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TAIWAN'S 2000 PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRACY AND CREATING A NEW ERA OF POLITICS

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I. INTRODUCTION

On March 18, 2000, voters in Taiwan (whose official name is the Republic of China) went to the polls to cast ballots for a presidential and vice-presidential candidate. This was Taiwan's tenth competitive national election (its eleventh if the 1994 election of Taiwan's provincial governor, provincial assembly, metropolitan mayors and city councils is counted). It was the nation's tenth presidential election and its second direct election for president and vice

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(1)
It was Taiwan's first national election wherein it was difficult to predict the winner.

The campaign started early. In fact, the selection of candidates began six months before the balloting. This process split the two major parties, the Nationalist Party and the Democratic Progressive Party, when two candidates that did not get their party's nomination decided to run as independents. Ultimately, however, it only hurt the KMT. Campaigning was tough and very nasty from the beginning and remained that way until the time of balloting.

When candidates came to present the required number of signatures to get on the ballot, the field narrowed to five, three of them serious. In addition to CHEN Shui-bian representing the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), James SOONG running as an independent, and LIEN Chan for the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT), HSU Hsin-liang ran as an independent. The New Party (NP) nominated LI Ao. Soong, Chen and Lien led in the polls in that order, far ahead of the other two early on and into the final days of the campaign.

The main campaign issues were cross-strait relations, that in its expanded definition meant the kind of contacts, or lack of them, Taiwan would have with China and Taiwan's national identity. Beijing threatened Taiwan during the campaign, thus rarifying the issue. However, because the candidates all took a very similar moderate position on "mainland policy," the issue had less impact on the voting results than might have been expected at this time. The second, and as it turned out most prominent issue, was "black gold" or money politics, corruption, and the relationship of both to criminals and criminal organizations. Other issues faded in importance during the campaign or remained secondary.

The candidates' reputations and personalities played a major role in influencing voters, as did scandals and charges of various kinds leveled at each by other candidates and parties. The top three

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candidates were all tainted but not equally so and not all of the charges stuck or influenced voters.

When the results were in, it was clear this election would have a profound impact on Taiwan’s politics. CHEN Shui-bian of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party won the election, thus ending more than five decades of Nationalist Party rule of the country. Adding to the salience of the election, especially thinking in terms of future political stability, Chen won only 39 percent of the vote. This, by most accounts, did not constitute a mandate. It, in fact, evoked many questions about the strength of the nation’s future executive leadership, its political stability and much more.

James SOONG finished less than 3 percentage points behind Chen in the vote count. The ruling Nationalist Party’s candidate, LIEN Chan, did poorly (by its standards at least) with 23 percent, deeply disappointing both party leaders and the rank and file. It was clear that Lien’s nomination, which was the work of President LEE Teng-hui, had split the vote and had given the presidency to Chen. Demonstrations followed the vote counting at KMT headquarters, with protestors demanding President Lee give up the position of chairman of the KMT, which he did.

If Taiwan’s political future was in doubt, the same was true of the KMT; it fretted very seriously over its future. Adding to its apprehensions, Soong announced after the election that he would start a new political party.

Despite all of this, the election may be viewed as a major step for Taiwan in consolidating its democracy. It was widely accepted before the election that Taiwan was a real democracy. That being the case, though, it was another thing to make a democratic polity properly. This election afforded proof that the system could work even when putting the opposition in charge. Convincing evidence of that was the fact that in spite of the new president lacking a mandate, both the ruling party and the population accepted his victory. In addition, he announced moderate policies, as well as his intention to work with opposition parties. Chen also expressed his desire for better, and certainly peaceful, relations with China, though on this issue observers were less optimistic.

II. PRE-ELECTION POLITICS

One place to begin in assessing the milieu in which the campaign for Taiwan’s president and vice president began is to look at
the most recent previous national election. In December 1998, a "three-in-one election was held: voting for the lawmaking body of government (or the Legislative Yuan), two mayoral contests to choose the executive heads of Taiwan's two metropolitan cities (Taipei and Kaohsiung), and, finally, city council races in those two cities.

The 1998 election was a major victory for the ruling Nationalist Party and a significant setback for the opposition Democratic Progressive Party. The New Party and other political parties that competed in the contest did even worse than the DPP; in fact, some pundits questioned whether the New Party would survive for very long. A number of independents won, but this was not significant in terms of changing the political landscape. In the most exciting and most watched part of the election, MA Ying-jeou of the KMT beat the well-known incumbent mayor, CHEN Shui-bian, of the DPP. The KMT also won in the more important, though less exciting, Legislative Yuan contest and did well in the city council races, though it lost the Kaohsiung mayoral race.

The KMT did well with the electorate on the most important campaign issues. Voters apparently perceived that the ruling party's performance on managing the economy was good in spite of a slight economic downturn. In fact, the "Asian economic meltdown" was blamed for the somewhat slower growth rate in Taiwan; voters, according to the polls, thought the Nationalist Party had done well in terms of economic management so that the "meltdown" or crisis did not affect Taiwan more than it did. They also perceived that the KMT was most able to handle the economy in the future. The ruling party was also thought to be better on foreign policy issues, especially in dealing with cross-strait relations. Many voters, in fact, did not trust the DPP and perceived that if voted into power it might cause a crisis in Taipei-Beijing relations. The United States government, which expressed misgivings about the DPP's independence platform, seemed to also have a negative impact on the DPP's performance at the polls. The KMT did less well in the area of corruption and crime, but the opposition parties were not able to fully capitalize on these issues.

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2. It is worth noting here that a cyclic pattern can be seen in Taiwan's national elections, with both the KMT and the DPP doing better or worse in each successive election. See the author's previous works for details.

3. For details, see Copper, Taiwan's 1998 Legislative Yuan, Metropolitan Mayoral and City Council Elections, supra note 1.

4. Ibid.
As the year 1999 began there was some troubling economic news. The government reported that unemployment the previous month had risen to its highest level in 13 years and had increased 30 percent over the previous year. The average time of unemployment was also high: 24 weeks. However, the news seemed to hurt the KMT only marginally, if at all, since the loss of jobs was attributed mainly to cutbacks in the electronics industry, the phasing out of the provincial government and the privatization of three large commercial banks. Again Taiwan’s mild economic malaise was linked by many to the Asian meltdown as voters could see that Taiwan was doing better than most other countries in the region.

In February, a controversy erupted over cutting the tax rate on stock transactions: both whether it was fair (i.e., would inordinately help the rich) and if it might boost or hurt the market. Rumors that it would be reduced caused the stock market to soar, breaking an eight-month record. The issue appeared to create tension between President Lee, who favored the reduction, and Premier Siew, who did not, as rumors circulated at this time that Siew might be replaced. Some even called the situation a constitutional crisis. In any event both Lee and Siew denied serious differences and the crisis soon passed.

Meanwhile, however, Premier Siew faced an angry legislature when the two opposition parties, the DPP and NP, orchestrated a vote of no confidence against him. The parties’ complaints focused on Siew’s handling of the stock transaction tax issue and the appearance that he was simply following Lee’s orders on this and other legislative matters. In broader terms, his leadership, or rather a lack of it, was questioned. Critics said that he had no agenda. Siew came under fire also over the budget when the opposition parties working together caused a temporary impasse. Some observers felt Siew’s credibility and image were hurt significantly by the problems and what the public began to see as a lack of strong leadership from the premier’s office.

Just as this issue faded, the two major political parties, the KMT and the DPP, began wrangling over amendments to the Con-

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stitution. KMT leaders wanted to create a bicameral legislature with the National Assembly converted into one of the legislative branches. Their reasoning was that a two-house legislature would better serve constituents and would prevent rashly considered and/or bad laws (thus explaining why such a system is found in most Western democracies). The DPP argued that the National Assembly served no useful function and the KMT wanted to make it part of the legislative branch of government solely to keep the support of its members in the 2000 election campaign.\(^\text{10}\) This controversy, however, passed without causing too much ado.

The two parties also disagreed on the issue of putting the power of the plebiscite in the Constitution. The KMT wanted the plebiscite, if at all, limited to resolving specific issues, not general or ideological matters such as the nation’s future and especially the matter of independence versus unification. The DPP wanted the independence issue included. In other words, the KMT sought essentially a referendum law giving the public a voice on legislative issues, but not constitutional ones; the DPP disagreed. DPP leaders claimed that the so-called “danger” in holding a plebiscite, as claimed by the KMT, was not real since the international community, in particular the United States, would not allow a cross-strait war to break out over the use of a plebiscite. Several DPP leaders went on a hunger strike in April to draw attention to the issue.\(^\text{11}\)

The issue of inserting provision for a run-off election in the Constitution was also discussed. The KMT favored an absolute majority provision to determine the winner in presidential elections. The DPP opposed this. The run-off election provision got linked to the proposal for a plebiscite and, because no compromise could be reached between the two parties, nothing happened. According to at least one KMT official, there was concern on the part of KMT leaders that a party member might decide to run as an independent (apparently thinking of James SOONG) and that he might get the second largest number of votes resulting in an embarrassing tie-breaking election between two KMT leaders.\(^\text{12}\) In any case, in a subsequent opinion poll on the issue, the public favored a run-off by 45.6 percent versus 40.9 percent against; this, in the opinion of


\(^{12}\) “DPP, KMT say amendments off,” China News, February 2, 1999 (from the Internet: web.lexis-nexis.com/universe.)
most observers, did not reflect strong public support for the measure.\textsuperscript{13}

In May, the DPP convened its National Congress and at that meeting voted on a "Draft Resolution on Taiwan's Future." This document contained a provision approving the use of the term "Republic of China" to refer to Taiwan (though it also contained a rejection of Beijing's "one country, two systems" formula for unifying Taiwan with China).\textsuperscript{14} This constituted a major shift away from the strong independence position the DPP had long espoused, even though independence remained a plank in the party's platform. At almost the same time, new nominations rules were adopted, paving the way for the DPP's most popular leader, CHEN Shui-bian, to be nominated by the party to run in the presidential election.\textsuperscript{15} These moves seemed to indicate that the party wanted to make a good showing or even thought it could win the election, and that it was willing to sacrifice its principles as well as some less than popular (with the public at large as opposed to DPP supporters) policies to do that.

Former DPP Chairman HSU Hsin-liang, a potential presidential candidate for the party's nomination (though fading in support), quit the party at this time. Hsu had been at odds with party leaders over the issue of holding a plebiscite, on the issue of independence, and about the importance of security versus the nation's official name. Hsu, a founding member of the party and former party chairman, had earlier taken a hard-line stance on Taiwan's independence; his views had changed markedly in recent years to become, by DPP standards, very soft or pro-Beijing.\textsuperscript{16} Hsu's departure from the party strengthened Chen's prospects for nomination.

Though Hsu criticized the DPP's leadership as being "unfit to lead Taiwan" and for "falling behind the times"—it appeared likely he would run as an independent—it was uncertain whether a bitter struggle would follow or if he would hurt the DPP's chances very much in March. Many said that neither concern was serious, since the party was moving toward the center anyway on most of the is-

\textsuperscript{14} "DPP Congress gives qualified approval to use 'ROC,'" China Post, May 10, 1999, p. 1.
sues Hsu mentioned and since the party was unified in supporting Chen.  

On July 7, President LEE Teng-hui dropped what turned out to be a bombshell in terms of Washington-Taipei-Beijing relations when he told a German radio station reporter that henceforth Taipei-Beijing negotiations had to be conducted on the basis of a “special state-to-state” relationship. Beijing went ballistic, saying that Lee had abandoned the one-China principle and that his statement was clear evidence of his “separatist views.” Beijing’s rhetoric was tougher, according to some observers, than that heard in 1996 when it conducted threatening missile tests off Taiwan’s shores. Chinese leaders ordered the military to mobilize, thereby intimidating Taiwan. China even announced that it had developed a neutron bomb (which would seemingly have application to its conflict with Taipei since it would make it possible for Beijing to recover Taiwan without destroying Taiwan’s physical infrastructure.)

The Clinton Administration took China’s side and criticized Lee while making friendly and open gestures to Beijing, including the first use of the Washington-Beijing hotline for a long conversation between President Clinton and President and General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, JIANG Zemin. Congress, on the other hand, was sympathetic toward Taiwan and to a large extent negated Clinton’s criticism of Lee. U.S. presidential candidates on the campaign trail also sided with Lee.

Lee’s main purpose in making the statement was probably what he said: that Beijing had taken advantage of Taipei’s support of a one-China policy by defining that to mean the People’s Republic of China, rather than the historical and/or cultural China that was Taiwan’s perspective. Lee also sought to break out of Beijing’s efforts to isolate Taiwan diplomatically and gain “international space,” which China was taking away.

Some observers, however, said that Lee was motivated by a desire to undermine James SOONG’s presidential bid, and perhaps CHEN Shui-bian’s candidacy as well, and to help his favorite, LIEN

20. The Mainland Affairs Council published a detailed account of Lee’s reasoning behind the statement that include this and other arguments.
Chan. Soong was viewed as more pro-unification than the other candidates. Strained relations with Beijing, which had in the past turned the public away from unification, thus would presumably hurt Soong. A crisis would damage Chen, who was considered by many too provocative regarding cross-strait relations. Lien not only looked moderate, but the situation made his foreign policy experience look good.\textsuperscript{21}

The crisis atmosphere continued for a number of weeks. Beijing’s continued hostility and bellicose statements, and Lee persistent his position and other high officials support of him in statements to the press, kept the crisis alive. SU Chi, chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council, defended Lee’s statement a few days after Lee made it. Lee then reiterated his comment on July 20. KOO Chen-fu, chairman of the Straits Exchange Foundation, elaborated on Lee’s position a few days after that.\textsuperscript{22}

On September 21, Taiwan experienced an earthquake of 7.3 on the Richter scale, its worst in a century. The quake, centered just over six kilometers from Sun Moon Lake in central Taiwan, killed 2,321 people and destroyed more than 20,000 buildings, while leaving 100,000 people homeless. The damage in dollar terms was estimated at US$31 billion, or ten percent of the nation’s annual gross national product. In addition to the personal tragedies and the social trauma it produced, the quake had a profound impact on Taiwan politically. However, at the time it was not easy to assess who gained politically and how much or what the final verdict would be.\textsuperscript{23}

Critics of the government pointed to the fact that initial rescue efforts saved only six people, compared to the Japanese government’s effort that saved 500 lives during the first 48 hours after the Kobe earthquake. Also, in providing emergency supplies such as food and water, individual and private organizations did better than the government.\textsuperscript{24} As a consequence of this and as a product of


\textsuperscript{22} See various speeches and articles on this subject, in addition to Lee’s original statement, in \textit{Exchange}, August 1999.

\textsuperscript{23} See “Killer quake claims over 1,700,” \textit{China Post} (international edition), September 22, 1999, p. 1 for an initial report on the earthquake and subsequent issues for more details.

many public complaints, the media was generally critical of the central government’s response.

Early observations thus seemed to indicate that the tragedy would hurt the chances of the ruling party in March. The homeless organized demonstrations and evidence surfaced that shoddy building construction caused by corruption made the damage and loss of life worse. Many also anticipated years of litigation and felt that would tarnish the already bad reputation the KMT had for involvement in money politics and corrupt ties with business.25

On the other hand, the government generously allocated funds for recovery efforts, totaling almost US$10 billion, and provided goodly amounts of compensation to help victims. The amount of NT$ 1 million (32 NT dollars at that time equaled one US dollar) was given to the families of each deceased and NT$ 200,000 to each person seriously injured. In addition, NT$ 200,000 was given to each family that lost a house while NT$ 100,000 went to those who lost most of a house. This looked good compared to the Japanese government, which gave less than one-third that amount only to the families of those killed in Kobe.26

Despite the early disappointment in the government, which reflected on the KMT as the ruling party, many people seemed to change their minds about the government’s performance. Opinion surveys done shortly after the quake indicated that the number of undecided voters had soared to 47 percent and that the three main candidates had each lost ground by 5 to 10 percent. According to a poll conducted on October 9, 60 percent of those questioned said they were “rather satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the government’s rescue and relief efforts.27

The KMT also seemed to be helped indirectly by the tragic event. The quake had a pronounced negative effect on Taipei-Beijing relations. China offered a paltry US$100,000 to Taiwan for relief efforts, less than numerous individuals gave. The sum was also miniscule compared to the US$50 million that Taiwan had contributed to China during various tragedies over the past decade. People in Taiwan were especially angered over the fact that Beijing interfered in the relief efforts by demanding that foreign countries sending help to Taiwan first gain clearance from China. Some said this may

have accounted for some deaths of people trapped who might otherwise have been saved. One official in Taipei described this as "tantamount to kicking the wounded and stomping on the sufferer."\(^{28}\)

Finally, all of the candidates halted their campaigns because of the earthquake. This worked to the advantage of LIEN Chan and Vincent SIEW; the two being in high office could take direct responsibility for dealing with earthquake related problems. In addition, their participation in government relief efforts and the constant press attention given to this, when other candidates were not campaigning as a gesture to the killed and injured, helped them in the opinion polls. According to a survey conducted by National Sun Yat-sen University in October, Lien's reputation had risen in the polls to 20.9 percent, compared to CHEN Shui-bian, who registered 16.8 percent. Lien still trailed Soong at 24.8 percent, but the large gap between the two seen a few months earlier had closed considerably.\(^{29}\)

Offsetting the spark the earthquake belatedly provided to the KMT's campaign, in early November an independent candidate won a bi-election for county magistrate in Yunlin County, indicating that the KMT had lost its grip on the area. There was also widespread speculation that this meant the KMT would not perform well in the 2000 presidential election. The winner, CHANG Jung-wei, was also a friend of James SOONG and was said to be able to get votes for him.\(^{30}\) At this time, Soong rose again in the polls, with one survey putting him nearly ten percentage points above the other two candidates.\(^{31}\)

The fact the KMT took the defeat seriously was apparent when General-Secretary John CHANG submitted his resignation. Although it was not accepted, Chang switched jobs with HUANG Kun-huei, presidential secretary, a few days later in what some interpreted to be because of the Yunlin setback, though others said there were disagreements between Chang and LIEN Chan, which

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31. See "Soong continues to lead public opinion polls," *China Post* (international edition), November 15, 1999, p. 1. Soong had a rating of 30.1, while Lien had 21.6 and Chen had 20.5.
had caused disarray in Lien's campaign organization, and that had to be rectified.32

On November 26, President Lee made a much softer statement on cross-strait relations.33 Beijing, however, hardened its position and relations remained heated. In fact, Beijing's tough statements and more military maneuvers sent the Taiwan stock market into a tailspin.34 Beijing may have been looking ahead to late December when Macao, the only remaining colony in Asia, would return to China, leaving only Taiwan to be "recovered."

The year ended with the return of Macao, prompting Beijing to put more pressure on Taiwan to negotiate reunification.35 This was blunted to a considerable degree, especially in terms of its effect on international public opinion by China's crackdown on a religious organization known as Fa-lun Gung. The final days of 1999 also saw the reporting of good economic news, with gross national product growth respectable, and with Taiwan leading the Asian tigers in export growth while increasing to nearly 50 percent its share of the global market for CD-ROMs.36 The main story that impacted the voting, however, was a scandal that hit James SOONG hard and is discussed below.

III. EARLY CANDIDATE SELECTION AND COMPETION

The candidate selection process and competition for the election for two Nationalist Party candidates, many experts say, began with the decision made in December 1996 during a National Development Conference to institute various political reforms, including one to phase out the provincial government and the position of provincial governor. The issue engendered serious friction between President LEE Teng-hui and Governor James SOONG.

On the other hand, the alienation between President Lee and Governor Soong may have even pre-existed the provincial govern-

ment issue. Some said it originated with Soong’s impressive victory in the governor’s race in 1994, which Lee helped Soong to win. Lee, it is said, felt he deserved more credit for the victory than Soong was willing to grant. Soong’s impressive popularity and his demonstrated ability to campaign may also have made Lee jealous. Alternatively, Lee may have subsequently perceived that governor Soong was trying to build his own empire and sought to take Taiwan in a different direction in terms of both domestic politics and foreign policy. Their falling out may have also stemmed from Soong being a Mainland Chinese while Lee was Taiwanese.

In any event, in ensuing months it appeared that reconciliation was unlikely. This was especially true after the KMT’s party Congress in 1997 when Lee orchestrated LIEN Chan’s election to become “first vice-chairman” of the party (a new position) while making a distinction between Lien and other vice-chairmen. Soong was not elected one of the four vice chairmen and was treated as a pariah by Lee and his supporters. Soong was, however, reelected to the Central Standing Committee with strong support from the party’s regulars. Some saw this as a rebuff of Lee while showing Soong had broad support in the party. Soong was not present at the meeting, otherwise the friction may have been worse.

From that point on it was very clear to many observers, especially as it became apparent that Lee would not run again and that it was not feasible to amend the Constitution to extend Lee’s term under the rationalization of coordinating presidential and Legislative Yuan elections, that Lee was going to push Lien to be the party’s presidential nominee in the summer of 1999. Soong would have to run as an independent or not at all.

This presented a dilemma for both Nationalist Party leaders and the rank and file in view of the fact that Soong’s popularity ratings were very high and Lien’s were not. Lee’s people argued that the polls did not matter and that when Lien was nominated and the Party got behind him with its organization and money, he could win easily. Soong’s people argued that the polls proved that he should be the Party’s candidate and that he alone could beat the opposition Democratic Progressive Party’s nominee. Many observ-

37. Id., p. 20.
38. The author has asked a number of officials as well as scholars about the origins of the feud between Lee and Soong and has heard a number of answers. No one seems to know the real reason, if indeed there is just one reason.
ers opined at this time that Lien and Soong might split the KMT vote and throw the election to the DPP.

The DPP, in the meantime, as noted in the previous section, suffered an election defeat in December. CHEN Shui-bian, the DPP’s most well known and popular leader, was seen by some as no longer a viable presidential candidate. However, others saw the situation differently. Supporting the view that the defeat had not hurt him, Chen did not now have to worry about his pledge not to run for the presidency if elected mayor. Moreover, his popularity, as reflected in various polls, was higher outside of Taipei than in the capital, so he was considered a good choice for national office. Finally, he was more popular than any other DPP leader or possible candidate.

In any event, soon after the election, the DPP held public debates to reassess its position on independence. Chen moved quickly to moderate his stance on the issue by saying that he, and the party if his view prevailed, did not intend to make any changes in Taiwan’s status without public support (which according to numerous polls would obviously not be forthcoming). This, in essence, got Chen off the hook regarding his earlier promises to create a “Republic of Taiwan.” It also began to make some voters and the media picture Chen as a candidate espousing moderate views on cross-strait relations.

Meanwhile, a battle between Chen and former party chairman HSU Hsin-liang for the nomination grew more intense. Accusations were heard that Chen was breaking a party rule (which said the party would not support a member running for high office more than once in a period of four years) to run. Hsu also asserted that Chen, quoting various opinion polls, would be defeated by the Nationalist Party’s candidate. Thus, all was not well in the DPP.

The KMT, on the other hand, had more serious problems that seemed to be getting worse by the day. At this time, the Nationalist Party announced that it would not hold a party primary in view of

40. Chen had promised during the campaign that if reelected he would not leave the office to run for president.
41. See Annie Huang, “DDP tries to ease independence fears,” China Post, January 4, 1999 and Irene Lin, “Broader horizons for DPP, suggest Chen, Wei,” China Post, January 4, 1999, p. 4. It is interesting to note that Chen made the statement during a visit by dissident Wei Jingsheng, which drew considerable attention to what he said.
42. “DDP presidential 2000 ticket battle heats up,” China Post, February 22, 1999, p. 1. DDP rules state that the party will not support a candidate for national office more than once every four years.
the difficulties this had caused for two other parties in the last election and the likelihood a primary would divide the party. While this argument at face value made sense, it also sent a clear signal that Soong would not be given a fair chance to compete for the ruling party’s nomination and would have to run as an independent.43

Opinion polls on both candidates and issues in January seemed to be quite revealing in terms of controversy over the candidate selection process and the formulating of platforms and the parties’ strategies. According to a Public Opinion Research Foundation poll, in a race among the three candidates that later dominated the field, Soong, Chen and Lien, Soong was preferred by almost half of the voters or 49.1 percent. Chen followed with 24.6 percent; Lien was third with 10.2 percent. Undecided were 15 percent. Soong led among all ethnic groups. He got 46.3 percent of the Taiwanese vote, compared to 28.2 percent for Chen and 9.2 percent for Lien. He was favored by 65.2 percent of mainlanders, compared to Chen with 7.4 percent and Lien with 17 percent. Soong got 56.3 percent of the Aborigine’s straw vote. Soong even got 62 percent of the KMT voters, compared to Lien’s 24 percent.44

The important issues according to the polls at this time were the economy at 49 percent and social order and crime at 48 percent. Taiwan’s diplomatic isolation and improving social mores and customs followed, both at 36 percent. Sagging property and stock prices and Taiwan independence lagged at 21 percent and 14 percent, respectively.45 Most people, 57 percent according to the polls, did not want President Lee’s term extended.46

In March, James SOONG returned from more than two months in the United States following the end of his term as governor. When asked by reporters about his plans, he said that he did not exclude the possibility of participating in politics, which most assumed meant that he was running for president. Soong also talked about “opinion convergence” within the party, suggesting that the KMT should use a broader base of its members to select its candidate, which, of course, would give him an advantage.47 Some KMT leaders described this as a signal that a reconciliation with

45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
Soong and a Lien-Soong ticket, which many party leaders hoped for, was not possible. 48

In early May, Soong gave his first public address since finishing his term as governor. He said he favored maintaining the status quo regarding Taipei-Beijing relations. Since that was the view of 80 percent of the population and because Soong had been seen as an advocate of closer ties, it appeared that, like Chen, he was trying to stake out a popular stance as he positioned himself to run for the presidency. At the same time a "campaign committee" in the form of a "Friends of James SOONG Club" was inaugurated in Taipei County. Supporters declared at the time that Soong had to try to generate public pressure for his candidacy since the KMT had failed to listen to the people in carrying out the nomination process. 49

A few days later, HSU Hsin-liang announced that he was leaving the DPP. Hsu had already declared his intention to run for president, since it was apparent that CHEN Shui-bian would get the party's nomination mainly because Chen was much more popular both inside the party and with the electorate. Hsu, on the other hand, had alienated many in the party because of his stance on improving relations with Beijing. 50

In mid-May, CHEN Shui-bian received endorsements from 168 of the 199 DPP officials eligible to participate in the nominating process in the DPP, making Chen the party's odds-on favorite. Still there remained dissension in the party because Chen was ineligible to run under current party rules. 51 But these doubts soon dissipated. Moreover, given Hsu's decision to run as an independent, Chen was virtually unopposed.

In June, leading up to the Nationalist Party's congress in August, rumors circulated that a deal would be made to give former Governor Soong a high position in the post-election government, including the position of premier or vice president, to keep him from running as an independent. The assumption was that Vice President Lien would get the party's nomination. Party leaders, including Lien and General Secretary John CHANG met Soong ostensibly to discuss his political future. Late in the month, Soong said that the overtures were a "contriving campaign tactic" or, in other words, an effort to undermine his appeal at the grassroot level. Ru-

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rumors spread as to whether the KMT sincerely offered Soong a position or not. Some insiders, however, said that President Lee had nixed offering Soong anything.\textsuperscript{52}

In mid-July, James SOONG declared his candidacy, saying that "people weigh more than the party in my decision-making." He elaborated on his statement saying: "Disappointed with the government, the people want change. They demand more democracy." Soong, however, did not leave the Nationalist Party. In fact, he did not repudiate a statement he had made not long before this that he would compete in the KMT primary if the franchise were extended to all party members.\textsuperscript{53} He may have thought that there was still some chance a grassroots movement in the party would influence top party leaders and they would have a change of heart.

However, since the KMT had already held a preference vote, albeit one that was swayed by President Lee and lacked the fairness of a secret ballot, it seemed a foregone conclusion that the party would nominate Lien. Soong, therefore, presumed efforts by the party to cajole him and its continuing talk of a Lien-Soong ticket, since some top party officials made some public statements highly critical of Soong at this time, were a trick to undermine his campaign.\textsuperscript{54}

A number of high ranking KMT officials expressed both grief and concern over Soong's decision. Some said the KMT had not tried hard enough to keep him from running as an independent. Others opined that the feud would get CHEN Shui-bian elected as president. Chen refused to say this, but other DPP officials said so. Kaohsiung Mayor Frank HSIEH said that the "KMT's situation" would greatly benefit Chen. Many seconded Hsieh's remarks.\textsuperscript{55}

No sooner had Soong made the announcement he was running for president than top KMT leaders began to attack him almost without restraint. Secretary-General John CHANG referred to Soong supporters as the "Soong gang," to which Soong replied that this reminded him of the past era when Taiwan was ruled under martial law and that it didn't reflect real democracy. LIEN Chan criticized Soong for being a "turncoat" for not remaining loyal to the party.

\textsuperscript{52} The author heard this from several KMT officials at this time.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} "KMT elders lament Soong's decision to run," China Post, July 15, 1999, p. 4.
This made Soong's followers angry. They slammed the KMT for not reforming party rules, corruption and its underhanded treatment of Soong. They also went on the attack, though generally not to the extreme the KMT did. They accused Lee of being a dictator and wanting to stay in office and run the KMT forever. They subsequently staged a hunger strike in front of the Presidential Palace, claiming that the KMT planned to change the Constitution so that President Lee's term in office could be extended, thus thwarting Soong's bid for the presidency.56

In mid-November, the Nationalist Party expelled Soong. President Lee said nothing at the meeting. Other KMT leaders blasted Soong for disloyalty to the party and for "putting his personal goals above those of the party." Fortwith the party's information organizations launched an organized campaign to hurt Soong. In reply, Soong said that the party "had strayed too much from its grass roots" and that the KMT is a party that "seeks money and power and has put these above the needs of the people."57

In ensuing months, the campaign contest between Lien and Soong hardened still further. Lien told an audience in Linkou (near Taipei), Soong's hometown, that Soong would ruin what it had taken Taiwan 50 years to accomplish and that he, Soong, had never taken a position on any major issues. Lien also began to play the ethnic card, saying that Soong could not even pronounce the word saliva in Taiwanese. In this context he asserted that "we should not allow others to decide our fate" (making reference to the fact that Soong was not born in Taiwan).58 Soong replied that he did not oppose party politics, but when put above the nation a party becomes a gang (making veiled reference to the KMT's image of ties with criminals).

CHEN Shui-bian quickly took advantage of the Lien-Soong feud to proclaim that he was interested in issues. At this time he promised to give Kinmen (Quemoy) tax free status to attract business. He also put Lien and Soong in the same category, referring to both of them as pan-KMT.59 In following weeks and months, Chen's campaign organizers issued a number of "White Papers" on issues ranging from health care to foreign policy and other matters.

57. "KMT finally put end to Soong saga," *Taipei Times*, November 18, 1999 (from the internet).
To many, the policy studies gave the impression Chen was serious about political reform and was concentrating on matters of real concern to the people.

The KMT intra-party feud got worse. In early December, the KMT, according to several press accounts, without compunction defined Soong as the party’s enemy. On December 6, the ruling party expelled members who were loyal to Soong, including seven members of the Legislative Yuan, thereby reducing the KMT’s majority from 123 to 117 in the 225-member body. It also “black listed” these people.60 Two days later President Lee launched what he declared was a “100-day war” for the presidency. His statements attacking Soong sounded bitter, as if he and the party hated Soong and considered him the paramount threat to a KMT election win in March. Lee said: “Some turncoats are trying to use a Nazi-style supra-party alliance to destroy democratic party politics.” He went on to attack Soong’s “petty language about public opinion” and his “foggy as frosted glass” views. Lee assailed Soong’s supporters as “fickle political opportunists” and the “most conservative and interest-driven elements in the party” and promised further expulsions from the party for those who failed to support LIEN Chan. “We must ruthlessly drive them out,” Lee said. Lee also barked: “Ignore public opinion!” To which one of Soong’s supporters retorted: “Lee’s tirade is standard mudslinging.” An expelled legislator retorted angrily that if he were driven by self-interest he would have stayed in the party waiting for a handout.61

On December 9, the effort to wound Soong reached new heights when a little-known KMT legislator, YANG Chi-hsiung, accused Soong of channeling over NT$ 100 million into an account at Chung Hsing Bills Finance Corp. in his son’s name in 1991. Yang followed up on that accusation, saying that another NT$116 million was put into Soong’s son’s name in 1992 just after the year-end election. Since James SOONG’s son was not employed in 1991, the first transfer looked odd to say the least. And since Soong was secretary general of the KMT at that time the second transfer of funds was allegedly made, it looked to be kickback money.62 Soong promised to make a statement to clear up the matter.

Soong's ratings in the polls plummeted immediately, dropping in some polls even below Lien's. The reason these charges hit Soong so hard, unlike, for example, his expulsion from the party, was that Soong's supporters, many of whom were not members of political parties and probably many undecided voters, had high hopes that Soong, as president, would reform the government and deal with corruption. Also, Soong's delay in answering the charges caused the media to speculate and write a spate of negative editorials, prompting many voters to question his sincerity and many to believe the charges. In fact, according to one poll, 70 percent of the public didn't believe Soong's excuses.63

The scandal also gave CHEN Shui-bian and the DPP a chance to reclaim the reformist platform. Chen also gained from picking Annette LU as his vice presidential candidate (the first female vice presidential candidate and a well-known activist) at this juncture and from announcing several new policy initiatives. Chen was clearly given a choice opportunity to appeal to the public on issues of substance and improve his image while the KMT and Soong fought. KMT leaders seemed to underrate Chen at the time. Anyway, it was widely reported at this time that the ruling party did not consider Chen seriously and it was the KMT's strategy to "first break Soong and then bash Chen."64

Just days later, Soong's son was being investigated for tax evasion. Soong himself was accused of tax evasion and money laundering. Soong remained silent on the issue.65 The next day Soong offered an explanation: that President LEE Teng-hui had instructed him to transfer the money to be used for CHIANG Ching-kuo's family. Chiang had left a wife and three sons and had only a small inheritance. But why the money had not gone to them was unclear. Also, Soong had earlier said that the first money that went into his son's account was from "an elder" and that the money was repaid. Soong seemed contrite and promised to check further into the matter. SU Jyh-cherng of the presidential office said Soong had issued a "pack of lies" and that the party had already provided money ($NT30 million for Chiang) and asked why Soong had kept the


money for seven years. The DPP said that Soong's explanations "were full of holes."

President Lee soon jumped into the fray saying that Soong's explanation about the money was "nonsense" and that Soong had embezzled or stolen the money. At the same time, the KMT's Dynasty Investment Company, which Soong had said transferred the money, denied Soong's explanation was true. Soong, while campaigning, noted that his relationship with Lee was very good in the past and that Lee trusted him with money matters and important duties. The public reaction was unfavorable to Soong, but it also hurt the KMT's campaign, since many people said this was typical of Taiwan's political environment under Nationalist rule. Some New Party members and Soong supporters went on the attack, questioning how many such accounts, like the one Soong allegedly used, existed and how much money the KMT had and its sources.

In response, and probably to help his own image, LIEN Chan announced that, if elected, he would end KMT business operations and its ownership of a vast business empire. The announcement, presented at the opening of his Taipei Headquarters, was also intended to give some needed zest to Lien's campaign. The proposal was part of a six-point reform package that also included eliminating criminal influence from politics, ending special privileges, improving the judicial system, establishing a referendum system and increasing efficiency in government.

President LEE Teng-hui immediately endorsed the plan, calling it the "third wave of reform" (the first being CHIANG Ching-kuo's economic reform and the second Lee's political reform). LIU Tai-ying, who ran the KMT's business operations, was silent. Rumors circulated that he did not agree and that President Lee was also at odds with Lien about the issue. In any event, CHEN Shui-bian called the idea "impossible." Other DPP leaders called it an empty promise. Many people seemed surprised by the announcement and wondered if Lien could do anything quickly, if indeed at

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70. Ibid.
all. Some observers felt that Lien had made a mistake, since it was unlikely that he could do anything significant by the time of the election and therefore would be seen to have lied.\textsuperscript{71}

As the campaign officially opened, the Soong “money issue” was the major topic before the electorate. KMT money and Lien’s proposal to put KMT funds in trust was a close second. But before assessing the official campaign, it is necessary to look at the candidates and their positions on the issues.

\section*{IV. THE CANDIDATES AND THEIR PLATFORMS}

Compared to most democratic countries, the electorate was very aware of the candidates’ backgrounds and qualifications. Still the campaign organizations of each widely advertised their candidates’ qualifications as well as those of their running mates.\textsuperscript{72}

James SOONG was born in China in 1942. Though he could barely remember the place of his birth and grew up in Taiwan, he is considered a “mainland Chinese,” and is thus part of a minority group in Taiwan that is around 14 percent of the population. He was active as a youth, joining the Nationalist Party at age nineteen. He received a good education and studies in the United States. Soong obtained a Ph.D. from Georgetown University after which he returned to Taiwan.

His first important position in government was director general of the Government Information Office from 1979 to 1984. In that position, he became well known to the public and was considered bright, handsome and charismatic. He subsequently served as head of the Nationalist Party’s Department of Cultural Affairs until 1987 and secretary general of the Nationalist Party from 1988 to 1993.

In 1988, upon the death of CHIANG Ching-kuo, Soong strongly and courageously supported LEE Teng-hui to head the ruling party at a time when forces mobilized to oppose Lee. Many of the “old guard” KMT members did not trust Lee and were concerned about the fact Lee was Taiwanese. Some said Soong put his career on the line for Lee.

Soong also stood behind Lee in 1990 during another time of crisis for Lee. In 1990, when Lee ran for reelection (the National

\textsuperscript{71} The author heard this from a number of ordinary people and scholars.
\textsuperscript{72} For background information on the candidates see various issues of the \textit{Republic of China Yearbook}. Also see John F. Cooper, \textit{Historical Dictionary of Taiwan (Republic of China)} (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000). The candidates all had web sites that could be accessed locally through the Government Information Offices site.
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Assembly at the time cast votes for presidential candidates), he was challenged by the popular Taiwanese politician, LIN Yang-kang, and CHIANG Kai-shek's second son and half-brother of CHIANG Ching-kuo, CHIANG Wei-kuo. Soong again supported Lee. Returning the favor, Lee appointed Soong governor of Taiwan Province in 1993. In 1994, in the first election for provincial governor, Soong was elected with Lee's support, collecting more than half of the votes.

As governor, appointed before he was elected to the office, Soong was extremely popular. During the campaign for governor in 1994, Soong proved to be a formidable campaigner. He won over fifty percent of the popular vote in a contest with three other candidates. As a mainland Chinese vying for votes among an electorate that is around 85 percent Taiwanese, he successfully bridged the "ethnic" gap and demonstrated a formidable talent in democratic election politics.

As governor, both as an appointee and after he was elected, Soong became known as a man of the people. He garnered good press both in Taiwan and abroad for frequently visiting his constituents and caring about the common person, not to mention taking care of his employees. Soong was also long considered an honest and upright politician among many who were not.

In November, Soong picked as his running mate physician CHANG Chao-hsiung. Chang was not Soong's first choice and he brought to the ticket virtually no political experience. Some said, however, that this might be an asset. Chang was well known as a heart surgeon and built a reputation for administrative ability as president of Chang Gung University. As a Taiwanese, Chang ethnically balanced Soong, and he fit with Soong's campaign slogan of bridging the gap between parties or transcending party politics. Chang and his family had long had close ties with both the Nationalist Party and the Democratic Progressive Party. Chang himself had close ties with the DPP. He had earlier drafted a medical white paper for CHEN Shui-bian. Chang was also said to be able to bring money to the ticket, being close to business tycoon WANG Yung-ching. When Chang joined the ticket, Soong's ratings went up.

73. Chiang Wei-kuo later stated in public that he was not Chiang Kai-shek's son; at the time it was presumed that he was.

74. Soong had talked to a number of well known figures, including Wu Po-hsiung, who had been considered by the KMT as Lien's vice-presidential running mate.

LIEN Chan was born in 1936, like Soong in China; but Lien's father was from Taiwan, so he was considered Taiwanese (though his mother was Manchurian). He grew up in Taiwan in a wealthy family and attended university in the United States, receiving his Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago.

Lien returned to Taiwan and held a number of positions in government. By the age of 45 he was a cabinet minister, the youngest person ever to serve in that capacity in the government of the Republic of China. He was also the youngest ever to be promoted to the Central Standing Committee of the Nationalist Party. Lien was minister of transportation and communications from 1981 to 1987, vice premier from 1987 to 1988, minister of foreign affairs from 1988 to 1990, governor of Taiwan province from 1990 to 1993, premier from 1993 to 1997 and vice president from 1996 to the present. Lien was clearly the most experienced of all the presidential candidates. Many people considered Lien to be politically astute, though he did not have the popular image of Soong. Lien was a more traditional-type leader.

Lien chose Premier Vincent SIEW as his running mate. Siew was born in Taiwan of Taiwanese parents. He had served as director of the Board of Foreign Trade (in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and as chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council and Minister of Economic Affairs. He was elected to the Legislative Yuan before being appointed premier in 1997. Siew was considered affable and a good campaigner, though, as noted above, his reputation had been sullied somewhat by difficulties with the legislature since he has been premier. According to a January poll asking about the vice presidential running candidates, Siew was rated lowest in job efficiency and helpfulness to the ticket.76

LI Ao was born in Harbin China and was educated at National Taiwan University. His career was almost exclusively that of a writer and publisher. He was also, however, an activist in his early years and spent over seven years in prison for opposing the government. He was considered one of the first activists for democracy in Taiwan. Li founded or edited a number of magazines and journals and has written over one hundred books. In January 2000, his novel *Beijing Fa Yuan Si* (Martyr's Shrine) was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature.77

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77. From materials handed out at Li Ao press briefing on March 12, 2000.
In August 1999, when the New Party picked him as its nominee, he took the opportunity of press attention to criticize the government and the other nominees, including James SOONG, though he said that voters should vote for Soong, as he was the least incompetent and corrupt of the three main candidates. It was clear at that time that Li would play the role of provocateur and possible spoiler. Some observers commented at the time that the New Party was not serious about competing in the election and only picked Li because he would embarrass the KMT and bring chaos to the campaign. This was thought to indicate that the NP had no future.\textsuperscript{78}

Li picked FUNG Hu-hsiang as his running mate. Fung was also born in China, in Shanghai, and studied in Taiwan and the United States. He received a Ph.D. degree in philosophy from Boston University. Fung had been an academic, publishing several books, but had also been in politics for some years, working as a secretary to President CHIANG Ching-kuo and more recently as a legislator.\textsuperscript{79}

HSU Hsin-liang was born in Taiwan and received a degree from Chengchi University after which he studied at Edinburgh University. Hsu was Hakka. Early in his career he was a member of the Nationalist Party, but ran as an independent when he failed to get his party’s endorsement to run for magistrate of Taoyuan County in 1977. He won the election, but soon after fled to the United States amidst a feud with the government and the ruling party and legal charges against him. While in the United States “in exile,” he formed the Taiwan Revolutionary Party and advocated urban guerrilla warfare in Taiwan to overthrow the government.

In November 1986, shortly after the formation of the Democratic Progressive Party and just before a national election in December, Hsu tried to return to Taiwan but was blocked from doing so by Taiwan authorities. He succeeded in returning in 1987 following the termination of martial law. He became active in the Democratic Progressive Party and was subsequently elected party chairman. His views, which were earlier quite radical, mellowed considerably and he headed the more moderate Formosa Faction of the DPP.

When he failed to win the DPP’s nomination to run for president, he decided to leave the party and run as an independent. Hsu had difficulty raising money and his support rate in most polls

\textsuperscript{78} The author heard this from a number of people in Taiwan at the time and it was also mentioned by television commentators.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
hovered only around one percent. He also had problems finding a running mate and asked LI Ao to join him. He finally settled on Chu Hui-liang, a female legislator and member of the New Party.\footnote{Allen Pun, “Independent Hsu on ‘quixotic’ quest for the presidency,” \textit{Free China Journal}, December 13, 1999, p. 1.}

CHEN Shui-bian was born in Taiwan in 1951 of a poor, southern Taiwan family. From childhood through law school at Taiwan National University, he ranked at the top of his class. Before age 30 he became famous in Taiwan for defending dissidents arrested following the Kaohsiung Incident in 1979. Chen was later convicted of libel and served eight months in jail.

Chen joined the Democratic Progressive Party at its founding in 1986. From 1981 to 1985 he served on the Taipei City Council. He later won two terms in the legislature, representing the DPP as an activist lawmaker from 1989 to 1994. In 1994, he gained national recognition when he was elected mayor of Taipei. Some said, however, that the ruling Nationalist Party threw the race to him to avoid losing to JAW Shao-kong, the candidate of the New Party. Nevertheless, Chen, according to most, did a good job as mayor and cultivated an image of someone who might win higher office. He typically had 70 percent positive opinion ratings when mayor. Nevertheless, he lost a bid for reelection in 1998.\footnote{Allen Pun, “Chen campaigns in middle ground,” \textit{Free China Journal}, December 10, 1999, p. 1.}

Chen long supported democratic reform in Taiwan and was a staunch advocate of an independent Taiwan while opposing the government’s one-China policy. In fact, he put a provision in the DPP’s charter calling for an independent Taiwan. Chen, however, avoided participation in the party’s two main factions and in 1991 founded the Justice Alliance “group” which he said was not a faction.

In December, Chen chose Annette LU, a well known DPP activist, as his vice presidential running mate. Lu was born and grew up in Taiwan. She received a good education locally and then studied at Harvard University in the United States. In 1979, Lu was arrested when she joined protestors who battled police during a Human Rights Day parade in Taiwan’s second largest city, Kaohsiung. Chen, in fact, defended her in court. She was sentenced to 12 years in prison and served just over five, for which, according to some of her friends, she blamed the United States (because President Carter granted diplomatic recognition to China in late 1978.
resulting in the canceling of an important election in Taiwan, evoking an outburst of anti-government opposition that led to the above-mentioned Kaohsiung Incident). In 1992, she was elected to the Legislative Yuan and from 1996 to 1997 served as a senior advisor to President Lee even though she remained a member of the DPP. In 1997, she became magistrate of Taoyuan County. 82

At the time she was picked to be Chen’s running mate (which occurred before Hsu made his vice presidential pick), she proclaimed that she was the only female candidate. She further declared that “we can do what the United States has not done and the KMT will not do.” She also stated that she sought to meet with China’s President JIANG Zemin after the election. 83 Subsequent polls indicated that she was considered the most effective of the vice presidential candidates. 84

Lu was seen by most voters as an adamant supporter of Taiwan’s independence and an activist supporting other causes, and a feminist. Some thought that in a party comprised almost exclusively of Taiwanese (many who had been inculcated with Japanese culture, including male chauvinism), her views would present problems. Others lauded her energy, competence, commitment, ability as a campaigner and her knowledge of the United States (which Chen lacked).

By the time the candidates picked their running mates and got into a serious campaign mode, it became apparent that the two issues that would dominate the debate and be the focus of press attention were cross-strait relations, and “black gold” or corruption and money politics, along with the involvement of criminals in politics. Other issues, like the economy, welfare, and education, faded in importance.

The candidates were defined by pundits as left, middle and right on the political spectrum, but this seemed to make little difference to the electorate. Chen was characterized as left of center for his and the party’s views on economic and social issues in the past on independence. Both Chen and the DPP were also labeled leftist because of their opposition to the “conservative” KMT and because the party portrayed itself as a party of change and progress.

82. “Chen announces Annette Lu as running mate,” Taiwan Headlines, December 10, 1999 (on the internet).
83. Ibid.
However, Chen early on diluted his views on cross-strait relations to the extent he could not be easily differentiated from Lien or Soong. His anti-corruption themes did not seem to have a political slant that could be defined well, though it was a strong point in his campaign. Chen took what some observers called a “socialist” position on welfare, aid to the elderly, funds for children in day care and other programs, but these did not get a lot of attention. In any case, conservative and moderate critics asked where the money was going to come from and warned that Chen’s projects would hurt the economy. Neither Chen’s proposals, nor the criticism of them, had much resonance.85

Soong was called the conservative of the three candidates, largely because of his past views on relations with China (anti-independence) and the fact he is mainland Chinese and thus is associated with the older KMT faction. He also had strong support from the New Party which has been labeled right of center. Soong likewise had considerable support from the business community. Soong, however, was a strong supporter of further democratization and spoke a lot, generally very credibly since he had been close to the people when he was governor, of a caring government, fulfilling the wishes of the people, and responsive to the public pulse. He made efficiency in government one of his hallmarks. He gave a lot of attention to minority issues and attracted the support of women. Finally, he addressed trade and foreign policy matters and seemed to be quite internationalist, especially compared to Chen.

Lien was called the moderate candidate of the three. He spoke much more about maintaining stability and keeping the status quo than the other two. This was natural since Lien represented the party in power and also because he depended upon President LEE Teng-hui for support. Thus, he personified the status quo. He gave more attention to economic issues than the other candidates, since the KMT was seen as the party to best manage the economy. He talked more about experience in government, since he upstaged the other candidates in this realm. Lien indeed tried to portray himself as both “middle of the road” and “safe” on the issue of cross-strait relations. However, at the time he tried to build a reformist image by advocating that KMT assets should be put into trust and by set-

ting out proposals to deal with crime, corruption, social and labor problems. 86

LI Ao, being a candidate of the New Party, was labeled a conservative. His views on China also gave him this image: agreeing with Beijing’s “one nation, two systems” approach to dealing with Taiwan in particular. His strident criticism of LEE Teng-hui and CHEN Shui-bian also got him this reputation. His background as a writer and critic caused some to think of him as less conservative, but more so abroad than locally, because in Taiwan academics are not seen as left of center politically.

HSU Hsin-liang, earlier in his career, was viewed as politically very left. In recent years, however, he changed, and during the campaign was not often defined as liberal or conservative. He was critical of the DPP and advocated a much more friendly policy toward Beijing than the other candidates, except for LI Ao. His views on economic and social issues did not get much attention.

On the issue of cross-strait relations, the differences between the candidates was more a matter of nuance than substance. Still what they said about relations with the mainland got a lot of attention. Their views on the issue of “black gold” better identified the candidates in the minds of the voters.

On Taiwan’s identity or status, Soong took the view that the Republic of China has been a sovereign state since 1912 and that it (Taiwan) is not a province of the People’s Republic of China. At times he stated this very forcefully in order to erase the image that he is pro-Beijing or that he might “sell out” Taiwan, as his opponents charged. He stated that Taipei and Beijing have a “special relationship,” but that neither is subservient. He said that “at the present stage” Taiwan does not accept reunification. He suggested as a palliative to strained cross-strait relations “practical contacts” and “peaceful coexistence.” He criticized President Lee’s “special state to state relations” as unnecessarily provocative. He asserted that Taiwan should not practice “money diplomacy” and should not deliberately bait Beijing.

Soong used the phrase “quasi-international relationship with relative sovereignty” to define the cross-strait relationship and said he would, if elected, seek to sign a 30-year non-aggression agreement with Beijing. He advocated implementing the “three links” (mail, trade and transportation ties that Beijing had proposed in the early 1980s and many people in Taiwan, especially businessmen,

86. For further details, see id., pp. 36-37.
have supported) and expressed reservations that LEE Teng-hui’s “Go Slow” policy (referring to establishing trade and investment ties with China) would cause Taiwan to lose business. He called for “building consensus” and testing public opinion.87

Soong’s opponents claimed that he was “in Beijing’s pocket” and could not be trusted. A more legitimate criticism was that “quasi-international” and other terms he used could not be defined and said little to clarify his position on the issues. This was offset to some degree, however, by the fact that Soong took a rather hard stance, at least in the short run, against unification, and based on his stint as governor and his work with local officials most people placed faith in his promise to protect Taiwan’s interests.

LIEN Chan also declared that the Republic of China was an independent country, one that had existed since 1912 and was present now along with the People’s Republic of China in the international community. He advocated that the dispute over sovereignty should “be put on hold.” He talked of the “four p” approach: pragmatism, parity, progress and peace. He supported Lee’s “special state-to-state” relationship but said it is not a two state theory and cannot be equated to Taiwan independence. Lien stated that the “three links” can be implemented only under conditions of security and dignity, and that the “Go Slow” policy will be adjusted but only after treatment of Taiwan-owned businesses in China can be made more “system-based.”

Critics of Lien’s policies contended that he was stuck to LEE Teng-hui’s policies and that, like Soong, his policies were too ambiguous. Lien had the advantage of being tied less than Soong to unpopular past KMT policies (Soong working for the party longer), but did suffer from not being able to depart from President Lee’s views very much and “be his own man.”

CHEN Shui-bian declared that Taiwan was a sovereign state called the Republic of China in the Constitution. This, he said, was recognized internally but need not be insisted on externally. He said that Taiwan was not part of the People’s Republic of China and the two neither govern nor have jurisdiction over the other. He abandoned a position that he had taken earlier: that of Taiwan’s independence.

In some ways Chen took a more accommodating (with Beijing) attitude than either of the other two top contenders. For example,

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he suggested promoting the "full normalization of relations" between the two sides while advocating pushing trade relations further and abandoning the LEE Teng-hui's "Go Slow" policy. He also supported the "three links." He said that Taiwan should begin dialogue and negotiations with Beijing immediately and talks should not be limited to issues discussed when the Koo-Wang talks left off.

Chen's views were criticized as reflecting a huge departure from his past views and, therefore, as simply campaign talk. His belief that trade and the market economy would make for smooth relations, some said, did not fit his "welfare mentality" on dealing with domestic economic issues. Chen's supporters said he was following public opinion and his changed views proved he was "ready to govern."

One critic concluded that "there wasn't a dime's worth of difference" among the top three and that, though the other two candidates, LI Ao and HSU Hsin-liang, had radically different views, they didn't matter. Thus, as the election date approached, except for the fact Beijing expressed its hostility toward Chen and this impacted public opinion, relations with China did not seem to be helping or hurting any candidate very much.

The candidates all took a strong stance against "black gold" but what they said was more often than not translated by the electorate according to their views of the candidates. Lien claimed to have lowered the crime rate and corruption in government when he was premier. Many, however, doubted if this was very meaningful. Lien's wealth often connected him in the minds of voters with money politics and corruption. Soong had cultivated the image of a clean politician, though he had "hands on" involvement with many projects and the use of money in campaigns both as secretary general of the KMT and as governor. Also the December revelations about Soong and the subsequent dogging KMT campaign hurt Soong badly. Chen built the image of a clean and straight-forward politician when he was mayor of Taipei, but there were also accusations being leveled against him.

The major candidates had political experience and had in some ways been seen as capable of dealing with the problem of criminal involvement in politics and money and corruption, yet all of them also were tainted, and their winning or losing on this issue hinged largely on how effective other candidates or the media painted them.

On economic issues there were some clear differences among the candidates. Lien advocated increasing the tax base while giving
tax payers more deductions. He also said he would give local governments more authority. Chen advocated tax reform and breaks to help education. He was seen, however, as likely to increase taxes. Soong advocated an overhaul of the tax system and seemed more likely to cut taxes. On agriculture, Lien advocated a network of farmers' banks and promised to upgrade the Council of Agriculture to ministry level. Chen would rezone. Soong called for government involvement in the free market. The views of the three candidates did not differ significantly on technology, finance or privatization, though they put forth some different policies.

The three candidates also gave considerable attention during the campaigns to education. Lien advocated increasing the number of years of mandatory education from nine to twelve, but was criticized when he did not explain how it would be financed. Chen made the same proposal. Soong's proposal for increasing the time of schooling was long-term. Lien backed building more universities, Chen changing testing and Soong more cooperation between education and business.

All three candidates talked a lot and supported policies favoring women. Lien called for amending the Constitution requiring 25 percent of seats in the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan be held by women. Chen called for 25 percent of government departments being staffed by women and pledged this same guideline, 25 percent, for his cabinet. Soong called for 25 percent women in legislative seats, the Control Yuan and senior government posts. All called for outlawing discrimination and for improving child care. Soong came closer than the other candidates to advocating the "right to choose" (regarding abortion).

As for other issues, all of the candidates had a platform dealing with youth, senior citizens, health, labor and the environment. Chen advocated a stipend of NT$3,000 for every citizen over 65. He was criticized for overspending by his opponents. The same was true of his advocacy of providing children under three with free medical care. Lien and Chen both came out for restrictions against foreign

88. See "About the candidates" information provided by the Government Information Office (on the internet at http://th.gio.gov.tw/p2000/ Also see articles on the candidates in Free China Review, March 2000. Taiwan's various newspapers also carried numerous stories on the candidates' backgrounds.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid.
workers. All had policies to help the Aborigines and other minority groups. Soong was the most credible in this area since he was seen to have established effective and caring policies when governor.

V. THE CAMPAIGN

Although the campaigning started a year or so before the election date, the presidential and vice presidential election contest was officially launched on February 19. The Election Commission limited the campaigning to twenty-eight days. Campaign activities could be held only for fifteen hours each day (from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.).

Four days prior to the beginning of the campaign period, the five candidates drew numbers that would be used to identify them during events leading up to the voting day and on the ballot. James SOONG drew number one. LIEN Chan drew number two, LI Ao number three, HSU Hsin-liang four, and CHEN Shui-bian number five. Each tried to make their number into something auspicious.94

On February 20, the candidates went head-to-head during a televised “policy presentation,” during which time each was given thirty minutes to present his position. Lien, who was first, talked about his experience, his success in implementing national health insurance and his “five perspectives and ten goals.” Soong criticized the government for fiscal irresponsibility, saying that when CHI-ANG Ching-kuo was president, the nation had a NT$ 50 billion surplus, compared to the present NT$ 300 billion deficit. He also said candidates’ platforms were similar and thus voters should decide based on who could actually implement his or her program. Chen called for a rotation of power and spoke of his unique role in bringing it to Taiwan. Hsu called Chen dangerous for his views on independence and Li used his time to speak about President LEE Teng-hui’s secret bank accounts abroad.95

The next day, on February 21, Beijing issued a “White Paper” on Taiwan, which asserted that China would employ military force against Taiwan if Taipei refused to negotiate reunification. The statement was the most threatening of its kind and in essence gave

93. Ibid.

94. Soong, for example, said that he would end number one. Lien spoke of he and Lee winning the last election.

Taipei an ultimatum. The paper warned that China "will not permit the 'Taiwan question' to drag on..." Previous Chinese threats were put differently: they were phrased if Taiwan did something (such as declare independence, allow foreign military bases on Taiwan, etc.); this time they were phrased if Taiwan did not do something. Since opinion polls in Taiwan showed that around 80 percent of the population wanted to maintain the status quo, China's "White Paper" was construed to be against the will of the people of Taiwan and thus ominous. Beijing's declaration certainly redirected the electorate's attention to the issue of cross-strait relations and away from other matters.

The stock market immediately fell by 3.2 percent, but closed the day only 1.8 percent lower. A poll taken the next day revealed that 68 percent of the people were not worried about a PLA invasion of Taiwan.97

Taiwan citizens did not panic, probably because of a strong U.S. reaction and moderate positions taken by the three main presidential candidates in Taiwan. In Washington, Presidential spokesperson John Lockhart declared that the United States rejected any use of force or threats of the use of force. Assistant Secretary of State for Asia and the Pacific, Stanley Roth, declared that Beijing's paper "appeared to be contrary to the policy that is the bedrock of our relations with China and Taiwan." Congress took a much stronger line. In fact, a number of members of Congress called the Administration's reaction too weak. Senator John Kerry (Democrat from Massachusetts) called the statement "unacceptable."98 The Pentagon spoke of "incalculable consequences" if China followed through on its threats.99

The government in Taipei initially made only a brief and innocuous reply. Candidate CHEN Shui-bian took a softer position. James SOONG took a little harder position saying: "We will not go

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96. The "White Paper" was entitled "The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue." It was released by the Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council, China's cabinet.


to China to negotiate the terms for surrender." Lien took a moderate, non-committal position.100

Beijing subsequently rebuffed Washington’s threats, causing the issue to become one more of Sino-American relations than cross-strait relations. Thus, even a serious escalation, as described in the People’s Liberation Army Daily, to the effect that 2.5 million soldiers were “urged to contribute to protecting the motherland” did not cause all that much concern in Taiwan.101

As this issue faded, at least partially, several incidences that occurred concurrently began to have an impact. At the time Beijing issued the “White Paper,” a Taichung District judge ordered the search of former Legislative Yuan speaker LIU Sung-pan’s house in connection with a fraud and embezzlement case involving a person that bought a bank Liu formerly headed. Since Liu was the most prominent KMT official in Taiwan to support James SOONG and had influenced others to do the same, the action seemed patently political. Soong’s lawyer said the search was illegal since it did not specify what was being sought. Other Soong people said it was blatantly partisan and attacked the KMT for it.102

At the same time, a scandal involving CHEN Shui-bian heated up when lawmaker LIN Jui-tu tried to expose Chen for using his office (when he was mayor of Taipei) to “extract” a NT$200 million loan from a Malaysian company in return for issuing the city’s welfare lottery tickets. Lin accused Chen of not repaying the money. Chen replied that there was no such agreement or loans and that his cousin had forged his signature.103 A few days later, Chen deflated the charges to some degree by promising to resign from the campaign if the accusations proved true.104

Late in the month, former presidential candidate CHEN Li-an endorsed LIEN Chan. It was qualified support, however, as Chen called the KMT “really rotten” but said, in the context of cross-

strait tension, Lien would be the best negotiator. Some observers remarked that Chen would not have much impact on voters anyway.

In the beginning of March, the KMT came under attack by other candidates for using pension funds to prop up the stock market and because the National Police Administration was involved in organizing support for LIEN Chan.

At this time, rumors began to spread and the media started speculating about a rift between President Lee and LIEN Chan, especially regarding mainland policy. The party denied a rift, but CHEN Li-an made public comments that helped confirm the alleged disagreements. President Lee, perhaps to refute the charges, for the first time used strong language against CHEN Shui-bian. Lee said: “If this kind of person is allowed to become president, the more things he does the more chaotic it will get.” But Lee continued to attack Soong, and the more acerbic and hostile remarks were saved for him. Lee, while attacking Chen, said that Soong would be “tossed out” in a Western country (referring to charges against him for taking KMT funds) while urging the public to “open their eyes.” Meanwhile, CHEN Shui-bian’s aides sued over the bribery charges concerning the lottery deal cited above.

In ensuing days, the candidates appealed to the religious voter, even though Taiwan is known to be one of the freest countries in the world, in terms of religious liberties and few people vote their religion. Both Soong and Lien appeared at temples in the presence of known religious figures. The news had no shelf life, though, as at the same time the People’s Liberation Army’s highest ranking officer declaring that Taiwan’s independence meant war. Two

106. “Government funds prop up TAIEX,” and “Commissioner irate over poll bias by police,” both in China Post (international edition), March 1, 2000, p. 1.
109. Ibid.
112. “PLA general warns that independence means war,” China Post (international edition), March 6, 2000, p. 1. The statement was made by General Zhang Wannian, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission.
days later, Beijing announced that its military spending would be increased by 12.7 percent and cited Taiwan as the reason for the boost in the defense budget. The next day the United States announced the possible sale of HAWK missiles to Taiwan, signaling, according to some in the media, that Taiwan's voters need not be intimidated by China. Simultaneous with this announcement, the head of U.S. forces in the Pacific stated that China lacked the military might to invade Taiwan.

Meanwhile, Soong received an endorsement from former Minister without Portfolio David CHUNG, who blamed the KMT for the "corruption mess" while praising Soong as the best candidate to deal with China. Taichung speaker YEN Ching-biao also proclaimed his support for Soong, saying that Soong "genuinely cared for the people."

On March 10, LEE Yuan-tseh, head of Academia Sinica and a Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry, the only Taiwanese ever to win the prize, announced he would be an adviser to CHEN Shui-bian. Lee had earlier made statements in support of Chen but came up short of offering to play a role in a future Chen government. The announcement was played up by the Chen campaign, which cited Lee as the likely premier in a Chen government if Chen won the election. At the time, the announcement appeared to be highly beneficial to the Chen campaign. It seemed clearly to outweigh the endorsements received by Lien and Soong at this time.

On Sunday March 12, the New York Times carried an article on Taiwan's election, charging the KMT with a massive vote buying effort and saying that it had allocated US$60 million for that purpose. This provided grist for the Chen and Soong campaign organizations' people who had been attacking the KMT on this issue. Subsequently a "supra-party alliance" consisting of members of all parties and independents in the Legislative Yuan called a press conference and delineated the kinds of vote buying that were going on. It cited in detail nine kinds: (1) NT$2,000 gifts given by election

officials under the guise of ballot box supervision, (2) the same amount given with election literature, (3) the giving of receipts of bets for LIEN Chan with gambling houses, (4) paying wives to distribute campaign jackets, (5) paying stumpers to organize banquets where they provided free food and drink, (6) giving funds to small restaurants that would pay customers to vote for Lien, (7) using Buddhist-named organizations to pay people to pay homage, (8) paying travel expenses of voters (even from abroad), and (9) paying village chiefs to organize voters for Lien.\footnote{118}

At this juncture, the New Party invited Christine Deviers-Joncour, the ex-mistress of former French foreign Minister Roland Dumas, to Taiwan to provide information on questionable activities regarding Taiwan’s purchases in 1992 of Lafayette frigates from France, worth US$2.7 billion. LI Ao called a news conference where he charged that Taiwan had paid as much as US$1 billion more than the ships should have cost, and that this undoubtedly got back to KMT politicians in the form of kickbacks. Deviers-Joncour subsequently provided evidence to the Control Yuan (where she posed for photographs for newspapers) to supposedly clear her name.\footnote{119} The incident, which was orchestrated by the New Party, nevertheless further tarred the KMT.

Meanwhile, on Monday March 13, the stock market in Taiwan suffered a record fall of 617.65 points or 6.6 percent of its value (the eleventh worst drop in percentage terms). Since individual investors account for 90 percent of the stocks traded each day and a large percentage of the population owns stocks, the impact on the election might be considerable, though it was at the time unsure how this might influence voters.\footnote{120} Soong’s supporters charged politicians with “making unfavorable remarks at the expense of investors’ interests” and said some were violating the Stock Transaction Law, pointing fingers mainly at the KMT. CHEN Shui-bian accused the KMT directly of market manipulation in order to secure votes by frightening stockholders. Although KMT officials denied this, the fact that President Lee the day before had said that only Lien’s victory could bring stability to the stock market and a win by another candidate would cause the market to drop by 2,000 to 3,000


points, Chen’s accusation seemed credible.\textsuperscript{121} Accusations also flew in the direction of the KMT, averring that the ruling party was desperate in view of the fact that Chen had attracted a reported 400,000 people to a campaign rally on Sunday in Kaohsiung, the largest such gathering to date.

On March 13, LEE Yuan-tseh made a firm commitment to Chen when he declared he was resigning his post and was joining the Chen campaign. He cited the sovereignty issue (meaning cross-strait relations and China’s intimidation of Taiwan) and “black gold” as his reasons. Lee praised Chen for his resolve in cracking down on corruption and said he would put the national interest above the DPP’s agenda (meaning he believed Chen’s position on the matter of Taiwan’s national identity).\textsuperscript{122} He later mentioned that he was “sickened” to see LIEN Chan in public together with well-known criminals and that influenced him to support Chen.

LEE Yuan-tseh’s decision gave Chen’s campaign a major boost. Lee was viewed by the public as Taiwan’s top academic and a person of character and high ethical standards.\textsuperscript{123} Being a friend of President LEE Teng-hui, his decision also gave support to the rumors that President Lee secretly supported Chen for president and not LIEN Chan.

Supporting the view that President Lee secretly supported Chen, SHU Wen-long, chairman of Chi Mei Corporation, one of Taiwan’s large and famous companies, came out in support of Chen. Shu had a long standing reputation for supporting democracy in Taiwan and was close to both President LEE Teng-hui and LEE Yuan-tseh. His announcement also gave a shot in the arm to Chen’s campaign efforts.\textsuperscript{124}

The next day LIEN Chan published a list of 88 people who would advise him as a kind of “transition team.” At the same time, the Ministry of National Defense said it would investigate the Lafayette ship deal. Madam CHIANG Kai-shek and WANG Yung-

\textsuperscript{123} Lee Yuan-tseh was born in Taiwan and graduated from National Taiwan University in 1959. He received his Master of Science degree from National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan and his Ph.D. degree from the University of California at Berkeley. He won the Nobel Prize in 1986. In 1994, he returned to Taiwan to head Academic Sinica the premier academic institution in Taiwan.
\textsuperscript{124} “Chi Mei chairman puts weight behind Chen,” \textit{China Post}, March 14, 2000, p. 20.
ching, head of Formosa Plastics, endorsed LIEN Chan (though Wang’s statement was somewhat equivocal). Also, President Lee denied that there was such a thing as a “LEE Teng-hui path” which CHEN Shui-bian was allegedly following. However, none of these stories seemed to have the impact on voters that LEE Yuan-tseh’s announcement of supporting Chen had.

Three days before the day of voting China’s Premier Zhu Rongji, during a 90-minute news conference to mark the end of a session China’s National People's Congress, warned Taiwan’s voters to “shun a pro-independence candidate” (clearly meaning Chen) on Saturday (voting day) as “they would not get a second chance.” Zhu went on to say that the Chinese were “ready to shed blood” and that “anyone who said that China did not have the missiles, ships or aircraft to invade Taiwan had misread history.” Zhu’s picture, showing an angry and fierce looking face, was published on the front page of all of Taiwan’s major newspapers.

Further elaborating on what he said, Zhu barked: “Let me advise all of these people in Taiwan: do not act on impulse at this juncture which will decide the future course that China and Taiwan will follow. Otherwise, I am afraid you won’t get another opportunity.” Zhu also said that the stock market crash that Monday reflected fears that Taiwan’s relations with China might worsen and was a measure of the “arrogance of pro-Taiwan independence forces.” He concluded that “Taiwan will never be allowed to be independent.” “This is our bottom line and the will of 1.25 billion Chinese people.”

CHEN Shui-bian responded, saying that “China was playing the ‘terror card.'” He went on to assert that “Taiwan won’t be scared by the threats of force” and that Taiwan “won’t reunify with China under the ‘one country, two systems’ formula used for Hong Kong and Macao.” “Taiwan is a sovereign independent country. It is not part of the People’s Republic of China,” Chen retorted. LEE Yuan-tseh moderated Chen’s comments, saying that Chen is not pro-independence as he used to be. Lee further mentioned that

125. See various stories in China News and Taipei Times.
127. Ibid.
Chen had discussed with him a role in organizing a cabinet if he were elected.\textsuperscript{129}

James SOONG told a rally of an estimated 300,000 that night that “people in Taiwan will not be intimidated.” He said: “Here in the Republic of China, all the people are entitled to freedom, democracy and the right to pursue happiness.” When asked if he would visit China if elected, Soong said he would not go if Taiwan’s integrity was not respected.\textsuperscript{130}

LIEN Chan commented that Chen’s support of independence and his calls for a change in the ruling party would cause instability, economic recession and war. He added, however, that Taiwan would not be influenced by another country. Lien’s comments were seen by some as too soft. Others said that Lien’s “backtracking” from President Lee’s “state-to-state” position, which Lien had heretofore supported, might cause difficulties for him. In any case, it did not appear that Lien was able to help himself with voters by taking a moderate position and warning of instability if Chen were elected.\textsuperscript{131}

At the time of Zhu’s comments it was unclear to most observers whether Zhu would scare more voters away from Chen or help Chen by causing a backlash. Since there were still many undecided voters it was certain to have some impact. The next day, it seemed that any impact was more in the direction of helping Chen as a result of resentment that developed toward Zhu’s attempt to intimidate voters and influence the outcome of a democratic election.\textsuperscript{132} This was confirmed by the fact that many of Chen’s and Soong’s campaign people condemned Zhu’s comments while saying that Taiwan would not relent or be influenced while talking about democratic values and Taiwan’s “sacred mission.”\textsuperscript{133}

Concern over Zhu’s remarks and strong support from the U.S. Congress and other high officials in Washington may have also in-


\textsuperscript{130} Paul Eckert, “Zhu Rongji warns Taiwan voters,” and “Chen urges voters to stand firm against ‘terror tactics,’” \textit{China Post}, March 16, 2000, p. 1.


\textsuperscript{132} This judgment is based on informally asking a number of scholars, news reporters, and potential voters at the time. Some stated that not only did Zhu try to intimidate Taiwan voters and affect the election, but that Chen Shui-bian had earlier warned that the KMT might do this.

fluenced the way Taiwan’s voters viewed Zhu’s threats. A number of members of Congress went on record supporting Taiwan’s democracy while condemning Zhu. National Security Advisor Sandy Berger had already announced a trip to Beijing to urge China to remain calm after the election. In addition, U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen told the media that China was not readying for an attack on Taiwan, while the Department of State summoned China’s ambassador to tell him to tone down the rhetoric against Taiwan.

Meanwhile a number of former high officials came out in support of James SOONG, including former Premier HAU Pei-tsun, former economics minister CHAO Yao-tung and former finance minister WANG Chien-hsien. The head of the New Party also endorsed Soong. President Lee, for the first time called on voters to “dump Soong to save Lien.”

The last day before the voting, friction between the Soong and Lien camps was the most intense. The friction appeared to help Chen. Concern about “black gold” and the China effect also were boosting his campaign. Other issues had faded and remained very much in the background.

VI. ELECTION RESULTS

The polls closed at 4 p.m., after which the votes were transferred from the districts to the vote-counting center in Taipei. They were tallied quickly by computer. The Election Commission had promised that the results would be known by 9 p.m. In fact, it was clear by 5:30 (due to the fact that the districts reported almost simultaneously) who had won and lost. Two hours later declarations of victory or defeat were being made by the various candidates.


137. Chiu Yu-tzu and Jou Ting-cheng, “President calls on electorate to dump James Soong to save LIEN Chan,” Taipei Times, March 17, 2000, p. 2.

138. The writer was on the scene at this time. Television stations were reporting winners based on five to ten percent of the vote.
CHEN Shui-bian won the election. James SOONG came in a close second. LIEN Chan was a distant third. The other two candidates, with HSU Hsin-liang a winner over LI Ao, did not receive enough votes to matter.

There was almost indescribable jubilation in the Chen camp. Many of Chen's advisors and supporters could hardly believe what had happened. They thanked everyone. They attributed the win to the electorate's desire for change and the DPP's fresh image. Some said it was for what they had worked for thirteen years (since the founding of the DPP). Some pronounced that the era of KMT "white terror" rule and oppression were over.139

The Soong camp expressed extreme disappointment. Soong supporters thought they should have won. Many wept. Some even fainted. But, they blamed the KMT, not Chen. Reflecting on what happened, Soong backers called for the formation of a new political party.140

Lien's supporters were more sober. They had hoped that they might somehow "pull it out" with good organization, fear tactics (because the populace was afraid of Chen's mainland policy), and by buying votes. They realized these tactics had not worked. Many were struck by the cold fact that they had split the vote and had given Chen the win and took it from Soong. Some were embarrassed. Many blamed President LEE Teng-hui.

Chen's win was described in various local newspapers as an event that "changed heaven and earth." "Executive power," the media noted, "had changed hands from the Nationalist Party to the opposition party." "Taiwan's politics would never be the same." All of Taiwan's newspapers, radio stations and television networks described the election outcome as a momentous event.

When the final vote tally was published, CHEN Shui-bian and his running mate Annette LU had won with 4,977,737 votes or 39.3 percent of the votes cast. The Soong team won 4,664,932 votes or 36.84 percent. LIEN Chan and Vincent SIEW won 2,925,513 votes or 23.10 percent. HSU Hsin-liang got 79,429 or 0.63 percent; and LI Ao garnered 16,782 or 0.13 percent. A total of 12,786,671 voters cast ballots. The voter turnout was a record 82.69 percent.141

140. Larry Dong, “Soong pledges to support Chen,” Taiwan News, March 19, 2000, p. 3.
To analyze the results of the election in greater depth and assess its significance in terms of Taiwan’s political future, some voting data needed to be dissected. Clearly what happened was more complicated than met the eye. Questions like, Who won where? Which candidates won the votes of the young, women and minority groups, needed to be addressed. Here also lies some of the answers to questions about how Chen will rule, the future of party politics and democracy itself in Taiwan, perhaps some insights about future elections, and more.

Vote counts from the districts revealed a distinct regional pattern in voting. Soong won a majority in the north, east and central part of the island, except for Yilan county. He won the smaller islands including the Quemoy and Matsu groups. Chen won in the south and southwest. Chen’s margin of victory in the areas where he won, however, was larger than Soong’s, accounting for his larger total vote count. Lien won nowhere. Looking at where the candidates won big: Soong won more than fifty percent of the vote (80.82 percent) in Fukien (Fujian according to the spelling in China) Province, which includes only the Offshore Islands near the coast of China, islands that have a very small local population but a large percent of Taiwan’s military vote. He also won a majority in Hualien and Taitung counties, with 58.81 and 52.78 percent, respectively. These are poor counties.

Chen won over fifty percent of the vote (53.78) in Tainan county only, the district where his hometown is located. Lien did best in Pingtung country in the south but got only 27.73 percent of the vote there. Soong won in Taipei, the capital and Taiwan’s largest city, but only by a small margin over Chen: 39.79 percent to 37.64 percent. Chen won big in Kaohsiung, Taiwan’s other metropolitan city, by a big margin: 45.79 percent to Soong’s 29.78 percent.

Chen captured the younger voters. A Chen supporter, in fact, explained his victory was made possible by the youth vote. Citizens under 40 constituted half of the electorate and there were 1.5 million new voters, he said, and most voted for Chen. Among the candidates, Soong did the best with women voters and got a majority of the votes from all of Taiwan’s minority groups: Aborigines, Hakka and mainland Chinese. Also, in a post-election poll, voters

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143. Ibid.
144. Stated by a DPP consultant at a meeting sponsored by the Center for Asian Studies at the University of Chicago on April 1, 2000.
said that among all of the candidates Soong conducted himself and his campaign the best.\textsuperscript{145}

Chen won voters without party identification (32.1 percent compared to Soong’s 24.7 percent and Lien’s 12.8 percent) and the undecided voter, both of which were much larger groups in this election than in the past.\textsuperscript{146} Chen also benefited from the high voter turnout (getting 48.1 percent of those who did not vote in the previous election compared to 23.2 voting for Soong and 12.1 percent voting for Lien).\textsuperscript{147}

All of this evoked the question: Did Chen come away with a mandate? In many ways he did not, or, so at least it could be argued.

Chen won the presidency with a plurality of the vote. In 1996, LEE Teng-hui had won with a majority, with over 54 percent of the popular vote. Lee won against three serious teams of competitors: the DPP’s PENG Ming-min (known as the father of Taiwan independence) and two other sets of independents, both well known to the voters. Lee, and Lien, in that election, won twenty-four of the nation’s twenty-five cities and counties and won over 50 percent of the vote in all of the main island’s counties except two.\textsuperscript{148}

Not only did Chen not win half of the vote, his margin of victory over Soong was very small, less than 3 percent. This gave rise to various explanations as to why Chen won at all and how it might have been otherwise. The margin of victory was grist for the argument that Chen was simply lucky.

There are clear explanations for his victory. The most often cited and clearly the main reason was that the traditional KMT vote split very evenly: 43.5 percent for Soong and 38.1 percent for Lien.\textsuperscript{149} Had this not happened, Chen would not have won. Had the KMT picked Soong instead of Lien, the results would have been dramatically different according to most observers. Had Lee not opposed a Lien-Soong ticket, the results also would have been very different. Had the KMT not disclosed information about Soong’s

\textsuperscript{145} See \textit{Lien Ho Pao} (United Daily News), March 20, 2000, p. 10.

\textsuperscript{146} The number of voters without party identification increased, compared with the last presidential election, in every city and country except Nantou. In some it increased by over 40 percent and in most by double digit amounts. See data chart in \textit{Chung Yang Ji Pao} (Central Daily News), March 19, 2000, p. 11.


\textsuperscript{148} See Copper, \textit{Taiwan’s Mid-1990s Elections}, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{149} \textit{Ibid}. 
financial dealings when he was secretary general of the party, he
would have won the election easily, pundits said. Had the KMT,
including President Lee, not bitterly attacked him during the cam-
paign; had rumors not circulated that President Lee favored Chen,
Soong would have won. Had party leaders not stated during the
latter days of the campaign that Soong had no chance to win, Soong
might have won for Lien. So many small things cost Soong the elec-
tion. KMT supporters noted that more than 60 percent of the voters
did not vote for Chen.

Had Soong not run or had he dropped out at some point and
thrown his support to Lien, Lien might have won. Finally, while
Chen was a very appealing candidate, the DPP’s performance as a
party dropped from winning 43.3 percent of the vote in city and
county magistrate elections in 1997. All of this cast doubt on Chen’s
victory, especially as to whether he had a mandate to rule.

Another factor to consider was that Chen would not have won
had Taiwan employed a different system of vote counting. Taiwan’s
electoral system is an odd one; there is no provision for avoiding
the problem of a winning candidate not garnering a majority of the
vote. In other words, there is no provision for voting for two can-
didates or for a run-off election. As noted earlier, a provision for a
run-off was debated and it might have been made a part of the Con-
stitution had another issue, the plebiscite, not been linked to it. Had
it passed (and most democracies have such a provision in their Con-
stitution or election laws) and had there been a run off election,
Chen would not likely have won the presidency.

However, having said this, the other candidates accepted his
victory and did not protest either the electoral system or the vote
counting. When the results were known, immediately James
SOONG pledged that he would wholeheartedly support the new
government. Soong declared: “We should support the new govern-
ment and let Taiwan become a true democracy to push for political
reform and ethnic harmony, and end white terror.” Soong went on
to state that “democracy means respecting people’s choice.” “There
are always winners and losers in a democratic election. What we
care about is the island’s democratic development and its
future.”

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150. Most democracies that have multi-party systems either have a provision for a
run-off election or some kind of system whereby voters can vote for more than one
candidate. Both systems guarantee a mandate.

151. Larry Dong, “Soong pledges to support Chen,” Taiwan News, March 19, 2000,
p. 3.
LIEN Chan also sent a message to Chen on his victory. Lien was less congratulatory; but neither Lien nor his advisors complained the election was unfair or that Chen should not be president. Lien’s comments after the election emphasized discovering what went wrong and rebuilding the party’s popularity.\footnote{152}

The reaction to Chen’s victory on the part of the Soong and Lien camps and the KMT generally was one of taking stock and doing something about the mistakes made, rather than challenging Chen’s mandate or questioning his ability to rule. Both the Soong camp and many KMT leaders blamed President LEE Teng-hui for the defeat, saying that he had split the party by alienating Soong and by surreptitiously, if not directly, helping Chen.

Finally, after the election was over, 62.8 percent of those surveyed by the United Daily News Press Group said that they were satisfied with the election result. Only 25.4 percent said they were dissatisfied. A larger number than thought otherwise opined that the political situation would be more stable because of Chen’s victory: 30 percent to 26.8 percent.\footnote{153}

If there were doubts about Chen’s ability to lead the country, it was most evident in the Chen camp. Many of his advisors and supporters were dumbfounded after the results were announced. Many seemed genuinely stunned. They had not thought they would win until a week or so before the election. They had thought little about what they would do after taking office. One top DPP leader asked: “What do we do now?” It seemed many found it difficult to shift gears and assume the role of the winner. Pondering the future presented some trauma.

On the other hand, Chen had during much of the campaign emphasized issues. The Chen campaign team wrote a number of policy papers. Chen had a blueprint for running the country. He and his supporters had to focus on running the government. And they did. Chen’s victory speech reflected cool-headedness and realism. It showed his desire to compromise. He seemed to know his limitations and what he had to do to be a successful president. He obviously knew that he would face many difficulties.

The reactions in other countries to the election were generally positive, though often with reservations, almost all focusing on the

153. \textit{Ibid.} About 13 percent perceived it would cause no change; 30 percent had no opinion.}
future of cross-strait relations. There was understandably some apprehension about Chen’s victory, and because of it, Taiwan’s future relationship with China. Many were worried about the possibility of conflict. China, of course, did not express congratulations or make any friendly statement.

In the United States, President Clinton congratulated the future president and vice president, CHEN Shui-bian and Annette LU, respectively, on their victory. He spoke in a positive tone about it being a contribution to Taiwan’s democracy. He also asserted, however, that it will result in no change in U.S. China policy and that Washington would retain its one-China stance. Clinton, it was reported, went further, conveying the message to Chen that he should negotiate Taiwan’s future with Beijing and accept Beijing’s one-China formula.\textsuperscript{154}

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright seconded President Clinton’s congratulations but also stressed that America’s policy toward Taiwan had not changed and would not change because of the election. She said: “They have had a very vibrant democratic election and that’s something obviously that is a part of what we believe is important for society, but we have not changed our one-China policy.” She also noted, seemingly very approvingly, that Chen’s first public comments after the election were careful and appropriate.\textsuperscript{155} This response contrasts to the State Department’s not congratulating LEE Teng-hui in 1996.

The response from Congress was very different: more positive and less conditional. Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, sent a congratulatory letter to Chen saying: “Your election will serve as a wake-up call. The people of Taiwan made clear this weekend that, if there is still ‘one China’ there are without question two Chinese states.” Helms went on to assert: “The time has come for the United States to adopt a China policy which recognizes this undeniable truth.” Tom DeLay, the Republican whip, went even further; he called Clinton Administration China policy “appeasement” and suggested a two-China policy.\textsuperscript{156} Senator John Kerry, a few days later, in a public address in


\textsuperscript{155} “Albright: Taiwan Head’s Words ‘Careful and Appropriate,’” AFP, March 19, 2000 cited in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), March 21, 2000.

Washington, declared that “the United States will never accept a rollback of democracy and freedom in Taiwan.”

Most other members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, applauded the election and congratulated the winners. In fact, forty members of the House of Representatives sent a formal letter of congratulations to president-elect Chen and in it stated that “Taiwan should not be compelled to accept Beijing’s ‘one country, two systems’ formulation.” The House also passed a resolution by a vote of 418-1 to congratulate Taiwan while reaffirming the Taiwan Relations Act and suggesting that Beijing renounce threats of force against Taiwan. The House also voted $75 million to build new facilities for the American Institute in Taiwan (Washington’s pseudo embassy in Taipei).

The U.S. media presented a favorable and supportive view of the election, a perspective closer to that of Congress than the Administration. Editorially the Wall Street Journal called Chen’s victory “convincing” and advised that the United States not treat Taiwan as an “embarrassing troublemaker,” pointing out that when Washington has given strong support to Taiwan, China has engaged in cross-strait talks. USA Today suggested that the United States continue to use economic leverage against China, in view of its intimidation of Taiwan and considering that the Taiwan issue would remain a hot topic. The New York Times spoke of Taiwan’s “democratic evolution” and its potentially dangerous uncertainty in future relations with China, noting Beijing’s failed efforts to defeat Chen. The Washington Post observed that the election was a major step in Taiwan “consolidating” its democracy and that China’s efforts in trying to keep Chen from winning had “backfired.” The Los Angeles Times called the election a “new chapter” in Taiwan’s political history.

Time magazine carried an article entitled “Taiwan Takes a Stand” lauding the election as democratic. The article quoted Chen who said it was the “greatest victory in Taiwan’s democracy move-

158. Ibid.
ment." Newsweek talked of the election as the “first democratic transfer of power in China’s 5,000-year history” and an event that “threatened the principle honored in Washington and Beijing that Taiwan is “just a wayward province.” U.S. News and World Report said the election “created a national identity for a renegade province.”

One newspaper in Britain applauded the election enthusiastically, calling it a “great opportunity for the West to stand up for Asian’s most promising democracy” despite “Chinese bullying.” Another called the election a “victory for democracy” and a defeat for JIANG Zemin, while describing Taiwan as a “role model.”

In Australia, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer expressed hope for future Taipei-Beijing talks. Opposition politicians, however, were quick to congratulate Taiwan and talk about its contribution to democracy in the region. Leaders from South Korean and Singapore were generally cautious in their comments about the election while encouraging talks between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

In Japan, the government was very restrained in talking about Chen’s win. Leaders expressed hope that Chen would talk to Beijing. There were also reservations expressed: Prime Minister Obuchi said that he did not know that any of his party’s lawmakers knew Chen personally and stated that Japan anticipated no change in its policy. He elaborated by saying that Japanese China policy was determined by the 1972 Japan-China Communiqué (through which Japan recognizes Beijing as the sole government of China).

In Russia, the foreign ministry declined to comment on the voting numbers and stated that official policy toward Taiwan is “in agreement with China and has not changed.” This, it said, was summarized in the “four no” (sic) principles: no to Taiwan indepen-
Taiwan's 2000 Election

dence, no to two Chinas, no to Taiwan's membership in international organizations that assume sovereignty, and no to arms or military hardware shipments to Taiwan. The ministry, on the other hand, commented that Chen was trying to improve relations with Beijing.\textsuperscript{173}

China responded with a decidedly negative and very sour tone. The Taiwan Affairs Office of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party warned that the election did not change the fact that Taiwan is a part of Chinese territory and that the one-China principle is the "prerequisite for peaceful unification," seemingly sending a warning to Chen that he must accept the one-China doctrine in order for relations to improve. The statement went on to say that Taiwan independence "in whatever form" will never be allowed.\textsuperscript{174}

Two days after the election, Defense Minister Chi Haotian made a visit to Fujian Province adjacent to Taiwan to inspect a mass assembly of People's Liberation Army troops. There were, in the meantime, reports in China of massive troop movements and large numbers of military aircraft flying in the area.\textsuperscript{175} A few days later, in an apparent act of intimidation, hundreds of Chinese fishing boats suddenly intruded into the waters near one of Taiwan offshore islands off the mainland. The People's Liberation Army said at the time that it would mobilize thousands of boats for an invasion of Taiwan. The incident, however, passed without any military action.\textsuperscript{176}

At this time, Xinhua, China's government-controlled news agency, presented a fairly in-depth analysis of the election, citing a number of Taiwan sources. It concluded that the "Lee Teng-hui era" was characterized by "black gold" and "by a collapse of social values," "by people not knowing which way to go in Taiwan," and "by a new wave of cross-strait conflicts." The news agency accepted the notion that Lee secretly supported Chen and made Chen's victory possible, as evidenced by the fact that a number of Lee's close


\textsuperscript{176} "Hundreds of Chinese boats intruding [sic] Taiwan waters; report," AFP, March 24, 2000 (from the internet).
associates, including LEE Yuan-tseh and some important business leaders, endorsed Chen.  

Another news agency in China declared that President LEE Teng-hui had long been succoring Taiwan’s independence, proven by the fact that the DPP regarded him as a “fellow traveler” and the DPP’s gaining control over almost two-thirds of Taiwan’s counties and cities in earlier local elections. It said that this amounted to Lee “handing over half of the country” to the DPP. The agency also wrote that Lee had, “under the pretense of democratization” carried out a policy of “indigenousness” and had “driven out” KMT members who supported one China. Lee, furthermore, purged James SOONG from the government (by getting rid of the provincial government) and caused his defeat in the election.  

President and Chinese Communist Party Secretary General JIANG Zemin took a noticeably softer view of Chen’s election victory. Jiang stated that “we said before that whoever comes to power in Taiwan is welcome to come to the mainland for talks and we may also go to Taiwan.” He further stated, however, that there should be a basis for dialogue and negotiation, namely the one China principle.  

The media in Hong Kong, controlled by Beijing, declared that Chen won because President LEE Teng-hui secretly supported him. It called on him to renounce independence and accept the “one country, two systems” model for China’s unification. Officials in Hong Kong did not congratulate Chen, except for Martin LEE, head of Hong Kong’s Democratic Party and an opposition figure. There was also hostility expressed in Taiwan toward the KMT. The day after the election, thousands of Soong supporters gathered outside KMT headquarters expressing their anger. Soon they were joined by many KMT members. They threw eggs and clashed with police. There was violence and certain top KMT officials were hurt, whom the crowd specifically blamed for the election results. Similar protests were held in other cities in Taiwan. President Lee promised  

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to resign from the chairmanship of the party in September and then announced he would leave the post immediately.  

VII. CONCLUSIONS

CHEN Shui-bian won this election because of a combination of factors that throughout the campaign strengthened his candidacy and weakened those of his rivals. Most important in abetting Chen was the fact that the traditional KMT or “conservative” vote split. Not only did Soong and Lien divide the vote, but they very seriously damaged the other’s hopes for a victory: Soong by virtue of his popularity and the widespread feeling that he should have been the KMT’s nominee; Lien because he and President Lee went on the attack against Soong and hurt his candidacy and in the process hurt Lien as well. In short, the KMT’s attack on Soong backfired.

The assault on Soong’s honesty and character with the release of documents in December showing Soong had taken or misused party funds damaged his image badly and thus his campaign effort. Soong’s appeal was very much based on his personal attractiveness and the widespread view, especially among his supporters, that he could do something about black gold “without upsetting heaven and earth” as Chen would. The charges were something that Soong could not, or at least did not, respond to very well. The issue was dragged out in public view throughout the final and important part of the campaign, because KMT officials in the government would not let the issue fade.

It was clear from this that the KMT viewed Soong as the “primary enemy.” Some, in fact, said what occurred was a repeat of what happened in the 1994 Taipei mayoral election. During that campaign, the KMT abandoned its candidate, HUANG Ta-chou, who was low in the polls, to support Chen so that JAW Shao-kang of the New Party, which KMT leaders, especially President Lee, disliked, would not win.  

182 Was this history repeating itself? Many believed this. On the other hand, the feud between Lee and Soong was also personal. When their differences first became serious, Lee felt that Soong should have come to him to apologize. Soong did not do so. The issue of pride or ego then created an impasse.

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182. The author heard this a number of times during the final days of the campaign and after the election.
Soong was also handicapped by not having a political party to promote and protect him. He thus suffered to some extent from a shortage of money, organization and talent. Money was scarce especially toward the end of the campaign. Furthermore, Soong could not refute the KMT's claim (and sometimes the DPP's) that political parties were essential to democracy. It was obvious throughout the campaign, at press briefings and elsewhere, that Soong had to rely too much on his personality and support from former provincial officials and associates. Even though his grass roots support was both broad and strong, it proved insufficient in the context of events during the last days of the campaign.

According to some pundits, Soong was also hurt by not getting his first or second choice for a running mate. The KMT pressured some possible picks not to join Soong, and a delay in the process was very evident for several weeks. Although the polls indicated that Chang helped Soong at the time he was picked, in the last analysis this may not have been the case. Another way of looking at this matter is that Chang may have helped Soong more than Siew helped Lien, but not more than Lu aided Chen’s campaign. In any case, Soong’s pick gave the impression that he was desperate and that his running mate was the least experienced among the vice presidential candidates of the three top contenders.

Unlike the KMT, Chen was able to prevent his party, and thus his vote, from dividing. HSU Hsin-liang was not able to build support as the campaign progressed and did not drain many votes away from Chen. This happened in considerable part because Chen was able to successfully move to the center (as campaign experts usually say one should do) and, in particular, to adopt a more moderate position on cross-strait relations. Hsu actually helped Chen do this. Chen’s party and his voters, as it turned out, maintained unity even though observers knew that the DPP had a history of factionalism. The DPP did not split, in large measure because both its leaders and supporters smelled victory in light of the damage done to Soong by the KMT, the fact that Lien had too much baggage to shed, and the fact that “black gold” became a central issue as the campaign progressed.

That Chen became the “reformist candidate” on the issue of black gold when Soong’s image was sullied by the KMT attack was

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183. At least this is what Soong’s campaign people said. It was often reported in the press that the KMT made concerted efforts to keep people and businesses from donating to Soong.
critical to his victory. He had problems; in fact, there were rather powerful accusations about him being corrupt. But the charges against Chen did not ignite well. Also, unlike Soong’s supporters, Chen’s backers for the most part refused to be influenced by the lottery scandal.

Chen benefited very much from LEE Yuan-tseh endorsing him. Lee was called by many, including the press, “the conscience of the nation.” He was also Taiwan’s most renowned scholar. In a society where learning is revered, this is important. Lee’s volunteering to form a “National Policy Committee” to deal with “black gold” had great salience. This made Chen the most credible candidate to deal with what turned out to be the most important issue to voters. Some analysts say that Lee’s move gave Chen five to eight percent of his votes and was decisive; Chen would not have won otherwise.184

A number of other notables, in particular some well-known and respected heads of big businesses, endorsed Chen and also had a major positive impact on him. Their support boosted Chen’s campaign at a critical juncture. Chen had lacked credibility in the business community compared to the other two top candidates. In view of the fact that there were many undecided voters in the last few days, this can probably be seen as also helping turn the tide for Chen.

The fact that LEE Yuan-tseh and several leading business leaders, who were friends of President Lee, came out in support of Chen conveyed the impression that President LEE Teng-hui secretly supported Chen. This may not have been true and was certainly exaggerated in any case. Nevertheless, there was the appearance of Lee wanting Chen to win, and that mattered.

Chen also capitalized on the increasing number of voters who felt that change was badly needed. The DPP had attracted voters in the past by arguing that democracy was possible only if there were party competition; in this campaign they talked about a needed change of parties. Many voters indeed felt that the KMT had been in office too long. The black gold problem amplified this perception.

While Soong was also a candidate for change, many felt that if Soong won he would return to the KMT and there would be “politics as usual.” The “vote for change” portion of the electorate in-
creased as cross-trait policy diminished in importance with all of the candidates saying practically the same thing. The fact that new blood was on the voters’ minds was apparent throughout the campaign, but it was more noticeable in the last days before the voting.

Evidence of it being a decisive issue was seen in the fact that opinion polls consistently showed a preference for Soong and Chen, even though voters thought that Lien would win. They obviously assumed that Lien would win other than through legitimate means (which many defined to include both vote-buying as well as more talented campaign planners who received high salaries and the purchasing of expensive campaign advertising); they didn’t like this and felt new faces in high office might be a partial cure.

The KMT made strenuous efforts to “dump Soong to save Lien” throughout the campaign. In the final days, when it was obvious to KMT leaders doing polls (which they could conduct legally but could not publish) that Lien could not win, they continued to try to prevent Soong’s winning. KMT spokespersons emphatically declared that Soong could not win. In particular, some of the KMT’s young stars drew voters away from Soong. This also helped Chen at a critical time. It certainly might have been the other way around had KMT leaders, especially LEE Teng-hui, decided to help Soong. Lee’s antipathy toward Soong was too strong. Some KMT leaders may have also decided, based on their desire to keep control of party funds, not to support Soong. Soong would certainly have taken control of KMT money had he won (assuming, of course, he would have been invited back into the party). Finally, there is no doubt that some voters left Lien and opted for Chen based on ethnic preference even though Soong was closer in many ways to the Taiwanese and had more Taiwanese advisors with him than Lien. The DPP organizers used the ethnic card during the campaign. However, they employed it more subtly and therefore more successfully than in 1998.

Beijing also aided Chen. Just as in 1996 when China conducted missile tests near Taiwan’s shores, Beijing’s “White Paper” on Taiwan and Premier Zhu Rongji’s threats just before balloting time, succored Chen. After all, Chen was the candidate who had a repu-tation for being most in favor of Taiwan’s permanent separation from China. Voters were clearly turned off by China’s bluster more than they were intimidated. Further helping Chen, Lien did not make a very good case; in fact, many say that his mild reaction cost him a considerable number of votes (though he certainly would not have won the election had he responded differently). Chen gave the
proper response. Many voters felt that succumbing to intimidation would have bad consequences for Taiwan’s democratization and felt in any case that the United States would defend Taiwan.

Lien’s candidacy may have been doomed from the start, since Taiwan’s democracy had evolved another step, which meant that a presidential candidate had to have charisma, personality and an image of caring, which Lien did not have. Lien was thus an anachronism. He is tall, good looking, has a radio voice and was very seasoned in politics; but he lacked those other traits. His advisors may have told him these things were not important, as witnessed by the fact that he and LEE Teng-hui won a big victory in 1996 without emphasizing those traits. They were wrong. Some also said that Lien lacked the “fire in his belly” to be president.  

Lien was also wounded badly by the “black gold” issue. As the campaign went on, other issues faded and this one rose in importance. Lien tried to do something but almost all of his efforts failed badly. Many said that his proposal to put KMT money in trust was a major mistake. It divided the party. Also, since he was not able to do it before the voting (it being immensely complicated), it appeared that he had made an empty promise. Lien also proposed passage of a Political Party Law, Lobby Law, Political Contribution Management Law and Trust Enterprise Law, but all got bogged down in bickering between the KMT and the DPP over the Political Party Law. It thus appeared again that Lien could not produce or had not been sincere. The proposals also drew attention to the party’s wealth at a stage in Taiwan’s democracy where it affected voters in a negative way. Or, the way the campaign went this was so. Probably both were true.

Lien’s wealth, both his own and that of his family, not to mention his personal life, were scrutinized and gossiped about as never before. This included his relationship with his wife. Local Saturday Night Live-style programs carried a number of parody skits of lookalikes making fun of her. To counteract his high class and rich image, some of Lien’s advisors suggested to him that he ride the subway to work to give the impression of being a common person and caring about local problems and that he ask his wife to shop in

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185. Several individuals who knew Lien well and even some who advised him told this writer that he was not really enthusiastic about becoming president.
the local markets and be seen with ordinary people. Both Lien and his wife refused. 187

Soong and Chen in contrast campaigned as “man of the people” candidates and their wives helped their popularity. They avoided being painted as members of the elite. Soong’s wife, who is Taiwanese, helped him bridge the ethnic gap. She also made a good impression with voters, especially women. Chen’s wife, partially paralyzed after being run down by a truck several years ago (which many felt was done by KMT operatives, though Chen has denied thinking this), won him sympathy votes.

A number of issues paled in importance during the campaign or did not grow as some thought they would. The stock market manipulation did not. Social issues and the economy, especially the problem of inequality (which to some reflected class tension), did not. Many said this was a good sign.

All of this says something about Taiwan’s democracy and how it is evolving. The fact that this election brought a change of leadership via the ballot box in a direct election is noteworthy in and of itself. President Lee earlier announced that he was stepping down and did so. Except in established, working democracies, this is not the norm. It is, in fact, unusual. Lee is to be congratulated, as Taiwan’s democracy may be said to have been consolidated. It is one thing to build a democracy; it is another to institutionalize it.

Not only that, but the election brought the opposition political party into power. The KMT has ruled Taiwan continuously since it was taken from Japan and restored to China at the end of World War II. Many thought that it would rule for the foreseeable future. The KMT certainly had a very good reputation for both engineering economic growth and political modernization in Taiwan. Since voters in Taiwan have long given much weight to economic issues, many felt the KMT could remain in power for a long time. Many thought Taiwan would go the way of Japan and other East Asian countries where continuity and strong leadership are seen as invaluable and have kept the ruling party in power. Even DPP leaders did not think they would have one of their own in the presidency so soon.

Related to this, the election of CHEN Shui-bian affords further evidence that Taiwan is pursuing a different model: Western democ-

187. This information comes from several people that worked for Lien or knew him well. In any event, neither Lien nor his wife were seen among ordinary people, as were Chen and Soong.
racy (as opposed to "Asian democracy"). The fact that the opposition has been strong and boisterous and the press less quiescent had for some time labeled Taiwan a model of Western or American democracy. Its voters put the opposition in control of the executive branch of government and elected a young politician to replace an icon or patriarch is therefore very telling. In fact, it may be said to be definitive proof of Taiwan following the "American model" of democracy.188

Other nations in East Asia and developing nations around the world were certainly watching Taiwan. Many have long preferred the Asian democracy model. It seemed to offer more stability and was seen as a better system for promoting economic development. Now they may be thinking differently. Taiwan has been doing well economically and seems to show that the Western model of democracy can work. It offers even more to nations that worry about the democratic transition and about adjusting to technological change, especially the computer-telecommunications revolution.

Transcending the argument about models, the election of CHEN Shui-bian was generally seen in other countries as a sign of Taiwan's democracy maturing. The most important, however, was that the reaction from the United States, Taiwan's protector, was positive. The new president, though, will have to make a special effort to maintain Taiwan's close ties with Washington, but he can probably do that. He will have trouble with Beijing; but most people feel that is inevitable. Contrary to conventional wisdom, CHEN Shui-bian may do better than anticipated, because he may advantaged by bringing the issue into the open and fighting the fight in the wake of a widely publicized and very democratic election. He may also benefit from low expectations from Beijing.

The election will clearly create a divided government. But this may be good also. Taiwan was already evolving in that direction and it needed to make systemic changes to adjust to that. Now it may act. The election, however, created what appears to be a three-party system. The DPP may benefit from Chen's victory and become stronger. Soong formed a new party, which given his popularity and good showing in the election, may grow. The KMT still has support and certainly money and talent. But three parties are inherently unstable and will make future elections unpredictable; win-

188. See John F. Copper, "Taiwan's Democratization: The Significance for Southeast Asia," Foreign Affairs, May-June 2000.
ning candidates may take office without a clear mandate unless something is done to change the voting rules.

Beijing risked a lot in trying to prevent Chen from winning. Chinese leaders now have to worry about “face.” They will find it difficult to get along with Chen for that reason alone. They may also see the election as ominous because the results were determined largely by the “black gold” issue, which is a major problem in China. This may persuade China to do something about it at home; alternatively, it may convince top leaders to more adamantly oppose democracy in China.

In any case, the bottom line is that this election was an important one for Taiwan and other countries. It will probably be seen by future historians as historic. It will likely also prove to be a watershed event in Taiwan’s political history. Most important, it provided for the transition from democracy to consolidated democracy and underscored the fact Taiwan is a civil society and authority transitions can be peaceful even when a new party takes command.
Appendix A. Votes Won by Political Parties in Elections over the Last Decade

Votes won

*Others: small parties and independents
Source: Central Election Commission, Ministry of the Interior
Appendix B. Votes Candidates Won in 1996 Presidential Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee Teng-hui (KMT)</td>
<td>54.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lien Chan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peng Ming-min (DPP)</td>
<td>21.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Hsieh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lin Yang-kang (Independent)</td>
<td>14.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hau Pei-tsun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Li-an Wang (Independent)</td>
<td>9.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ching-feng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Election Commission, Ministry of the Interior
Appendix C. Present National Assembly Seats Held by Each Political Party

Number of seats:
- KMT: 179
- DPP: 88
- New Party: 40
- Others*: 9

Total: 316
(8 seats vacant)

*Others: small parties and independents
Source: National Assembly February 2000
Appendix D. Present Legislative Seats Held by Each Political Party

Number of seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KMT</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Party</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others*</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 224 (1 seat vacant)

*Others: small parties and independents
Source: Legislative Yuan February 2000
Appendix E. Present County Magistrate and City Mayor Seats Held by Each Political Party (Excluding Taipei and Kaohsiung)

Number of seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>KMT</th>
<th>DDP</th>
<th>Independents</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Central Election Commission, Ministry of the Interior February 2000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Chinese Name/Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beijing Fa Yuan Si</td>
<td>北京法源寺</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANG, Chao-hsiung</td>
<td>張昭雄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANG, Ching-kuo</td>
<td>蔣經國</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHANG, Jason</td>
<td>章孝嚴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANG, Jung-wei</td>
<td>張榮味</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHAO, Yao-tung</td>
<td>趙耀東</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHEN, Li-an</td>
<td>陳履安</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHEN, Shui-bian</td>
<td>陳水扁</td>
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<td>CHI, Haotian</td>
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<td>CHIANG, Wei-kuo</td>
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<td>CHU, Hui-liang</td>
<td>朱惠良</td>
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<td>Chung Hsing Bills Finance Corp.</td>
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<td>鍾榮吉</td>
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