

# TAIWAN STRATEGY AND DIPLOMACY RESPONSE TO ONE-CHINA POLICY DURING MA YING-JEOU ADMINISTRATION 2008-2015

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## **Abstract**

*After the lost from the communist and after the expulsion from UN membership Taiwan face a hard time in gaining recognition from international community, the fact that China has rise as a new super power also quite a threaten for Taiwan as China would have tighten its grip toward Taiwan international space. Taiwan on the otherhand has put a concern toward this issue. Ma Ying-Jeou one of the leaders of Taiwan also not forget to put much concern in this issue.*

*This paper would analyze about the strategy and diplomacy Taiwan use in response to the One-China Policy. the analysis would began with realist theory saying that "the world in state of anarchy and that power is important yet state is rational so it will select strategy that will minimize it lost and maximize the benefit". Hence it goes the same to Taiwan nowadays condition under the One-China Policy. It will select strategy that will most benefit Taiwan. looking to the fact Taiwan compare to China is lost in term of hard power possession so it would mostlikely that the use of soft power as the most secure strategy and Public diplomacy as the means on utilizing the soft power at it best.*

## **Key Words:**

One-China Policy, Soft Power, Strategy, Public Diplomacy, Ma Ying-Jeou

## **Introduction**

Sovereignty is one of the important terms in international relation. To reach a status as a sovereign state, a nation-state must fulfill the requirements which clearly defined in Montevideo Convention. In the Montevideo Convention Article 1, it is explained that one can be called a sovereign state if it already has permanent population, definite territory, government and capacity to enter into relationship with other state and international entities.

Not every nation-state that exists in this world has an easy way in completing the requirement to be classified as a sovereign state. Some of them do not have enough power to do so. The term sovereignty has become very crucial and essential in the forming of nation state. Not being recognized by another state would create a quite struggle for a state to enter into relations. If this happens, it would impact to the welfare of that particular nation state. One of the state that have been struggling a lot in achieving the title as a sovereign state is Taiwan which is also known as The Republic of China.

Taiwan until present days has been in the uncertain position about its international status. Some called that Taiwan is a complete sovereign state while others claimed that Taiwan should not be called as a sovereign state. Both sides have their own opinion regarding the status of Taiwan.

Based on general characteristics of a nation-state featured in Montevideo Convention, Taiwan has fulfilled the *de facto* characteristic as a nation state. Unfortunately, the same thing could not be said with the *de jure* characteristics.

Looking to the nowadays fact, Taiwan has positioned itself as one of the sample of a developed country in Asia pacific along with China, Japan, and South Korea. It is proven by the success of Taiwan government to develop its economic and advance in the technology. As a state, Taiwan is more successful than those third worlds states in development despite the ironic fact that Taiwan status is still uncertain. This is why the status of Taiwan is one of unique cases in the international relation studies.

The uncertain status of Taiwan does not mean Taiwan having no recognition at all from other state. Only a small number of states recognize Taiwan's existence as a nation state. Therefore, it is very interesting to discuss about Taiwan ways of diplomacy to gain recognition from other state and China in particular.

To talk and to understand deeper about Taiwan case and its relation to One-China Policy, what we should do is to look back at the history. One-China Policy is commonly interpreted as the common agreement by states around the world to only acknowledge one state as China, which mostly refers to the mainland China presented by the PRC (People Republic of China).

The history could be traced back to the era after the revolution of China in 1911 that was led by Sun-Yat Sen. Revolution in 1911 was marked as the end of the monarch system in China transforming into a republic system. The new system recognized Sun-Yat Sen as the president.

The new system acquired threat in the form of the fallen Qing Dynasty which was believed to be overthrown from its power. Apparently, the power of Qing Dynasty remained in some part of China. Derived from the need to completely end the power of Qing Dynasty and prevent the threat that might occur because of it, Sun-Yat Sen gave up his position as the President of China to Yuan Shikai who was the former minister of the Qing Dynasty.

During the administration of Yuan Shikai, a lot of rebellion emerged in some part of China. Yuan Shikai then gave up his position in order to pacify the rebellion. As the effect of Yuan Shikai's resignation and the absence of leader to lead the regime, there was a vacuum of power during the period of time in 1916.

During the vacuum of power some part of China was controlled by some chief (local land lord). There were two big power parties which had control over the main part of prior-Qing dynasty territory. Those two different parties were Komintang Party which at that time is still in power and govern China as ROC

(Republic of China) and CPC (Chinese Communist Party) which also had a big influence with its communist ideology.

In 1927, the proletarian government of Chin Kai-Sek, the second leader of Komintang Party after the death of Sun-Yat Sen, forced the communist party to go to the Eastern part of China especially in the country side. The policies of Chin Kai-Sek made the CPC to do a long march as a resulted of the expulsion. During the time communist party secretly built its power and new rising leader appeared. The leader was Mao Zedong

In 1945-1949, there was civil war which was started by a revolt done by the Communist Party. In this civil war, the Communist party successfully defeated the Komintang Party. They changed the administration that used to be led by Komintang party with its nationalist ideology into communist ideology-driven regime.

The fallen Komintang Party fled to the Formosa Island which is now commonly known as Taiwan, a former colonized area of Japanese military after the Sino-Japanese war. The status of China which was used to be as the ROC after the loss of Komintang party has to be replaced. The beginning of the switch of administration marked by the declaration done by Mao Zedong who was the leader of the winning party declared that China (the mainland China) has changed into the People Republic of China (PRC). Mao Zedong appointed himself as the new leader who would lead and govern the country base on the communist ideology.

The civil war did not only result in the coup of Komintang party from its power, but also created the problem of two different legitimate governments. Komintang Party that settled in Taiwan still recognized itself and acclaimed as the legitimate government of China while the Communist Party also put the same claim.

In order to counter Komintang Party' claim as legitimate China, Communist Party as the leader of PRC, they issued the One-China Policy. This

policy to the greater power and its likely happen to have an impact to Taiwan in the negative way. It began with the expulsion of Taiwan from the UN. Taiwan lost relationship with other countries. Only 22 countries left recognize Taiwan. Almost none of those countries, frankly to say, have a significant position in international society. Taiwan was forced to give up its membership from 29 major inter-governmental organizations. Taiwan became a pariah state in international society.

Until now it is really hard for Taiwan to enter into relation with other state and or international entities. Taiwan request for membership to UN was repeatedly declined. Such a declination also happened to Taiwan's membership request to World Health Organization (WHO). Taiwan international activity is very limited and controlled by Beijing.

This is not only impacted the Taiwan government but also its citizen. When Taiwan citizen wanted to travel outside the country and or join some international activity representing Taiwan, in response China would put pressure to the host to correct the name or simply add China to it, as they believe Taiwan is part of China. It resulted in the question of identity for Taiwan citizen. So in this writing, the main discussion would mainly lies on answering what is Taiwan strategy and diplomacy response to One-China Policy.

### **The Analysis on Taiwan and China Power Comparison**

Talking about strategy is about what kind of action used to face certain issue, which actions that will benefit more and which one will result a lost. There are many considerations to think before one decides what kind of strategy it will use. Firstly, the subject will analyze what kind of issue state is dealing with. Then it continue to the analysis on the very own capability and the opposing parties' capability. The capability is often measured by power. Hence in the case of Taiwan and One-China Policy, both parties' power should be analyzed by comparing their power capability.

For state, the term power is related to the national power. The national power can be seen from population, geography, economic condition, technology and military power. These are the variable often used to measure the power capability of state. The power comparison of Taiwan and China will be using those variables.

The first one is population. It is universally known that China for the past decades has position itself the most populous country in the world. It means that it possesses a huge number of populations. On the other hand, Taiwan with its small geographical territory held enough population to fill out the land but in comparison with China, it is inescapably lost.

The second variable is the comparison in the field of geographic. Strategic studies explained that one of the winning sides of having a good geographic position is that it would prevent the enemy to attack. This statement applied to Taiwan. Taiwan is said to be one of the countries that is gifted with a quite unique geographical condition. The good demographic condition owned by Taiwan will keep China troops quite at bay.

Unfortunately, China has developed its military technology. Now it is far more advance than just a conventional infantry. This means that there is the possibility of using missile technology is bigger than ever. This made Taiwan's advantageous geographic condition was not helpful.

Next is population. Talking about population, it will lead to the human resources. As explained in the previous paragraph, in term of population China possesses more compared to Taiwan but the high number of population should be in line with the good quality of education. A great number of human resources without good quality in education will create an imbalance condition. The population would not achieve as much as expected from the big population.

China, on the other hand, has a good quality of education but spread unevenly. David Gitter and Robert Sutter also explained Taiwan possesses a very

good human resources. It is even ranked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> position in the world, below the South Korea. Taiwan population is known as a highly educated people. Almost 70% of Taiwanese ranged from the age of 18-22 record studies in the high education institutions.

In relation to high awareness of education in Taiwan, the economic gained positive impact. The business in Taiwan is getting stronger. Taiwanese entrepreneurs have been known as one of those who capitalized Chinese cheap labors while Taiwanese is known for its technological knowledge.

The last but not least is the military power. Military is a crucial instrument when talking about state power or national power. The Republic of China's armed forces number is approximately 290,000, with 130,000 in the army, 45,000 in the navy and Marine Corps, and approximately 80,000 in the air force. Traditionally the army has been the dominant service, but that has shifted over the years. Taiwan's military doctrine states that any fighting that occurs should take place as far from population centers as possible. The army is only relevant once the enemy lands on the island while the navy and air force can range over the strait. Defense spending is 15.7 percent of the national budget. At roughly \$10.5 billion, Taiwan's 2014 defense budget reached 2.54 percent of GDP as cited from Focus Taiwan, went up to 2.7 percent in 2013.

President Ma Ying-Jeou has repeatedly promised to spend three percent of GDP on defense, but the global economic crisis in 2007-2008 damaged Taiwan's economy. Like many states, Taiwan is still recovering from the crisis.

China, as many people know, is one of the countries that spend a lot in the military sector. Just like Taiwan, China growing economic could be linked to the advanced of military technology. Known as the one of the countries to possess a great military power, China is also supported by its large territory and big population. It means that in case of a risk time, China has more than enough volunteer for the armies.

This comparison is to highlight why Taiwan needs to find other ways to secure its status as a state and also to gain international recognition.

From the economy indeed Taiwan has gained development in the past decades. It managed to come up as one of the brightest in the sector. The economic success even has an impact to the advance of technology in the country, increasing the other sectors like military. The high level of GDP per capita that Taiwan held this past decade is the mark of a change of people behavior. It is also noted that a lot of Taiwanese has high awareness of the need on education and also the higher education.

The situation has created very competitive circumstances to the peoples of Taiwan. That is why the competitiveness is strong there. Many big entrepreneurs and companies were born to make betterment and contribute to the more betterment to the economic. Some of those entrepreneurs have reached a global success for example the HTC Inc. Some of the entrepreneurs that support Taiwan financial has been smartly benefited the cheap labors that is scattered all around China. They had become a domain capitalized for the cheap labors.

Regardless the tension between China-Taiwan, is China is still become the big market for Taiwan export product. This means that Taiwan cannot act extremely antagonizing toward China because Taiwan is in the economic-interdependence with China. Thus the act of declaring independence or short of that behavior would likely resulting in an economic embargo by China to Taiwan, which without a doubt would have a great impact for Taiwan.

While in the military, it is clearly that Taiwan is in a great loss in comparison to China. Though Taiwan is benefited from its geography that would quite keep the Chinese armed troops at bay but it would not help the missile attack. This is a very risk act to act in provocative behavior toward China. Shortly, it is really a matter of life and death.



Hence in order to gain international sympathy or recognition Taiwan needs to think of another way of behavior. It should be done in a way that would not provoke China. The word “not provoke” here means not acting like a sovereign state and should identify itself as part of China. This situation is very complicated because it needs to act as a state to gain *de facto*.

### **The Analysis on Taiwan’s Strategy and Diplomacy under the Administration of Ma Ying-Jeou.**

Different from the previous president, Ma has his own strategy in dealing with One-China issues. On the day of his first speech as a president, he stated that in dealing with One-China Policy and the cross strait relation there would be “no reunification, no independence, no war” while in his charge as president.<sup>1</sup> Ma Ying-Jeou clearly has stated its strategy here even though some said that his action contradicts his speech and his policies had become too close to China and so much pro to the reunification idea. The action triggered many protest in Taiwan.

But Ma Ying-Jeou actually has stated the pattern of its leadership in dealing with this One China issue at the very beginning, that it is the strategy that Ma use in order not to provoke China. Ma’s action showed that indeed Ma realize that the world is in the state of anarchy and Taiwan needs power and strategy in order to survive. He realize that any action provoke China would cost great lost to Taiwan and that he did not want Taiwan experience a great tension like what happened in the previous president era. Hence the safest way is to negotiate with the mainland so that it would not be so hard on Taiwan.

Ma’s strategy it is very smart indeed .He committed in using the Consensus 1992 as the main foundation of Taiwan’s behavior and actions. The

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<sup>1</sup> Sina Global News, Taiwan Inaugural Speech Stressed that Neither Reunification nor Independence- Wu Ma- Ying Jeou Call on the Two side not Negotiate. <http://news.sina.com/int/sinchewdaily/105-103-102-101/2008-05-20/02332912835.html> access on March 9 2016. 4:28 AM

Consensus 1992 stated that Taiwan and China agree that there only one China and that both party can stick to its own definition of One-China Policy. PRC might interpreted that the “China“ in One-China refers to PRC and that ROC May interpreted that the “China” in the context of One-China is referring to ROC.

Meanwhile the objective of using soft power itself is to enhance Taiwan identity in International without using coercion like military or economic embargo. According to Joseph Nye, public diplomacy is the tool to exercise the soft power itself and it is used in order to gain sympathy and to drag attention of international to be more focused on Taiwan issues or status. Indeed Ma’s administration was said to be too close to China, but it does not stop Taiwan on promoting one of the main soft power strategy is democracy itself.

While democracy system might has gave Taiwan enough attention from the ‘big brother’ the United State, it only can assure that the brother is still protecting him, just in case the tension get escalated. Taiwan in other way cannot depend on the protection of US, because after all the US has already Sign a diplomatic relation to the PRC and agreed that it would not interfere the internal affairs of PRC which by any means Taiwan question is include.

As of that the other soft power strategy should be done are communication or diplomacy as the alternatives. It is believed that international community rarely pays attention to Taiwan because they are not familiar to Taiwan. So, in order to be known, public diplomacy is executed. As it works beyond politics and focusing on social and culture aspect, public diplomacy is more appealing. Public Diplomacy is the best tool to utilize Taiwan power with almost zero percent of lost.

Ma’s administration, though gain a lot of criticisms during his time, has shown a unique way of diplomacy that some scholars say as a safe yet very successful move. In his early campaign in 2008 in response to One-China topic and the future of cross strait relation if he is in charge he said that;

“President Ma said Taiwan should strengthen relations with major powers of the world but does not have to win diplomatic allies simply for the sake of winning”(Post, 2008)

This means that it wants to gain more sympathy and to change its status in international community from a “troublemaker” because the tendencies of Taiwan behavior that used to create a tension in Taiwan Strait and Pacific region. The tile is changed into a “good friend” that would think twice on what action it should do.

Meanwhile the meaning of the Ma’s diplomacy, as he explained, is that Taiwan would hold talks with China in search of an agreement. Taiwan would be allowed to have certain space in the international community and later both sides could avoid wasting their resources and hurting each other because of the fight over Taiwan's international participation attempt. The agreement also May expected to help Taiwan in the cross strait relation with China so it would be expected to achieve a policy on an elasticity on Taiwan status. The agreement also addressed the issue of name Beijing demanded Taiwan to use, whether it is Chinese or Taipei Chinese or Taiwanese. Taiwan people have a full right to be treated equally and not being oppressed by any side.

Included with the diplomacy, Taiwan also wanted to gain international attention in a more good way than propaganda using a series of *Public Diplomacy Program*. Government's public diplomacy has avoided costly and meaningless cutthroat diplomatic competition with Beijing. Huge funds were saved for use in many other fields in Taiwan, he said.

It is known that Ma’s administration is very concerned to build Taiwan international image through cultural aspect. He even established the Bureau of International Cultural Relations under the Ministry of Education to institute the program on a comprehensive basis<sup>2</sup>. Five sections have been established to expand activities on a continuing basis.

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<sup>2</sup> Taiwaaninfo :*Two ways student Exchange Play Role on Diplomacy*,<http://Taiwaninfo.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=126896&ctNode=103>. Access on January 5 2016. 2:17 AM

The first, the government supervises the bureau's offices abroad taking care of students and scholars from Taiwan. Secondly, they organize international conferences and related activities. Third is dealing with local students and professors going abroad. Next is providing similar services for those coming Taiwan. Last is handling all kinds of cultural exchanges.<sup>3</sup>

As cited from BBC News Taipei, Ma's efforts in public diplomacy are not limited to that. Taiwan government strategy is wide-ranging. It includes developing globally famous brands, boosting Taiwan's presence not only in the high-tech sector but also in arts, food and fashion, and marketing great things about Taiwan. As a result, the government has poured millions of dollars into supporting performance troupes, filmmaker and also singers. Some of them have enjoyed regional or international acclaim, including a government-funded film that won an award at the Berlin International Film Festival this year. There are plans to spend \$200m (£128m) to help the movie industry. Money has also been given for promoting tourism, and not just to boost economic growth. Previously content with being just a manufacturer of the world's high-tech products, Taiwan now wants to be a place where everybody wants to visit and get to know.

Taiwan also has spread the most important and highlighted means from Ma's public diplomacy which is advocacy. As cited from Taiwan official economic and cultural website in Philippines saying that over the past few years, the government of Taiwan has been actively engaging in international humanitarian aid activities. Taiwan has transformed from a "charity importing country" into a "charity exporting country". For example, after the serious earthquake happened in Haiti in 2010, Taiwan immediately dispatched rescue and medical groups to Haiti. Taiwan also shipped disaster relief supplies and delivered donations to that country. Taiwan's relief and recovery assistance to Haiti included public healthcare, restoration arrangement for the people who lost their homes, vocational training, and adoption of the orphans.

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<sup>3</sup> Taiwan Info :*Two ways student Exchange Play Role on Diplomacy*,<http://Taiwaninfo.nat.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=126896&ctNode=103>. Access on January 5 2016. 3:49 AM

Even though many people has claim that Ma's administration is the worst and has created an ambiguity for the diplomatic relation in Taiwan strait, but it is better to think that people should see more into what achievement the strategy of Ma has accomplish in dealing with this complicated One-China issues.

As said by Kaocheng Wang in his writing Taiwan Diplomatic Diplomacy under Ma Ying-Jeou's Administration that describe the fruitful result of Ma's strategy, soft power is indeed exercised successfully through diplomacy. Wang said that the diplomacy Taiwan have done has decrease the tension in Taiwan strait, it has also build up a mutual trust between Taiwan and other countries., especially US, as well as creating diplomatic highway for Taiwan future diplomatic.

In the Asia Pacific region Ma's also has successfully signed an agreement with countries in Asia Pacific in the various issues, Taiwan and South Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Aviation Safety Cooperation on August 11, 2009. The deputy-minister level economic and trade consultations between Taiwan and Malaysia is resumed in Taipei on September 8, 2009 after being suspended for four years. Both the Philippines and India agreed, in May and June 2009 respectively, to grant the same<sup>4</sup>tax-free treatment to the staff of Taiwan's Representative Offices as the diplomatic staff of other countries, which significantly promoted the status of Taiwan's representative offices in these countries. Taiwan and Vietnam signed the Temporary Customs Clearance Agreement and its Protocol on June 26, 2009.<sup>5</sup>

In international organization, Taiwan participated in the World Health Assembly in 2009 and APEC. Under Ma's administration, Taiwan has changed its sails from trying to gain membership in UN as party state, to more into the lower level. Ma has successfully submitted Taiwan in the membership of some international organization such as International maritime Organization (IMO) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Taiwan's success in joining

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<sup>4</sup>Kaocheng Wang, Taiwan Diplomatic Policy uder Ma Ying-Jeous.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

international fisheries agreements as a “fishing entity” and aimed to circumvent the rule that only states could join the UNFCCC<sup>6</sup>.

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