

TIME FOR CANADA TO STAND UP FOR TAIWAN
Notes for Speech to Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs,
Taipei
Hon. David Kilgour. J.D.,
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Taipei with 509-metre observatory

Among almost 200 independent nations today, Taiwan is a major success story that should inspire democrats everywhere. You have 23 million citizens, are one of about 30 parliamentary democracies, and enjoy a strong economy with a high standard of living, excellent education and good social programs.

You became an ‘Asian Tiger’ decades ago primarily because of the strength of your manufacturing/export sector, rule of law, work ethic and universal values. Taiwan, Canada and other economies have seen many manufacturing jobs since disappear because investors felt—often mistakenly—that they could make larger profits in China. The candid indication by Hong Kong’s Li Ka-shing, in recent years that he prefers markets with rule of law is no doubt contributing to current questions internationally about China’s economy and one-man governance.

For decades, many academics, writers, and policy makers in democracies were rewarded by the party-state in Beijing with favours for their help in legitimizing its dictatorship and ‘party crony capitalism’. They often referred to the “Asian Model” and Confucian traditions to justify asserting that democracy is unworkable in China. The success of democracy in Japan and South Korea was not convincing enough for some, but Taiwan’s model weakened this sophistry considerably.

Although Taiwan has diplomatic relations now with only 17 U.N. member states and the Holy See, Taiwan passport holders can visit 149 countries without a visa (vs. 74 countries for China.) according to the recently released Henley Passport Index. Reporters Without Borders lists Taiwan in 42nd place in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index while China is in 176th place (near North Korea at the very bottom). Despite China's population being 58 times that of your own, its total national income is only 10 times larger. The 2018 GDP per capita here was US\$25,534, whereas in China it was US\$10,200.

Following the horrors of martial law in effect in Taiwan from 1949-1987, one presumes that no rational Taiwanese national would favour tyranny over the rule of law and dignity for only a party elite. Taiwan is a governance model for what many nations, including China, can and should aspire to become—a multi-party democracy, cherishing freedom of speech/religion, and respect/equality for all citizens, and currently a female elected president. Taiwan and China could scarcely be more different today.

A recent letter from Douglas Chiang, president of the of the Taiwanese-Canadian Association, was entitled “Taiwan is not part of China”. It urged the governments of Canada, the United States and other free countries to support Taiwan as an independent nation and to support its admission to international bodies such as the United Nations, WHO, WTO and the Olympics as a regular member. Quite understandably, it objects to Beijing pressure to affix China to the name of Taiwan or Taipei on maps, etc.

Open letter to Democratic Taiwan

Another letter last month (9 Jan 2019) to democratic Taiwan from scholars, former government and military officials and other friends of Taiwan made numerous points, but above all urged you to maintain “unity and continuity” against Beijing, which is seeking to reduce further your international space and threatening Taiwan's “existence as a free and democratic nation”.

The letter praised Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen as an “effective and knowledgeable statesperson” and her response to the recent speech of China's President Xi Jinping, advocating unification under China's “one country, two systems” principle. She had reminded him that the vast

majority of the Taiwanese people strongly rejected “one country, two systems” and that her government had never accepted the so-called “1992 consensus”.

As a mature democracy, it went on, Taiwan’s future can no longer be decided unilaterally by “Taiwan authorities”, but only through the deliberation and expressed democratic will of all its citizens. In democracies, citizens own their governments, not vice versa as tragically often appears the case in authoritarian/totalitarian regimes. Unlike the former British colony of Hong Kong... there are no authorities who can simply negotiate the transfer of Taiwan to China as if it were a piece of expensive real estate. Self-determination by the world’s peoples is a cardinal principle upon which the United Nations was founded.

Prof. Scott Simon

Professor Scott Simon at the University of Ottawa, whose research specializes on these islands, recently wrote that in her New Year’s message (President) Tsai stressed that cross-Strait relations are to be conducted according to “four musts.” ...China 1) must face the reality of the existence of the Taiwan and its democracy; 2) must respect the commitment of 23 million Taiwanese people to freedom and democracy; 3) must handle cross-Strait relations peacefully on the basis of equality rather than intimidation; and 4) must engage in negotiations only with the government or authorized agencies.”

Simon added that Taiwan is already an independent state with its own constitution, elected government, judiciary and military... “polls taken by the Chengchi University Election Study Centre show that only 3 percent of Taiwanese people support unification as soon as possible. Moreover, 12.5 percent support eventual unification, but want to keep the status quo for now. This means that it is impossible for China to annex Taiwan peacefully in the absence of democratization in China itself”.

On what Canada and other democracies can do, Simon advocates that we can begin by “supporting Taiwan’s inclusion in agreements like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and in international organizations like the International Civil Aviation Organization. We can also pass our own legislation similar to the Taiwan Travel Act. It is time for Canadians to wake up from their illusive dreams about China, while also embracing peaceful and democratic Taiwan”.

China

China's 5000-year-old civilization and intelligent hard-working people deserve our utmost respect, but the country has suffered from waves of violence and mis-governance, especially by the party-state since 1949.

Canadian writer Jonathan Manthorpe, whose new book, *Claws of the Panda*, is now published, noted several years ago that China was full of variations of a Ponzi scheme: "A local government, without a functioning system for raising tax revenue—and...riddled with corruption...sells development land to garner cash... (first getting rid of (farmers) living on the land)...And, this being China...the municipality has the power to instruct banks to lend the development company the money for the sale. So the local government gets its cash, the municipally-owned company gets to build a speculative residential or industrial complex, and all seems well".

A short while later, there was a story in the *Financial Times* about how in one coastal city luxury apartments were to be built for as much as 70,000 Yuan (\$11,000) a square metre, which is about twice the annual income of the average resident. To finance a 150 square metre apartment in the building would consume every penny of a typical resident's income for 350 years. This was clearly a housing bubble which was going to burst with much grief for many innocent families.

Chinese banking today is dominated by state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that lend primarily to inefficient government businesses and now pay about 0.3 per cent for deposits with no deposit insurance. These factors encourage abused depositors to invest in increasingly risky realty and stocks. There is a very large amount of money in China's shadow banking sector, but it has very little regulation. The sector also holds a lot of the total debt in China, which since 2008 has surged. What happens if/when China's estimated \$23 trillion credit bubble bursts? I understand that the Shanghai Composite Index for stocks is down around 30% in the last 12 months.

The California academics, Peter Navarro and Greg Autry, have reminded us that the U.S. lost an estimated 54,000 factories and more than 20 million manufacturing jobs mostly to China over recent decades. How many similar factories/manufacturing jobs have been lost from Taiwan, Canada and other countries over the same period for the same reason?

Governments, investors and opinion leaders generally might also examine why they are supporting the violation of so many universal and democratic values in order to increase trade/investment with China. It has resulted mostly in jobs being outsourced to China and continuous increases in bilateral trade/investment deficits. Are the rest of us so focused on inexpensive consumer goods that we ignore the human, social and natural environment costs paid by millions of Chinese to produce them?

Louisa Greve

Louisa Greve, formerly of the National Endowment for Democracy (US) in Asia and now director of external affairs for the Uyghur Human Rights Project, writes (<https://www.lawliberty.org/2019/01/14/china-model-of-the-modern-digital-dictatorship/>): “While jumping to defend the “legitimate rights and interests” of executives working for a Chinese tech giant (Huawei Technologies), Beijing does not hesitate to defend the indefensible in other situations. In late September, an op-ed published over the name of the Chinese ambassador in Jakarta baldly defended China’s mass-detention camps in the western region of Xinjiang, which according to State Department figures, hold as many as two million Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. The op-ed’s title: ‘Xinjiang, What a Wonderful Place’.”

“A camp survivor interviewed (last) May said that prisoners were forced to shout the slogans, ‘Xi Jinping is great! The Communist Party is great! I deserve punishment for not understanding that only President Xi Jinping and the Communist Party can help me.’ Even outside the living nightmare of the Uyghur detention camps, an atmosphere of coercion is inexorably becoming the order of the day. The Xi Jinping cult of personality and the sweeping powers of the CCP’s anti-corruption units, including the new National Supervision Commission, have combined to make officials’ daily lives like riding the proverbial tiger. They have to hold on no matter how dangerous it gets, but many will be eaten alive regardless.”

Greve concludes, “Foreigners’ illusions about China as a normal country and trading partner are being punctured by revelations of its massive technology theft and extraterritorial surveillance of hundreds of millions of citizens of the West. But what if this isn’t the end of the story? How does a high-tech, well-resourced state conduct itself on the world stage when it is entering a period of internal political turmoil not seen for four decades?”

Organ Pillaging

Since at least 2001, party-state brutality in China has also resulted in large scale government-run pillaging of vital organs mostly from Falun Gong practitioners. No-one survives these operations because all vital organs are seized and the bodies of “donors” are then cremated. The ongoing trafficking across China constitutes a major new crime against humanity, which the International Coalition against Organ Abuse in China (ETAC) is working hard to end. Condemnation of the Chinese Communist Party for its forced organ-harvesting of prisoners of conscience is growing internationally. In December 2018, many survivors of Chinese labour camps and human rights lawyers among others provided evidence and gave testimony throughout an independent tribunal. The tribunal, led by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, a world-renowned lawyer and professor of law stated of the evidence given, “We, the tribunal members are all certain, unanimously, and sure beyond all reasonable doubt that in China, forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience has been practiced for a substantial period of time, involving a very substantial number of victims.”

David Matas and I located numerous pieces of evidence about this. From research set out in our book, *Bloody Harvest*, we concluded that Falun Gong have been killed in the thousands since 2001 so that their organs could be trafficked for large amounts both to Chinese and foreign patients. For the period 2000-2005 alone, we arrived at the figure of 41,500 such transplants by deducting from the 60,000 transplants claimed by the government for the period, which seemed reasonable to us, our best estimate of the number of executed convicted persons (18,550).

Forced organ pillaging from Uyghurs in China for profit appears in fact to have preceded that from Falun Gong. Nobel Peace Prize nominee and co-founder of the International Coalition to end Organ Abuse in China Ethan Gutmann’s 2014 book, *The Slaughter*, places the persecution of the Falun Gong, Tibetan, Uyghur, and Eastern Lightning Christian communities in context. He explains how he arrived at his “best estimate” that organs of 65,000 Falun Gong and “two to four thousand” Uyghurs, Tibetans and Christians were “harvested” in the 2000- 2008 period. There is much concern now that imprisoned Uyghurs have become the latest major live organ donor community.

Conclusion

With its proximity making Taiwan's dealings with Beijing always difficult, the world's democrats, including our national governments, civil society institutions and businesses, should remain engaged with both governments and the broadest possible range of citizens across China. The people of China should know that the democratic world stands with them, not with the party-state, just as we did in east/central Europe during the Cold War, and with South Africans, particularly during the lead-up to the election of Nelson Mandela by all South Africans as president in 1994.

The Chinese people want the same things as the rest of us, respect for all, education, safety and security, good jobs, the rule of law, democratic and accountable governance and a sustainable natural environment. If the party-state in China ends its systematic and gross violations of human rights at home and abroad and begins to treat its trade partners in a transparent and equitable way, the new century can bring harmony and coherence for Taiwan, China and the world.

Thank you.

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