducive to a broader change in both economic and non-economic spheres of activity. Mainland China may have had some success in its economic reforms during the past ten years, but this success will be short-lived if the leadership is not willing to make changes in socio-political institutions to sustain economic growth.

American political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset once used two criteria to classify nations in the world: the effectiveness of the government to implement its policy and the legitimacy of the support of its citizens. He developed four types of governments in the world. Type A is a government marked by higher degree of

35. *Id.*, p.7A.
both effectiveness and legitimacy (examples include the United States, Canada and most of the western European governments). Type B is a government of high legitimacy but low effectiveness (examples include India and Mexico). Type C is a government of lower legitimacy but with high effectiveness (examples include the former USSR and Communist China before its open-door policy). Type D is a government characterized by both lower degree of legitimacy and effectiveness (examples include Vietnam, Lao and many African nations).\textsuperscript{38} Instead of seeing Lipset's typology as four distinctive static types of government, we may treat them as four distinct stages of political transformation in a nation's government.

Seen from such a developmental perspective, mainland China from its inauguration in 1949 to the middle of the 1980s clearly was in Stage C that PRC government was in firm control and was able to implement all the policies handed down from the central government even though it did not have the support of its citizens. In Stage C, mainland China was a totalitarian state in which the people's fate was totally in the hands of the state and individual freedom was non-existent. People did not support that type of the government, but they had no choice. But mainland China in recent years has moved into Stage D, marked by a gradual loss of its effectiveness and a continuing lack of legitimacy; this was evident during the 1989 student demonstration and the widespread corruption and illegal activities in the 1990s. Some senior Communist cadres even suggested that corruption today under the Communist Party is worse than under Nationalist rule. JI Weidong pointed out that the existing Chinese Constitution is nothing but a sugar-coated formality and that political reality severely deviates from the rule of law.\textsuperscript{39}

In Figure 3, we can see that there are three directions mainland China may experience in the future. Mainland China may be back to Stage B if a forced revolution erupts that gains high legitimacy but creates a chaotic society immediately after revolution. Mainland China may also turn back to totalitarian rule if it decides to exercise its military might in controlling people's lives similar to the period under Mao. Mainland China may still also move forward to build a government that is both legitimate and effective as in Stage A if it is willing to promote a peaceful evolution and full

\textsuperscript{38} For Lipset's discussion on the four typologies of political government, please refer to Seymour Martin Lipset, The First New Nation, Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1968.

\textsuperscript{39} JI Weidong, "On Rule of Law and Democracy," Modern China Studies, No.60, 1998, p.23.
Figure 3. The Evolution of Modern China and its Future
scale modernization, creating a new society of economic prosperity and political freedom. WEN Zhimin saw democracy as a necessary and effective means in resolving China's social and political conflicts. He believed that economic reform will eventually lead to the rule of law and democracy in China.\footnote{WEN Zhimin, "The Politics of Economic Reform in China," Modern China Studies, No.60, 1998, pp.27-56.}

Clearly, the best choice for China’s future development is to reach Stage A, a new society of political stability and economic prosperity. Until now, mainland China was ruled by charismatic leaders such as Mao and Deng; the law was manipulated and abused by its leaders. What China needs in the future is to build a new society with distributive justice that is ruled by written law, not by leaders’ personalities and charm. The Taiwan experience has proved that the road toward this goal may be difficult but not impossible. If Taiwan can do it, so can mainland China.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

For over one century, since it began its search for modernization, China has struggled. The Communist victory on the mainland in 1949 brought hope to the Chinese for building a new China with political sovereignty, territorial integrity, economic prosperity and freedom of human spirit. The dream was quickly replaced by the nightmare of human suffering under PRC rule.

Ever since 1949, these two governments have been at odds with each other. Mainland China adopted a Communist mode of government and economic practice, while Taiwan adopted a version of capitalist practice in its own developmental path. The result was a great discrepancy between the livelihoods of the people and these two Chinas; this is evidenced by Taiwan’s fast economic growth and relatively relaxed political atmosphere in sharp contrast to the PRC’s slower economic growth and totalitarian government.

Have the PRC and ROC moved closer together so that Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Straits could benefit from unification? Recent changes that have occurred on both sides of the Taiwan Straits seem to suggest that a process of partial convergence is now taking place. Not only has the PRC adopted a number of economic developmental strategies from Taiwan’s successful past experience, but it also has started to encourage the development of a pluralist society on the mainland, a society characterized by the relaxation of press censorship and private ownership of property.
Indeed, Taiwan has served as a living model for the PRC. If the current trend of convergence continues, the two sides without any doubt will eventually show more similarities than differences. As the convergence perspective of modernization theory has suggested, the more a society tries to modernize, the more it will have to share in a modern, rational way of life. The PRC is no exception.\(^{41}\) This would contribute positively to the reduction of tensions between the two sides.

Judging from the differential development experienced between mainland China and Taiwan, Taiwan’s position against a hasty reunification is quite understandable. Economically, socially, culturally and politically, mainland China and Taiwan are two separate entities. Socioeconomic convergence between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits will help to narrow the gap and lead to eventual reunification through peaceful means. People in China and Taiwan can enjoy political democracy, economic prosperity and human dignity. Only then, can China reclaim its old glory.

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\(^{41}\) This is not to say that President Lee advocates the Taiwan independence movement. He is very much aware of the reaction from the PRC if Taiwan moves toward total independence from China. President Lee’s policy seem to separate Taiwan from mainland China in reality, but not in name.
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