

# One Canadian Perspective on Taiwan (revised)

Hon. David Kilgour, J.D.  
Taiwanese Canadian Association (TCA)  
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The TCA and its thousands of members across Canada deserve much thanks for building myriad links across the Pacific between our two peoples since its founding in 1963.

Your members also reinforce shared bi-national values, including human dignity, multi-party democracy and the rule of law. Time, however, permits me this morning to single out only a small sample of individuals from the membership, mostly from B.C.'s lower mainland:

## Exemplary Canadians



**Dr. Tsung-yi Lin**

The late Dr. Tsung-yi Lin became director of mental health at the World Health Organization and was one of the most effective advocates for psychiatry as a centerpiece of public health. He developed research methods at universities in Europe, the U.S. and finally at U.B.C.



**Robert Chen**

Robert Chen (1942-2010) worked with distinction for many years on value for money issues in the office of Canada's highly-respected Auditor General. He also gave much time to his loving family and to the cause of a democratic and independent Taiwan.

Cecilia Chueh is artistic director of the Egret Music Centre, conductor of the Egret Ladies and Men's Choirs, and co-conductor of the Vancouver Oratorio Society. She has served as a board member of both the Vancouver Chamber Choir and the Canadian Music Centre.



**Cecilia Chueh**



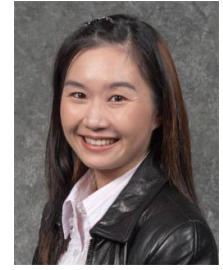
**Dr. Joseph Lin**

Joseph Lin, a pediatrician in Taiwan, is founding president of the Green Club on environmental education and an interpreter, organizer, writer and publisher on the environment. He is a volunteer award winner from the Vancouver Parks Board and has been honoured by the Natural History Society Conservation body.



**Richard Chang**

If democracies are to function well, it is essential that good people run for public office. At the municipal government level, the community should be proud that Anne Kang and Richard Chang are serving in many capacities on the City of Burnaby Council.



**Anne Kang**

Chungsen ‘CS’ Leung is the new Conservative Member of Parliament for Willowdale in Toronto and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.



An entrepreneur with much international business experience, he has worked tirelessly on projects, committees, and organizations.

**Chungsen ‘CS’ Leung, M.P.**

These individuals, along with so many others, embody the vibrancy and diversity of the Taiwanese people. We should all take pride that the community greatly enriches Canada.

**Canada-Taiwan Relations**

In 2010, Canada’s bilateral trade with Taiwan amounted to \$5.3 billion, making it our fourth largest trading partner in Asia and the twelfth largest worldwide. Congratulations to Taiwan on recently being named “the world’s sixth most competitive economy” and for exporting US\$ 154 billion in goods in the first six months of this year alone.

Last November, Canada became the 39th country to grant visa-free privilege to Taiwanese nationals. This was aimed at improving trade, cultural, investment and people-to-people contacts.

On July 1 2010, the Working Holiday program became an instant success with Taiwan’s young people because it enabled them and Canadians aged 18 - 35 to apply for a one-year working holiday multi-entry visa.



**David Ta-wei Lee**

Taiwan’s senior representative to Canada, David Ta-wei Lee, says that President Ma Ying-jeou’s policy of improving cross-strait economic and cultural ties has given new impetus to Taiwan-Canada ones as well, In Lee’s view, flexible diplomacy has created ‘win-win-win’ outcomes for Taipei, Ottawa and Beijing. He adds, “The signing of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) by the PRC and Taiwan [in 2010] is a clear corollary of this approach, and provides for even more opportunities for mutual prosperity in the Greater China and Southeast Asian markets.”

In fairness, others counter that closer economic links with China, especially the signing of the ECFA, have resulted in higher unemployment, especially for younger Taiwanese and recent university graduates, and increased income disparities within Taiwan. Large businesses will certainly benefit from the ECFA, they add, but it will hurt middle and low income families. Farmers across Taiwan will suffer. The closer ties have resulted in higher prices in Taiwan's housing market, due to speculative buying by Chinese nationals, which makes owning a home more difficult.



**President Ma  
Ying-jeou**

The 40-year relationship between Taiwan and Canada is significant because it has not depended on any of the usual international legal mechanisms and networks available in most bilateral relationships. Promoting the continued right of sovereignty and self-determination for Taiwan - even though it riles the party-state in Beijing - is seen as the right thing to do by many Canadians.

The Ma government has been building closer bonds with China, with the two sides launching direct flights to each other's cities and new tourist programs - all under a focus deemed 'economic' rather than 'political'. President Ma speaks of a framework of "mutual non-recognition, mutual non-denial".

Dr. Scott Simon at the University of Ottawa and longtime observer of Taiwan notes: "The surveys that I have seen show that a slight majority are satisfied with President Ma Ying-jeou and the pace of the cross-straits rapprochement. Also, (President) Ma claims that his policy is 'no unification, no independence, no use of force'. In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, I believe that he means it."



**Dr Scott Simon**



**John Weston, M.P.**

John Weston, the Member of Parliament in West Vancouver, lived in Taiwan from 1986 to 1997 and personally witnessed the emergence of Taiwan from martial law to a full-fledged democracy.

He said recently,

"Few places in the world can claim such leaders of high integrity, stellar intellect, and international experience as Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou, and Opposition Leader Tsai Ing-wen. Both are lawyers, educated in Taiwan and at US Ivy League universities. Both have extensive relationships with leaders from around the world ... Looking at Taiwan's Government today, one can learn as much from what is NOT happening, as from what is occurring. The tension on the Korean Peninsula could well characterize the Taiwan Straits; instead, the peace and stability there have facilitated a myriad of Cross-Straits Agreements, all of them pioneering, all of them enabling countries such as Canada to deal fruitfully with Taiwan as well as China. Other countries are able to work more broadly with Taiwan in the absence of Cross-Straits tension."



**Tsai Ing-wen**

## Justice For All

Permit me, as someone who was a prosecutor for almost ten years in Canada, to express doubts about the political impartiality of some prosecutors in Taiwan. Prosecutors as public servants must resist partisan pressures from the executive branch of government while under its control as in Taiwan and Canada. No-one is above the law, including elected persons, but criminal charges must never be laid primarily for partisan political advantage. Professional prosecutors must act ethically without fear or favour in every case and be seen to do so by fellow citizens.

Problems in Taiwan's justice system were specifically mentioned by Freedom House in its report on Taiwan last year. Since the inauguration of President Ma in 2008, 48 prosecutions of Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) supporters were launched. Among those charged were a former prime minister, minister of the interior, foreign minister and transportation minister. The cruel and vindictive manner in which some of the accused were handled in custody before trial caused concern at home and internationally.

A number of the cases were heard by the local district courts and the High Court; many ruled the defendants not guilty. Each acquittal, however, was appealed by prosecutors to the Supreme Court. The appeals created further hardship for defendants, including legal bills, lessened community standing and sapping the morale of the political opposition.

Under presidents Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian, there was a major effort to make the justice system more politically neutral and independent, but this was only partly successful. Since Ma assumed the presidency, prosecutors appear to have been encouraged to go after DPP officials, resulting in the wave of arrests and prosecutions beginning in November 2008.



**President Chen Shui-bian**

Former President Chen, for example, was questioned for 30 hours consecutively, held in a cell without a table or chair and even hand- and ankle-cuffed while attending a medical appointment. The trials of Chen and his wife Wu Shu-jen resulted in their sentences last December to a total of seventeen years imprisonment on bribery and embezzlement charges. On April 28th, Taiwan's Supreme Court found the former president not guilty on a third charge of embezzling \$330,000 from a special diplomatic fund.

Partisan prosecutors seem to persist as part of the legacy of fifty years of Kuomintang (KMT) one-party rule from until 1987, much of it under martial law. During those years, the justice system was often little more than another instrument of repression.

Concerns about political partisanship in Taiwan's Supreme Prosecutors office only worsened with the recent indictment of former KMT President Lee Teng-hui, now 88, on a charge of misappropriating public money during his period as president from 1988 to 2000. The alleged offence involved US\$ 7.8 million from the National Security Bureau, which Lee and another KMT official stand accused of using to establish the Taiwan Research Institute in 1994.



**President Lee Teng-hui**



How could it take prosecutors 17 years to locate evidence and to lay the charge against Lee? Could it not have more to do with the presidential and legislative elections now only seven months away? The announced election campaign co-operation of Lee's Taiwan Solidarity Union with Tsai Ing-wen's DPP would strongly seem to be part of the motivation as well.

### **World Stage**

Taiwan in other matters is a global good governance success story and beacon of democracy to Asia and the world. As only one indicator, gross domestic product over about five decades has grown from \$US 150 per capita yearly to an estimated \$US 35,800, the world's 32<sup>nd</sup> highest. Its emergence from a one-party military dictatorship into a multi-party democracy is a source of pride to 23 million Taiwanese and free peoples everywhere.

Unfortunately, many governments still ignore Taiwan's difficult international position and quest for self-determination. They fear China's wrath or worry about harming trade relations. I might add that most of them have enormous trade deficits with China and that increased commerce with it usually causes more manufacturing job losses at home. Canada currently imports \$44.4 billion worth of goods from China, mostly clothing, machinery, toys and furniture, and exports only \$12.8 billion, mostly coal, wood products and metals, for a deficit of \$31.6 billion.

Taiwan would like to regain the U.N. membership it lost in 1971 when the China seat was given to Beijing. Because of the Beijing party-state's hostility toward a declaration of independence and with hundreds of missiles on the mainland still targeting the island, Taipei is pragmatically wise to set its sights lower for the time being. One can only hope that when the China threat dissipates, when its people's demand for democracy can no longer be resisted, they would like to become a full and equal member of the world community.

### **Sovereignty**

Most Taiwanese want their country presented as a free and democratic nation under the name Taiwan and do not want to be designated as a "province of China" or "Chinese Taipei". More than three quarters of younger Taiwanese evidently now term themselves 'Taiwanese' rather than 'Chinese'. The people in general are willing to deal with China's party-state with respect on economic issues, but they do not want to talk about political issues unless Taiwan can talk as a separate country. They are waiting for the international community to stand up to Beijing's bullying and embrace Taiwan in its midst.



**Ambassador Nat Bellocchi**

Ambassador Nat Bellocchi, former chair of the American Institute in Taiwan, notes that many in the West are too concerned about not "rocking the boat" and upsetting the "sensitive relations" with Beijing. He urges democratic leaders to be on the right side of history by establishing and maintaining good relations with those who work for human dignity and democracy in Taiwan.

Noting that President Ma stressed in an interview with the Washington Post that he wants American arms sales to proceed in order to negotiate with China “from a position of strength”, Bellocchi adds that, while the West needs to be fully supportive of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, it must also emphasize that Taiwan’s most important asset is its democratic governance. Democracy, he feels, gives Taiwan much more “strength” than all the weapon systems combined. In its dealings with China, Bellocchi asserts, Taiwan needs to be up front about human rights and democracy, instead of keeping these issues on the back burner or avoiding them altogether. Taipei can help the Chinese people most by being much more supportive of China’s democratic movements.

Mei-chin Chen presented a number of points in her article, “What about protecting Taiwan’s democracy?”, published in the Taipei Times in May. She noted that some U.S. academics recently argued that the U.S. should distance itself from Taiwan because China’s power is rising and that it will become more “costly” for the U.S. to maintain close ties with Taipei. This group, adds Chen sensibly, seem to make two assumptions: first, that the rise of China is unstoppable and that the U.S. needs to adjust its policy to accommodate Beijing’s increasing influence on the international stage; and secondly, that given China’s economic and military power, Chinese annexation of Taiwan is a foregone conclusion.

Chen’s basic conclusion is that China will not become democratic if the U.S. gives up on Taiwan. The scenario of Taiwan’s eventual unification with China is totally out of step with the aspirations of the Taiwanese. A recent opinion poll conducted by the Global Views survey center showed that nearly 70 percent of respondents rejected unification with China, and, given a free choice, would opt for independence.

### **F-16 resolution**

For five years, Taiwan has been urging the U.S. to agree to sell it a total of 66 new F-16 C/D fighters to replace aging aircraft in its fleet.



**Prof. Nancy Tucker**

At a U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee hearing held on June, 16, 2011 on "Why Taiwan Matters", the testimony by Nancy Tucker, a specialist on Taiwan and Professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, contained important insights and I’ll include one of them here:

“Although the Obama administration approved \$13 billion in arms sales for Taiwan in the last two years, it, like the George W. Bush administration, has delayed a decision on the most important potential sales: whether to upgrade Taiwan’s existing F-16 A/B fighter aircraft sell F-16 C/Ds or both... I believe there are several reasons why arms sales to Taiwan should occur. Arms sales provide Taiwan a necessary deterrent, raising the potential cost to Beijing of any belligerent action. Beijing would have to decide whether Taiwan could be successfully intimidated or forced to capitulate before it could receive outside assistance. Arms sales strengthen morale among Taiwan’s population...Indeed, arms sales have become a symbol of US support for Taiwan making it possible for government leaders to take risks to advance relations with China...”

## **Why Taiwan Matters So Much**

Let me return to the issue of why Taiwan matters so much. At the Foreign Affairs Committee hearing in June, Nancy Tucker had a second key point to make:

“Taiwan, moreover, remains critical strategically. Crucial sea lanes of supply and communication pass near Taiwan's shores. Japan in particular depends on these trade routes...Taiwan also is the one point of friction that could lead to a military conflict between the US and China. Its future will say a lot about China and the United States. It serves as a predictor of China's behaviour toward, and intentions in, Asia and beyond. Coercion or military threats from an impatient rising China would signal a decision by Beijing to give up its long standing policy of peaceful development. We should note that at present there is little reason to believe Beijing seeks to alter a negotiation strategy that produced 15 cross-Strait agreements before the end of 2010, including a milestone Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA).”

The best long-term outcome is for a free, democratic and independent Taiwan to be accepted as a full member of the international community, just as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and many other nations were internationally recognized after the demise of the Soviet Union. That would be in the best interests of Taiwan, East Asia and the entire world.

### **Conclusion**

Permit me in closing to mention that in a remarkable coincidence I revisited Taiwan in late June, stopping at the Legislature in Taipei, universities and various other centres in five major cities. The occasion was the launch of the Chinese edition of Bloody Harvest, about organ pillaging from Falun Gong across China.

It was heart-warming to be among old and new friends. You can all imagine the national excitement when Yani Tseng won her fourth LPGA major with a record-breaking score and became the face of women`s golf across the world. The new bullet train gets you from Kaohsiung to Taipei in less than two hours through the countryside. In short, Taiwan is as beautiful as ever and full of intelligent, talented and kind people.

Thank you.