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CSD Background Study:
Lessons for the Consolidation of a Democracy

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Democratization in Taiwan Background research paper: Lessons for the Consolidation of a Democracy

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Preface

Most recently, Taiwan's presidential website was reconfigured, adding "Taiwan" after the island's official title of "Republic of China."[1] The president's office insists that this addition will cue readers to the difference between the Chinese mainland, the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the island, the Republic of China (ROC). Officials claim to have received several e-mails intended for PRC president Hu Jintao, causing trouble for the presidential office, but also inconveniences to the senders, as the office is unable to forward these emails to the PRC government. In a similar vein, "Taiwan" was added to ROC passports in late 2003. These moves towards Taiwanese identification on the presidential website or passports are symbolic of the island's evolving political identity. Since the 1970s, it has moved away from ethnic conceptions of the nation, such as those associated with the "one-China" policy, and towards a more secular, civic notion of what it means to be Taiwanese. The island's transformation into a democracy has been central to the reconstruction of its national identity.

Following World War II, the Kuomintang (KMT) Party imposed heavy-handed authoritarianism on Taiwan to protect it from the spread of communism and in the pursuit of Chinese reunification under ROC leadership. The KMT alleged that the powers of the president had to be enhanced to prevent the island from communist exploitation. Emergency decrees and martial law were enacted, delaying indefinitely the realization of the democratic goals espoused by the ROC constitution and inherent in the party's ideals. Over the next 40 plus years, the government used these excess powers to suspend elections, prevent the formation of opposition parties and quash dissidents' voices. However, KMT rule transitioned during this period from hard to soft authoritarianism, leading and responding to calls for greater democratization. In the last twenty years, the island has quickly and peacefully transitioned from an authoritarian regime to democratic governance.

Taiwan's political development demonstrates how democracies are built. The Taiwanese now boast a vigorous constitutional democracy, a competitive party system and an independent judiciary.[2] They also hold political rights and civil liberties similar to those enjoyed in the world's liberal democracies.[3] Of interest to students or countries transitioning to democratic rule are questions such as "How did this happen?" and "What events or public policies triggered Taiwan's democratization?" *Taiwan: Lessons for the Consolidation of a Democracy* attempts to shed light on democratic development. This background research paper will contextualize Taiwan's democratization and highlight several of its important sources, including acquired election experience, shared economic growth, evolving political opposition, and international and domestic pressures. Some of these are common to many countries – (e.g., economic development), while others are unique to Taiwan –(e.g., the island's international position). These sources will be overviewed in hopes of introducing the reader to Taiwan's recent political history and provoking further discussion and analysis. Subsequent case studies will elaborate upon several specific "tipping points" that have contributed to Taiwan's democratization.[4]

Taiwan at a Glance (2005)

Geography

Location: Eastern Asia, islands off the southeastern coast of China
Land area: 32 260 square kilometers

People

Population: 22 894 384
Life expectancy: 77.26 years
Ethnic groups: Taiwanese (84%); Mainland Chinese (14%); Aborigine (2%)
Religions: Mixture of Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist (93%); Christian (4.5%); other (2.5%)
Languages: Mandarin (official); Taiwanese and Hakka dialects
Literacy rate: 96.1% of those over 15 years of age can read and write

Government

Country name: Republic of China (ROC); Taiwan
Government type: Multiparty democratic regime headed by popularly elected president and unicameral legislature
Capital: Taipei
Constitution: 25 December 1946; amended in 1992, 1994, 1997, 1999 and 2000
Legal system: Civil law
Suffrage: 20 years
Political parties: Democratic Progressive Party (DPP); Kuomintang (KMT); People First Party (PFP); Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU); other minor parties
Political pressure: Relationship to the People's Republic of China (PRC)
International orgs: APEC; WTO; IOC; and other

Economy

Economy type: Capitalist
GDP: $576.2 billion (purchasing power parity)
GDP/real growth: 6%
GDP/sector: Agriculture (1.7%); Industry (30.9%); Services (67.4%)
Industries: Electronics; petroleum; armaments; chemicals; textiles; metals; machinery; cement; processed food; vehicles; consumer goods; and pharmaceuticals
Labor force: 10.22 million
Unemployment rate: 4.5%
Below poverty line: 1%

Chronology of Taiwan's Recent Political History

1945 Control of Taiwan shifts from Japan to the Republic of China (ROC).

1947 Taiwanese anger over ROC mismanagement explodes in the *2-28 Incident*.

1949 ROC president Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT party flee from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan because of the communist revolution, transferring the ROC's capital to Taipei as well as all state institutions. Martial law is imposed on Taiwan.

1950 The United States makes a strategic alliance with the ROC, guaranteeing the ROC protection from a communist invasion, at the outbreak of the Korean War.

1971 The ROC loses its seat in the United Nations.

1978 Chiang Ching-kuo becomes the ROC president, succeeding Yen Chia-kan who had served the remainder of Chiang Kai-shek's term following his death in 1975.

1979 The U.S. transfers its embassy from the ROC to the People's Republic of China (PRC), reversing the "one-China" policy in the PRC's favor.

The *Kaohsiung Incident* becomes a turning point in Taiwan's democracy movement, spurring on a unified opposition movement under the label "*Tangwai*."

1986 The first opposition party is founded, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

1987 Martial law is lifted.

1988 Lee Teng-hui becomes the first ROC president of Taiwanese ethnicity.
1991 The first comprehensive elections are held for the National Assembly. The emergency decrees are withdrawn.

1994 James Soong is elected the first and only directly elected governor of Taiwan. Chen Shui-bian and Wu Dun-yi are the first directly elected mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung cities respectively.

1996 Lee Teng-hui is re-elected president of the ROC in the first popular presidential elections in Taiwan.

2000 DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian becomes the first non-KMT president of Taiwan in a peaceful transference of power.

2004 Chen is re-elected president.

Introduction

This paper will familiarize the reader with Taiwan's democratization.[5] It provides a historical survey of the events and public policies that have contributed to Taiwan's democratic development over three time periods: the establishment (1940s to 1950s), growth (1960s to 1970s) and takeoff of the Taiwanese democracy (1980s to present).[6] Taiwan's transformation from strong state to multiparty democracy is important because it is the first "Chinese" democracy.

Establishment of Democracy

Control of Taiwan was transferred from Japan to the Republic of China (ROC) in 1945. Only four years later, ROC president Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) Party followers were forced to flee to the island because of the communist revolution, moving the ROC's capital and state institutions to Taiwan. Chiang vowed that this was a temporary relocation, promising to immediately retake the mainland and introduce gradual democratization. Emergency decrees and martial law were imposed to centralize power in the party-led state and prevent dissidence.

A communist takeover in Taiwan appeared inevitable. The United States made a strategic partnership with the ROC to protect it from falling to the communists at the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. The partnership guaranteed the ROC military and economic aid, as well as recognition as the legitimate government of all Chinese people in international affairs. Chiang undertook policies to strengthen his hold on the island and bolster the ROC's possibilities of retaking the mainland, including local elections and economic growth. During this time, Taiwan's political development was influenced by the assurance of political stability, the spread of material prosperity and civic learning.

Beginnings of ROC Rule

Five different colonial powers have administered Taiwan over its 400-year history.[7] Taiwan was last a Japanese colony from 1895 to 1945. The efficient Japanese regime made noteworthy contributions to Taiwan: ramping up its agricultural productivity, upgrading its economic infrastructure, improving its literacy rate and education levels, and introducing democracy and local elections. The Cairo Declaration (1943) ordered Taiwan's return to China at the end of World War II on the basis of ROC president Chiang Kai-shek's wartime alliance with western powers and China's previous control of Taiwan for more than 200 years. The Taiwanese are predominantly Chinese in origin.[8] Most welcomed the reinstitution of Chinese rule and expected the island to be named a province. They were soon disappointed by the imposition of a military-led government. A Chinese Administrator-General, Ch'en Yi, was appointed governor-general and an initial 12 000 military personnel and 200 officers were sent to maintain order. They immediately undertook plans to 'de-Japanese' the island, replacing Taiwanese who had worked in cooperation with the Japanese regime with KMT loyalists and funneling the island's resources to the mainland. As Taiwan's economic well-being, public health standards, and social order deteriorated, tensions rose between the Taiwanese and Chinese mainlanders.

Frustration over the government's heavy-handed treatment soon erupted into violence. On 28 February 1947, soldiers publicly assaulted Taiwanese widow Lin Chiang-mai, whom they suspected of selling cigarettes on the black market, and subsequently shot a passerby who tried to intervene. Outraged by the military's abuse of power, Taiwanese demonstrated throughout the island over the next two weeks. The Taiwanese called for fundamental political reforms, such as Taiwanese representation in politics and immediate municipal executive elections, as well as sharp restrictions on military and police authority. The demonstrations sparked confrontations with police officers,

soldiers and civilian mainlanders. Chiang feared the overthrow of his military government and sent in troops and armed police to restore control. This violent altercation became known as the 2-28 Incident, a reference to the date it occurred, and remains symbolic of calls for greater ethnic justice.[9]

The ROC government initiated a two-pronged strategy for the administration of Taiwan after the 2-28 Incident: suppressing dissenters and rectifying abuses. Emergency decrees were enacted giving the government nearly unlimited power to suppress political opposition and punish those who challenged its authority. It exercised targeted attacks against its political enemies, whether community leaders, intellectuals or students, in an effort to prevent future uprisings. An estimated 20 000 to 60 000 Taiwanese died in these purges, successfully crushing any future attempts to mobilize and lead opposition movements.[10] The government also raised Taiwan to the status of a province, held elections for positions at the local level, and appointed some Taiwanese to top jobs in the government. Efforts were made to alleviate unemployment and many monopoly enterprises were sold. Ultimately, Ch'en Yi and his collaborators took the blame for the incident.

Relocating the ROC

Mao Tse-tung's Chinese communists captured the final regions of mainland China in late 1949 and established the People's Republic of China (PRC). Chiang concurrently announced the move of the ROC's capital to Taipei, Taiwan, on 7 December. Chinese mainlanders (1.5 to 2 million) followed Chiang, including approximately 600 000 Chinese soldiers. Both leaders purported to govern on behalf of all of China. In Taiwan, Chiang was defiant in his assertions that the ROC had not been defeated. To this end, he directly transferred the ROC constitution and all state institutions from the mainland to the island. Thus began a competition that would inform Chinese politics for years to come.

The ROC government argued that the communist threat warranted a concentration of authority in the presidency. Emergency decrees suspending the ROC constitution, transferring all government powers to the president, and forbidding the formation of new political parties, were extended indefinitely pending the defeat of the communists. Martial law was also imposed to give the government the power to scrutinize and exercise these powers at the grassroots level. These decrees and martial law, which remained in effect for over 40 years, all but eliminated legal avenues for mounting political opposition and became the source of increasing dissidence.[11]

Chiang controlled most of Taiwan's mass media and was adept when using vast resources to uphold allegiance. He purged almost 100 civilian and military leaders, further centralizing power squarely in his hands. Chiang used propaganda, and repressed dissent throughout his time in office. The suppression of opposition forces through political arrests and detentions continued until the 1970s, earning the name "white terror."

Gaining Allies and Protection

In the spring of 1950, Mao made plans for an invasion of Taiwan. Predicting a quick communist advance, the United States and other countries ordered the evacuation of its nonessential personnel. Frustrated by the regime's apparent incompetence and corruption, the U.S. had withdrawn from the ROC because the island was outside the American "defense parameter." However, international questions soon moved the US to reconsider the ROC's status.

With the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950, the US began fearing the fall of the ROC. A PRC capture of Taiwan posed a serious threat to sea lanes; alternatively a pro-US government on Taiwan would assist in containing communism. On 27 June, US President Harry Truman announced that the US would protect Taiwan against possible attack, sending the Seventh Fleet to patrol the waters

between Taiwan and China. This symbolic gesture effectively discouraged the PRC from a possible attack. In 1951, the US resumed giving economic and military aid to the ROC to maintain the island's loyalty. The US would give approximately $1.5 billion in aid from this time onwards until the mid-1960s. In the subsequent Mutual Defense Treaty (1954), the US promised the ROC protection in the event of an attack by the PRC. The strategic partnership with the US guaranteed the ongoing survival of the ROC regime. The financial assistance also gave the government an opportunity to pursue economic development, which affected Taiwan's liberalization.[12]

Chiang remained committed to his goal of re-establishing control on mainland China throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Chiang's strategy involved deepening his support among the Taiwanese and improving his reputation on the mainland and elsewhere. Chiang believed that patriotism, material prosperity, and an understanding of and respect for democratic institutions were prerequisites for democracy. He felt that propaganda, local elections and economic progress would serve as positive incentives to win over the Taiwanese and world community.

Implementing Local Elections

The ROC constitution promised elections for positions at the local level. This provision was immediately put into place as the KMT was keen to win the support of the Taiwanese.[13] Local elections promised to enhance the legitimacy of the ROC government and draw a sharp distinction between the ROC and PRC administrations. They gave local politicians name recognition and valuable experience, requisites by which they could advance in politics. Local elections also assisted in institutionalizing democratic politics, which could be applied to the central government gradually, once the Taiwanese people were "ready."

To begin, the ROC government re-commenced the elections for township representatives that had been instituted on the mainland in 1946. They extended these contests to township heads, city council members and city executives in 1950. The elections for the first Taiwan Provincial Assembly and village councils and executives were held the following year. Early on, these elections were manipulated and dominated by the ruling party through fraud, intimidation, the power of incumbency and official rules. It was not until the 1970s that opposition candidates started to win local offices and the authenticity of these contests increased. In the end, these reforms paved the way for the consolidation of the opposition forces.

Initiating Economic Growth

After the relocation of the ROC to Taiwan in 1949, the government made an about face and began prioritizing the island's economic development. It hoped that successful economic development would improve the regime's respectability. The government had two advantages: it was an outsider regime and had learned from past mistakes on the mainland. This gave it a certain freedom to undertake daring economic policy with the knowledge of past successes and disappointments in mind. Land reform and industrial policies were two of its important undertakings.[14]

Land reform is often cited as the most important example of the government's economic development strategy. Between 1949 and 1951, the government imposed a rent ceiling on land and began redistributing land seized from the Japanese to tenant farmers. The government ordered landlords to exchange any land in excess of three hectares for in-kind bonds and shares in government enterprises in 1953. The redistribution of these lands helped thousands of farmers gain small, independent land holdings. Agricultural productivity improved and production increased. This helped equalize the distribution of wealth, income and associated social status of the Taiwanese and mainlanders.

The ROC government also implemented a highly successful industrial policy. It first adopted an import substitution policy, favoring labor-intensive and light manufacturing, and later took steps to stimulate private enterprise, such as moves to transfer state-owned industries to private ownership. The ROC soon shifted to export-led development, turning into an export processing zone. Over the next two decades, Taiwan enjoyed the world's fast growing economy, fostering social progress in manifold ways and devolving power back in the hands of the Taiwanese (such as the rapid growth of a middle class, more openness, and an influx of Western ideas).

Growth of Democracy

International and domestic pressures intensified during the late 1960s and early 1970s, encouraging Taiwan's democratization. The ROC became increasingly isolated from the world community as the PRC emerged as an important strategic ally to the western world. The ROC's expulsion from the UN in 1971 and the withdrawal of the US from Taiwan in 1979 bolstered the united opposition forces' campaigns under the label of the "*Tangwai*."

The ROC undertook a pragmatic response to these challenges under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek's son Chiang Ching-kuo: Taiwanese were integrated into the KMT party-led state, supplementary elections facilitated the promotion of Taiwanese and the island's economic engine was improved. Sources of Taiwan's democratic development during this period include shifting international pressures, the founding of civil society actors and increased public expectations of government.

Losing International Standing

The world community began welcoming the PRC back into the international fold in the mid-1960s. Sino-Soviet relations had cooled and the PRC had consolidated its grip on China. The PRC increasingly represented a large and strategically important partner for the western world. In contrast, the ROC was losing its international political capital and did not adjust to the Cold War's thawing, failing to liberalize and democratize. Canada was the first country to normalize relations with the PRC in 1970. While it refused to sever its ties to the ROC, many others did not. In fact, between 1968 and 1975, the number of countries with diplomatic ties to the ROC decreased by 38, while the PRC's count increased by 67.[15] A showdown over the ROC and PRC's international standing would take place in the United Nations (UN).

UN membership was considered important for legitimacy. Chiang was initially recognized by the international community for his role as the alliance leader in the Asian theatre of World War II. Portrayed as proto-democratic and proto-Christian, Chiang's ROC was given a seat in the UN and assigned a permanent seat in the Security Council. The ROC was entrusted with representing all of China in international affairs. Following the KMT's exile to Taiwan, the PRC and Soviet Union immediately began questioning Chiang's membership. In 1952, the General Assembly held its first vote on the matter, during which 88 percent of member countries turned down the PRC's request for recognition. The PRC would make gradual progress at Taiwan's expense in successive annual votes.

By 1970, the tide had turned in favor of the PRC and the US began encouraging Chiang to accept dual recognition. New members to the UN were sympathetic to the PRC and US-PRC relations had improved. The US withdrew its support for the ROC only a year later. Because its defeat seemed inevitable, the ROC announced its withdrawal from the UN only minutes before the General Assembly voted in the PRC's favor by a margin of 76 to 35. The ROC's expulsion from the UN also meant it lost its seats in UN-affiliated intergovernmental organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Changing ROC-US Relations

The relationship of the United States with the ROC became increasingly more distant. The US began reducing its military forces and installations on Taiwan and pursuing rapprochement with the PRC in the 1960s. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Richard Nixon's respective visits to the PRC in 1971 and 1972 are symbolic of intensified US-PRC relations. The Shanghai Communiqué (1972) established the two countries' shared aspirations and reversed the "one-China" policy in favor of the PRC. The ROC alleged that it had been abandoned by the US.

The ROC made significant efforts to maintain diplomatic relations with the US in the 1970s. However, these efforts were to no avail; US President Jimmy Carter announced that the US would break official ties with the ROC and recognize the PRC on 1 January 1979. Carter terminated the Mutual Defense Treaty and withdrew all US troops on Taiwan in four months time. Taiwan's expulsion from the UN and shifting US allegiances isolated the ROC from the rest of the world. This would serve as an important catalyst for protest on Taiwan and abroad favoring democratic reforms.[16]

Founding of the *Tangwai*

Emergency decrees forbade the formation of opposition parties, ensuring that the ROC remained a one-party state under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek's KMT. The decrees granted the party-led state significant control over its military, education system and mass media, which it used to suppress opposition forces. Those who spoke out risked arrest, torture and execution on the basis of sedition.

Nonetheless, dissidents often sought out different tools to challenge the KMT. Mainlander Lei Chan and others established a magazine, "The China Fortnightly" (1949), which was largely critical of the KMT-ruled government. The magazine encouraged dissidents to work through existing electoral institutions to influence ROC politics and foster democratic development. They sought more opportunities for participation in the political system and better Taiwanese representation in government. Chan and others began making plans for the creation of the Chinese Democratic Party to compete in the 1960 local elections against the ruling KMT. However, Chan and his editors were arrested just prior to this announcement and neither the magazine nor the party survived.

Dissidents began using local elections to challenge the KMT in the 1960s. Most benefited from strong personal followings and made few efforts to jointly organize. It was not until the 1973 local elections that a group of dissidents again started jointly campaigning for city council. In the 1977 municipal assembly, municipal executive and provincial assembly elections, independent publishers Kang Ning-hsiang and Huang Hsin-chieh spearheaded a unified campaign for dissident candidates. The success of these campaigns gave hope to the collaborators, who soon became known as the "*Tangwai*" (outside the party), marking the emergence of a unified opposition force. *Tangwai* members included students, aboriginals and lawyers whose efforts for political, social and legal progress had previously been halted because of Chiang's firm grip on power.[17]

Transitioning Leadership and Initiating Reforms

Chiang Kai-shek passed away on 5 April 1975 at the age of 87. The death of Mao only a year later put an end to the personal duel between two political factions-turned-governments that had dominated China for half a century. Their deaths presented the ROC and PRC with opportunities to pursue change. In Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek was soon succeeded by his eldest son, Chiang Ching-kuo (CCK), who was elected leader of the KMT in 1975 and president in 1978.[18] CCK was perhaps an unlikely reformer. He was not schooled in democratic tradition nor had he championed democracy during most of his political career. In fact, he was sent by his father to the Soviet Union during his

youth, where he joined the Communist Party and later married a Russian. Also, he had served in varying roles in the KMT government, including a stint as head of the Chinese Anti-Communists National Salvation Youth Corps, where he was responsible for suppressing dissent on college and university campuses. Nonetheless, CCK recognized that the KMT needed to shed its authoritarian rule to heal wounds in Taiwan, win international support and put pressure on the PRC to reform. He offered a pragmatic response to the crisis confronting the government.

As Premier, CCK realized that maintaining power on Taiwan had become the greatest challenge facing the ROC during the 1970s. He felt that increasing the integration of the Taiwanese into the party-led state would help it set down roots on Taiwan and foster better relations between Taiwanese and KMT. Thus, the government sought to identify and nominate a new generation of young and educated politicians and public servants. They were typically brought into leadership positions at the provincial level or below and promoted accordingly.

CCK also sought to expand opportunities for the Taiwanese to participate by opening contests for seats in the ROC's political institutions. The national legislatures had been transferred directly to Taiwan in 1949. Chinese mainland legislators elected in the 1946 Chinese elections assumed their seats and were frozen in office pending the ROC's takeover of mainland China. This had enhanced the power of Chinese mainlanders over the Taiwanese. CCK promoted supplementary elections as a means for improving and expanding the channels for political participation. In 1969, Chiang ordered the first supplementary elections for seats in the National Assembly, Legislative Yuan and Control Yuan. CCK regularized these elections in 1972, 1975 and thereafter. The KMT dominated these early elections because of its effective electoral machine and the opposition's lack of resources and stature. With the merger of opposition forces under the label "*Tangwai*", the opposition began launching successful challenges in the late 1970s. The promotions of Taipei and Kaohsiung as "special municipalities" in 1967 and 1979 respectively put them on equal footing with the provincial government and also served as fertile training grounds for the *Tangwai*.

CCK also intensified the regime's preservation through economic development. He invested heavily in a capital development model, which emphasized a full state economy, competent economic bureaucracy, ambitious industrial policy and equitable income distribution. Despite Taiwan's diminished international standing, its economy was not curtailed as foreign trade and tourism increased. Its GNP soared, averaging a growth rate of 8.8% from 1953 to 1984, and its income ratio between the highest fifth and the lowest fifth of households declined from 20.47:1 in 1953 to 4.40:1 in 1984.[19] The KMT took credit for Taiwan's economic miracle.

The Take-off of Democracy

Democratic transitioning became a KMT strategy after it suffered a series of embarrassments and failed to quell dissident voices in the late 1970s. The opposition forces employed a variety of protest tactics and pounced on the opportunity to create a political party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Chiang benevolently responded, announcing the lifting of martial law. State institutions were soon made subject to democratic contests, culminating in the election of the president in 1996. During the 1980s onwards, Taiwan's political development has been influenced by the fortification of opposition forces, a responsive and conciliatory government and transitioning to local and elected leadership.

Galvanizing the Opposition Forces

President Carter's announcement that the US would normalize relations with the PRC sent a shockwave through Taiwan. The opposition movement redoubled its efforts in

this tense atmosphere, using publications, demonstrations and elections to demonstrate its discontent. It established two opposition magazines in the summer of 1979, "The Eighties" and the "The Formosa Magazine". The latter quickly became the rallying point for the democratic movement. The radical Formosa faction wrote daring editorials and called for street-level protests. Electoral politics soon became the faction's preferred forum of protest and efforts were made to form an opposition party.

The Formosa faction sponsored a protest in Kaohsiung City commemorating International Human Rights Day on 10 December 1979. Thousands of participants campaigned against the lack of democracy and human rights on the island. Violence soon erupted as participants convened in the downtown square to find the exits blocked by riot police. Newspapers reported that more than 90 police officers and 40 civilians were injured in the incident, while the government claimed more than 180 police officers and a single civilian suffered injuries. The eight most prominent leaders were tried in military court and sentenced to terms ranging from 12 years to life imprisonment; 33 other participants were tried in civil court and sentenced to terms ranging from two to six years.

Reaction in the international community and among Taiwanese was particularly strong. In Taiwan, the crackdown on the Formosa faction only served to reinforce its commitment to political reform. The success of opposition candidates in the 1980 election suggests that the Kaohsiung defendants won the sympathy of the Taiwanese. In subsequent elections in 1982 and 1983, several wives and attorneys of the Kaohsiung defendants won the largest share of votes in their districts, becoming the opposition forces' newest generation of leaders. Thus, the *Tangwai* was becoming increasingly confrontational: magazines and protests were only two of the movement's new tactics. The conflict between the protestors and police officers became known as the Kaohsiung Incident and spurred on the opposition forces, as well as gave birth to a new cohort of leaders.

Leading and Conceding to Democratic Growth

Opposition forces intensified their lobbying for democratization and greater ethnic justice in the early 1980s. They were emboldened by electoral successes and the government's conciliatory tone, as well as a series of setbacks and embarrassments plaguing the KMT. As the vote share of *Tangwai* candidates increased, the formation of an opposition party appeared as a natural extension. A political party offered the *Tangwai* a permanent, organized vehicle to present activists and voters. In 1979, the Formosa faction opened its first service centre in Kaohsiung City to serve as a headquarters for demonstrations and grassroots organizing. In 1984, the *Tangwai* established the Public Policy Association to provide it with a full-time framework for building its grassroots support base and cultivating its leadership.

CCK became increasingly concerned with Taiwan's political development in this context. He understood democratization as part of a worldwide trend and as an important moral force. The gradual democratization of Taiwan offered the KMT an opportunity to vindicate its rule on Taiwan and unify China.[20] A new KMT central committee was formed in March of 1986 and was instructed to create a committee to study the initiation of political reform.[21] CCK raised the possibility of lifting martial law, ending the ban on new political organizations, subjecting the national legislative bodies to re-election and giving greater autonomy to local governments. CCK also decided that the time had come for contact and discussions with the opposition forces. Liberal KMT party members and *Tangwai* leaders agreed to the abolition of emergency decrees and martial law on 10 May 1986. The two parties failed to reach a consensus on the status of opposition political parties. Nonetheless, the committee's establishment and commencement of shared dialogue gave the opposition

Tangwai hope for additional political reform, while CCK promised continued gradual democratization.

Founding the DPP and Lifting of Martial Law

The offices of the "The Eighties" were closed after it featured an editorial challenging the *Tangwai* to form an opposition party on 19 May 1986. "The Formosa Magazine" was closed shortly thereafter and vocal opposition leaders were arrested. Protests sprung up widely against the ROC government. As the protests mounted, the idea of forming a political party became more popular. A successful coordinated election strategy for provincial and municipal elections in January 1985 unified the *Tangwai*'s various factions: all eleven of its candidates for Taipei City Council were elected, as were half of its candidates for Kaohsiung City Council, eleven of its Provincial Assembly candidates, and one municipal executive candidate.

A 'Committee for Organizing a Party and Carrying Out Its Construction' was soon struck, and activists spent the summer planning and strategizing. On 28 September, 130 *Tangwai* members met in Taipei to prepare for upcoming elections. A last minute motion for immediate action to organize a party was unanimously adopted, creating the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).[22] The party promised to campaign for the protection of liberties, democratization, nationalism and social welfare programs. DPP leaders feared a swift reaction from the KMT for the illegal establishment of an opposition party.

CCK's ability to control the democratization process was put into question by the DPP's founding. The fallout of the Kaoshiung Incident suggested that the opposition forces could not be easily quashed. A hard-handed approach would also threaten CCK's legacy as a democratic reformer. However, allowing one opposition party to operate effectively meant the de facto transition of Taiwan from one-party to multi-party system. It would mean that opposition forces were effectively steering the island's democratization process. Only days later, CCK countered by announcing that martial law would be lifted once a new security bill was drafted and approved by the legislature.

A new National Security Act was enacted on 23 June 1987, removing many restrictions on parades and assemblies, so long as they did not advocate communism, Taiwanese identity or the overthrow of the constitution. The Act brought to an end the ban on new political parties. The DPP soon achieved legal status as an opposition party, competing in the first true two-party election in 1986. By the elections in 1989, there were nearly 40 competitive political parties. The Act also transferred supervision of the mass media from a military unit to a branch of Executive Yuan and routine censorship was lifted. Within six months of the end of martial law on 15 July, the number of newspapers had increased from 31 to 123.[23] Freedom of association and speech had returned to the island.

Transitioning to Taiwanese Leadership

Chiang Ching-kuo passed away on 13 January 1988 at the age of 77 years old. Lee Teng-hui succeeded CCK as ROC president in 1988 and KMT party chairman in 1989. Lee is an American trained professor of agricultural economics at the National Taiwan University and advisor to the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction. He entered into active politics in 1972, serving as minister without portfolio, mayor of Taipei and governor of Taiwan. Only four years after Lee's appointment to the powerful standing committee of the KMT, Lee was chosen by CCK as his vice president. Lee was a surprise choice to many because of his relative inexperience. His promotion was also significant because he is Taiwanese. Many questioned how the democratization process only recently undertaken by CCK would unfold under new and Taiwanese leadership.

Lee used reform initiatives to gain Taiwanese support and ward off potential dissidence within the KMT. Lee unveiled a compensation scheme for the voluntary retirement of

senior legislators and developed ground rules for multi-party elections to the National Assembly in 1989. These initial reform efforts made Lee popular among the Taiwanese and reformers in the KMT. However, a conservative non-mainstream faction of the KMT emerged prior to the 1990 presidential election. The faction lobbied that Lee's concessions marked an abandonment of the party's traditional commitment to political stability and Chinese nationalism. These were the first signs of fractures that would later split the KMT. Factions left the party to form the New Party and People's First Party in 1993 and 2000 respectively, which were significant political and spiritual defeats for the party.

Changing Taiwan's Political Institutions

Upon Lee's reelection to the presidency in 1990, he immediately hosted the National Affairs Conference on constitutional and political reform in June and July of 1990. Over 150 politicians, scholars, business and community leaders participated and the public was encouraged to send in comments. Lee's goal was to create a blueprint for the next stage of Taiwan's democratization that would be acceptable to all the major players. By the Assembly's end, points of agreement included: the ROC president, the governor of Taiwan and the mayors of Taipei and Kaohsiung cities should be popularly elected; the special powers vested in the government because of the communist rebellion should be discontinued; and that all seats in the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan should be opened. The Assembly's findings are important because they reflect an emerging consensus on democratic goals. Public pressure pushed for immediate action.

In an appeal launched by KMT and DPP legislators, the Council of Grand Justices ordered that senior legislators retire by 31 December 1991. The National Assembly responded by passing a constitutional amendment providing for elections for all seats in parliamentary bodies over the following three years. Elections for seats in the National Assembly were the first held in December 1991. The election results reverberated throughout Taiwan's political arena as the electorate repudiated the DPP's calls for independence. The DPP's policies shifted to more realistic and responsible solutions and the KMT's mainstream faction gained confidence in its ability to implement profound reforms without losing control.

Lee developed a new international relations strategy for the ROC. He declared the Chinese civil war over in May of 1991 and repealed the emergency decrees. Lee emphasized that the ROC and PRC had split China into two areas and that both were equal states. He said that the ROC would only reunify if there was democracy, freedom and equal prosperity on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The ROC began pursuing a new strategy of "pragmatic diplomacy". It would forge official and unofficial ties with other countries and join international organizations, such as the United Nations, to raise the political costs of the PRC strong-arming the ROC. The ROC's peaceful democratization would be essential to its campaign for recognition. This bound the island to continue its efforts to democratize.

Holding Direct Presidential Elections

Early on, the newly elected National Assembly could not reach a consensus on presidential elections. Direct presidential elections were favored by Lee and the DPP, and an electoral college was preferred by many KMT members. Mass protests took place immediately after the government announced that any decision would be delayed until 1995. However, in April of 1994, the KMT Central Committee recommended the direct election of the president; presidents would serve four-year terms and for no longer than two consecutive terms. The National Assembly approved the Committee's recommendations in May, declaring that Taiwan's first presidential election would take place on 23 March 1996.

The first presidential elections were mired in conflict even prior to their beginning. The PRC began conducting missiles tests to intimidate the Taiwanese, firing missiles across the Taiwan Strait in July 1995. The Taiwanese stock market was jolted and lost a third of its value. In December, the US sent an aircraft through the Taiwan Strait to demonstrate its tacit support for the ROC's presidential elections and in hopes of cooling tensions between the PRC and ROC. However, soon after the presidential campaign formally began on 24 February 1996, the PRC announced another round of missile firings into the Taiwan Strait. Missiles hit the island's northeast and southeast's coasts, blockading traffic routes through Taiwan, from March 8 to 15. The US deployed an aircraft on March 8 and March 11 in response to the PRC's announcements that missiles would again be launched through March 12 to 20. After the PRC's third announcement of upcoming missile testing, the Taiwanese reacted with anger more than fear.

The PRC's threats rebounded in Lee's favor. On election-day, 76 percent of Taiwan's eligible voters exercised their right to select the country's head of state. Fifty-four percent cast their votes for President Lee. The election was a milestone in the island's political development and Lee's reelection was an endorsement of the democratization project. Taiwan's highest office was now accountable through direct elections.

Conclusion

In 2000, DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian was elected president of the Republic of China. Chen became politically active as a lawyer during the Kaohsiung Incident and was the first directly elected mayor of Taipei in 1994. He was now the first non-KMT Party member elected president. The peaceful transfer of power from the KMT to DPP brought Taiwan's procedural democratization to a close and opened up its consolidation.[24] Taiwan has a legitimate state apparatus, free and contested elections for the executive and legislative positions and governance according to the rule of law. It is now in the process of institutionalizing its democracy to ensure its sustainability over time.[25] Interestingly, Taiwan is the first "Chinese" democracy. Its democratic evolution remains important to understand not only for those interested in understanding democratic development, but also for those curious about the political future of East Asia.

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Notes

1 Shih Hsin-chuan, "Presidential Office Web site includes 'Taiwan'," *Taipei Times* 31 July 2005: 3.

2 Yun-han Chu et. al's "Halting Progress in Korea and Taiwan" details some of the strengths and weaknesses of Taiwan's democratic standing. Other insightful comparative articles include Joseph Wong's "Democratization and the left: comparing East Asia and Latin America" and Bum Suk Kim's "Democratic Development Process in Taiwan and South Korea."

3 Freedom House, "Taiwan," *Freedom in the World*, 18 June 2003, 11 Sept. 2005 <http://freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2003/countryratings/taiwan.htm>.

4 The Centre's initial case studies focus on the establishment of local elections and founding of the opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party.

5 A variety of texts are available for readers with different levels of interest or knowledge. For example, April C.J. Lin and Jerome F. Keating's *Island in the Stream: a Quick Case Study of Taiwan's Complex History* is ideal for those unfamiliar with Taiwan's history, while Shelley Rigger's *Politics in Taiwan* provides a more thorough overview.

6 Taiwan's Government Information Office first coined these terms in its "The Story of Taiwan – Politics".

7 The Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, French and Chinese have each staked claims on Taiwan.

8 See Chapter 1 of John F. Cooper's *Taiwan: Nation-state or Province?* for additional information.

Taiwan's population is made up of four major ethnic or sub-ethnic groups: the Aborigines (2%), two groups of "Taiwanese" Chinese, Fukienese or Hoklo, and Hakka (86%), and Mainland Chinese (14%). Those Chinese arriving on Taiwan in 1949 (or after) are referred to as Mainland Chinese.

9 President Lee Teng-hui apologized for the clash on 28 February 1996. The Legislative Yuan designated 28 February as a memorial day in February 1996 and Taipei mayor Chen Shui-bian renamed a downtown park 2-28 Peace Park in honor of the lives lost.

10 Andrew Lin, "Going Global: Finding a 'Place' for Taiwanese National Identity," *Metis Vita* 4 (2004): 80.

Lin reports that the estimates of the number of deaths varies; conservative estimates hold the death toll between 20,000 – 30,000 people, while some scholars would put the death toll closer to 50,000 – 60,000. A census conducted in 1953 showed that in the wake of the massacres, almost 100,000 people were reported missing.

11 Taiwan has the distinction of having the longest period of martial law in modern history. Martial law was declared in the aftermath of the 2-28 Incident to suppress communist and pro-democracy activities on the island and was not lifted until 1987.

12 Yu-Shan Wu's "Marketization of Politics: The Taiwan Experience" provides interesting insight into the relationship of Taiwan's market successes and its democratization.

13 Dorothy J. Solinger discusses the impact of election experience on democratic transitioning in her article, "Ending One-Party Dominance: Korea, Taiwan, Mexico."

14 Hilton L. Root's "What Democracy Can Do for East Asia" sheds light on the experiences of Taiwan's booming egalitarian economy.

15 Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003) 132.

The Republic of China on Taiwan is currently recognized by only 25 countries.

16 Denny Roy's *Taiwan: a Political History* describes how international affairs has shaped Taiwan's democratic development.

17 Yang Pi-chuan's *The Road to Freedom* details the history of Taiwan's democratic movement.

18 Yen Chia-kan served the remainder of Chiang Kai-shek's presidential term following his death on 5 April 1975 until 20 May 1978.

19 Yu-Shan Wu, "Marketization of Politics: The Taiwan Experience," *Asian Survey* 29.4 (1989): 384.

20 Tse-Kang Leng's *The Taiwan-China Connection: Democracy and Development across the Taiwan Straits* describes the influence of Taiwan and China's relationship on their political developments.

21 14 of 31 members of the KMT's new central committee were now Taiwanese.

22 Shelley Rigger's *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* is the most thorough source of information on the history of the DPP.

23 For additional information on the media's transformation, please see Winberg Chia's "The Transformation of the Mass Media in Taiwan Since 1950: Introduction."

24 For a relevant exploration of democratic theory, please see Larry Diamond et. al's *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies*.

25 Joseph Wong's "Deepening Democracy in Taiwan" provides insight into recent public policy transformations in Taiwan associated with democratic transitioning. Yun-han Chu's "-Taiwan's Year of Stress" describes the recent political agenda of 2004.