

Geopoliticians compete at the Asian Games

by Cho Wen-pin

In August, Taiwan officials announced that Lee Teng-hui, President of the Republic of China, had accepted an invitation extended earlier this summer by Kuwait's Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad, president of the Olympic Council of Asia, to go to Hiroshima to attend the Asian Games. Almost immediately, the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.) warned Tokyo that "there would be political troubles at the games" if Lee were allowed to attend the opening ceremonies.

Lee was later forced to drop the visit.

Yet, Taipei presses on; it will send other ranking officials, such as Vice Prime Minister Hsu Li-teh, to Japan, simply to defy Beijing as well as to announce to the world a new round of the independence movement. In recent years, Taiwan, under the presidency of Lee Teng-hui, has been on an all-out offensive—from buying political influence in small countries around the world, to sending officials to international events—to gain international recognition, defying the claim to Taiwan which the P.R.C. asserts, and opposing some nationalists on the island who still hold the dream of reunifying the country under the Three Principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

Almost immediately after this Taiwan-born President took over, he started a pragmatic foreign policy campaign to reach out to the world beyond the handful of nations that have kept diplomatic relations with the Republic of China when most nations flipped to recognize Beijing beginning in the 1970s. His "dollar diplomacy" has bought him some U.N. votes from Central American countries; his "holiday diplomacy" has taken him to golf courses in Southeast Asian countries; and his presidential invitations extend to those who want to split China once again into new warring states.

Partners of President Lee

The independence movement has run concurrently with an environmentalist movement, which has almost killed the fourth nuclear power plant on the island, and an indigenous movement, which is campaigning to eliminate in Taiwan the Mandarin language (spoken by 1 billion people). Furthermore, the movement, spearheaded by the Democratic Progressive Party, is encouraged by Trilateralists from Japan, Europe, and America, as seen in the 1994 Annual Report on China from the Trilateral Commission; by the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS); and "concerned" members of the Foreign Affairs Committee in London, who give

so-called friendly advice that Taiwan should replace Hongkong in case factions in Beijing take a harder line against the biggest financial center in Asia.

In the United States, on the other hand, geopoliticians associated with groups such as the New York Council on Foreign Relations and the Heritage Foundation have for years encouraged Taipei to get into an arms race with Beijing, and spend its huge foreign reserves buying F-16 jet fighters from the United States and Mirage 2000 planes from France.

Their strategy indirectly causes sharp increases in Beijing's military budget—which, in turn, disturbs neighboring countries, particularly the P.R.C.'s eastern and southern neighbors. The fact that in recent years Beijing has sent an unprecedented number of high-ranking delegations to these nations indicates that China has to assuage these countries if peace and collaboration are to be had; these nations are considered necessary to develop Asia and the Eurasian continent as a whole.

Beyond balance-of-power politics, figures such as Gerald Segal, the Asia hand for the IISS, openly call for splitting China—a policy which is also implied in the printed record of the Feb. 8, 1994 session of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British House of Commons. On July 8, a few days before he was invited to afternoon tea in Lee's presidential office, Segal wrote an article in the *International Herald Tribune* headlined, "The Taiwanese Need Help as They Edge Toward Sovereignty." Segal suggested to Lee: "As in the case of Hongkong, Taiwan is an important trading partner for China, and Beijing has grown cautious about damaging its economic interests. So it may be that China will quietly tolerate Taipei's creeping toward de facto sovereignty."

Free trade will not make you free

So, from the think-tanks of Britain comes the classic remedy: "Free Trade Will Make You Free." But that idea was proved false by Abraham Lincoln, who was forced to fight a war—a lesson Lee Teng-hui, a Ph.D. from Cornell University, should have learned.

However, while chatting with Segal and IISS Director John Chipman, and asking British intelligence for help to get Taiwan a U.N. seat, President Lee forgot more basic facts: In 1945, it was Winston Churchill, from Britain's U.N. Security Council seat, who refused to recognize the Republic of China under Chiang Kai-shek's leadership; later, it was President Chiang Kai-shek, who by then was the only one alive among the five founding signers of the U.N. Charter, who had the guts to instruct his ambassador to the U.N. to leave the General Assembly conference hall, accepting this humiliation imposed by Mao Zedong and Henry Kissinger in order to save a great country from being split.

While there is no future for China if it is reunified under the communist system, it is, nevertheless, almost equally fatal for Taiwan to hinge its own future on geopoliticians from London, Washington, and Tokyo.