

# UN'S CLOSED DOOR POLICY – ON TAIWAN

## By Don Feder

Last week, for the 14<sup>th</sup> year in a row, the United Nations again slammed the door on Taiwan. The General Committee refused to put Taiwan's application for membership on the agenda of the General Assembly.

On September 7, some of Taiwan's allies in the United Nations openly challenged China, the only obstacle to the ROC rejoining the world body.

Commenting on a report by Secretary General Kofi Annan ("Prevention of Armed Conflict") Gambia's UN Ambassador, Crispin Grey-Johnson, observed: "It is unfortunate that none other than the People's Republic of China, a respected member of the Security Council, the custodian of international peace and security (*well, that's a bit of hyperbole*), is itself engaged in threats to international peace and security by expanding its already huge military arsenal in readiness for an invasion of Taiwan."

Beijing responded predictably: "The Chinese delegation wishes to reiterate that there is but one China in the world and that Taiwan is an inseparable part of it," said Chinese diplomat Li Junhua. Parroting communist party line, Li added, "I wish to emphasize that the Taiwan question is entirely an internal affair of China and bears no relation whatsoever to the prevention of armed conflict."

Such is the air of unreality that pervades Babble on the East River – especially when the issue is Taiwan.

Since 1993, Taiwan has been trying to rejoin the United Nations – with the support of the two dozen member-states which

extend diplomatic recognition to Taipei. The result is always the same – a lopsided vote against putting the question of Taiwan's status on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Article 4 of the UN Charter invites all peace-loving nations to participate in its deliberations. Well – not quite all.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the United Nations in 1948) calls on nations to protect freedom of speech, press, religion, the right to property and the right to a fair trial.

Each of these rights is secure on Taiwan, which is rated one of the two freest countries in Asia by Freedom House. Each is non-existent in Mainland China – which remains what it was at its inception – a brutal, totalitarian dictatorship.

So, naturally, China is not only a respected member of the United Nations but has a permanent seat on the Security Council, while Taiwan is a pariah. More than anything else, this underscores the UN's hypocrisy.

Ignoring Taiwan takes a sustained act of will. Andorra, with its 54,550 citizens, is a UN member. Taiwan, with a population of 23 million (making it more populous than 60% of UN member states), is not.

Liechtenstein, which covers a land mass of 160 sq. kilometers, has a vote in the General Assembly. Taiwan, which encompasses 36,000 sq. km (roughly the size of the Netherlands), does not.

It's not easy to pretend that Taiwan isn't there. The economic dynamo has the world's 17<sup>th</sup> largest economy, 16<sup>th</sup>. largest volume of trade and 3<sup>rd</sup>. largest foreign-exchange reserves. Its IT industry

has the largest share of the global market for notebook computers, motherboards and LCD monitors.

While only 24 countries recognize the reality of Taiwanese sovereignty, Taipei has a diplomatic presence in over 100 nations. If you want a visa to visit Taiwan, you go to one of its representative offices abroad – not to a Chinese embassy. Citizens of Taiwan travel on an ROC (Republic of China) passport, not one issued by the PRC.

**Taiwan is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Asian Development Bank and the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).**

Article II of the Montevideo Convention on The Rights and Duties of States (which sets forth the definition of a nation-state for purposes of international law), declares, “The political existence of the state is independent of recognition by other states.” In 1776, no one recognized the fledgling United States of America, formerly colonies of Great Britain. Our national existence was a fact before any other country acknowledged same.

**Taiwan is an “inseparable” part of China the way Canada is an inseparable part of the United States or the Irish Republic is an inseparable part of the United Kingdom.**

Since the end of China’s civil war, now almost 60 years ago, the People’s Republic of China has not exercised control of Taiwan for a single day.

Settled by Mainlanders in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, for most of its existence Taiwan had only a tenuous connection to the Middle Kingdom. Since 1949, Taiwan has developed a national identity of its own, and one which would make integration into the People’s Republic impossible – other than by brute force.

The Taiwanese are increasingly Westernized and forward-looking. They have a vigorous independent press, as well as the other institutions of a free society. **Citizens of the Republic of China enjoy essentially the same human rights as residents of New York, London or Paris.**

Since 1987, Taiwan has moved from martial law (rule by a geriatric oligarchy of Mainlanders who arrived in '49 with Chiang Kai-shek) to a nation with a popularly elected president and legislature and an independent judiciary. The year 2000 saw the peaceful transfer of power from the ruling Nationalists (KMT) to the Democratic Progressive Party – a party which was banned and whose leader was in jail only 20 years earlier.

Despite its remarkable economic growth, the People's Republic is among the most dismal of dictatorships – economically capitalist and politically Stalinist – witness the persecution of the Falun Gong, the home church movement and political dissidents. **For Taiwan to unite with such a state would be like stepping from the sunshine into a blighted wasteland.**

What makes the refusal of the international community to grant standing to Taiwan so dangerous is that China intends to achieve “reunification” by force – Tiananmen Square on a grand scale.

In March, 2005, the National People's Congress (a rubber-stamp for China's Communist Party) passed an “Anti-Secession Law,” which provides a rationale for aggression. In it, China's rulers gave themselves the authority to use force whenever Taiwan takes unspecified steps toward “independence.”

Beijing has also hinted that maintenance of the status quo isn't enough. Taiwan's failure to surrender in a timely fashion will also provoke the military option.

Its campaign of military expansion is geared toward that end, as well as to counter potential US interference. China now has 800 medium-range ballistic missiles just across the Taiwan straits. This force is augmented at the rate of roughly 100 a year.

In 1995-96, in an attempt to intimidate the Taiwanese in the midst of their first presidential election, the People's Liberation Army "test-fired" missiles in the direction of Taiwan.

A Defense Department Report, released in July, ominously notes. "The threat against Taiwan is further reinforced by the deployment of the most advanced systems and military capability in the region directly opposite Taiwan."

In a speech in Singapore last year, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld noted: "China's defense expenditures are much higher than Chinese officials have publicly admitted. It is estimated that China's is the third-largest military budget in the world, and now the largest in Asia." Then, Rumsfeld asked rhetorically, "Since no nation threatens China, one wonders: why this growing investment."

At about the same time, Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy, told a congressional hearing, "I believe the PRC's aim is inexorably to supplant the United States as the world's premier economic power and, if necessary, to defeat us militarily."

Beijing will brook no interference with its expansionist plans. In 1995, Xiong Guangkai (now deputy chief of the PLA general staff) told a former Pentagon official who was visiting Beijing that

America should worry more about seeing Los Angeles disappear in a cloud of radioactive dust than saving Taiwan.

Last year, another Chinese general told a group of journalists from Hong Kong that if the U.S. interferes with a forcible annexation of Taiwan, “we will be determined to respond.” Just to be sure his point wasn’t missed, the general added that Beijing was prepared to lose every city in central China in a nuclear exchange, but that America must be willing to sacrifice “hundreds of cities.”

As long as Taiwan is outside the United Nations, it remains beyond the protection of international law. This is an unmistakable signal to Communist China that the day it sends an amphibious force steaming toward Taiwan, the international community will not interfere with the PRC’s internal affair.

By ignoring Taiwan, the United Nations is encouraging aggression, thus defeating its ostensible *raison d’être*.