

Appendix 176 -- Chen Frankfurter Allgemeine Interview (2006)

March 10, 2006

The following is a transcript of the interview with President Chen by Anne Schneppen, Seoul Correspondent, Frankfurter Allgemeine.

Q1. Mr. President, I had an interview with you in 2000 after you won the presidential election. It is a great pleasure to be able to interview you again.

A: The pleasure is all mine. It has been six years since 2000, and Taiwan has undergone tremendous changes, including significant changes in its cross-strait relations with China. One thing that has not changed and will not change is our pursuit of democracy and peace. In particular, our commitment to maintaining stability and safeguarding peace in the Taiwan Strait has never wavered.

This month happens to mark the 10th anniversary of the missile crisis in the Taiwan Strait. It is to our great satisfaction that no armed hostility of any kind has ever occurred in the strait over the past ten years. I still recall the numerous advertisements run by my opponents during the 2000 presidential campaign, which claimed that, should Chen Shui-bian, as the Democratic Progress Party's candidate, be elected, China would certainly invade Taiwan.

In response, my son took part in a campaign commercial pointing out that he would be called up for military service in the following year, 2001. This was intended to tell the public that I could not possibly send my own son to war. We have succeeded in maintaining cross-strait peace and stability over the last six years, and will continue to strive to the same end in years to come.

Q2. The world was shocked by the recent news that Taiwan had abolished its National Unification Council and its Guidelines for National Unification. What was the reason behind this decision? Was it necessary? And why was it made at this time?

A: First I would like to state, in all seriousness, that our decision was that the National Unification Council should cease to function and its Guidelines for National Unification should cease to apply. The word "fei-chu" (abolish) does not appear in the Chinese version of our statement; instead, we use the phrases "jhong-jhih yun-zuo" (cease to function) and "jhong-jhih shih-yong" (cease to apply). In our English version, therefore, we do not use the word "terminate"; instead, we use the phrases "cease to function" and "cease to apply."

Second, everyone is aware that this month marks the tenth anniversary of the Taiwan Strait missile crisis. Ten years ago, on March 8, 1996, China test-fired its first missile toward Taiwan and, on March 13, its second missile. The nearer of the two landed only 55 kilometers away from Taiwan.

In March 1996, we were very much engaged in the major political undertaking of staging our first-ever direct popular election of the president. It never occurred to us that China would use

military measures and fire missiles in an attempt to influence the result of Taiwan's election. We found it doubly hard to believe that China would resort to military action when Taiwan was promoting democracy.

March 14, 2006, will mark the first anniversary of China's passage of its "anti-separation law" as well as the 15th anniversary of the announcement of the Guidelines for National Unification. In particular, since its passage of the anti-separation law last year, China has not reduced its military threat toward Taiwan for even a single day; rather, China has further increased its threat. It has deployed 784 missiles along its southeastern coast targeting Taiwan. In the Cuban missile crisis, only 40 missiles were deployed. We, however, are now facing 784 missiles, and this number is steadily increasing at a rate of 100 to 120 a year. A movie entitled *Thirteen Days* explored the alarm and fear caused during the 13 days of the Cuban missile crisis. For the 23 million people of Taiwan, however, there is cause for alarm and fear every day. Therefore, at this important juncture, we have had to face up to and handle the situation. Our Executive Yuan Council has formally approved that March 14 will be commemorated as Anti- Aggression Day. This, to a considerable extent, represents our will and determination to uphold democracy and peace and to protect Taiwan.

Another important point, which set off the chain of events leading to the announcement [concerning the NUC and the guidelines], was the question I raised especially in my New Year's Day address concerning Kuomintang (KMT) Chairman Ma Ying-jeou's statement, during an exclusive interview with *Newsweek*, that unification with China is the ultimate goal of the KMT. We believe that this "ultimate unification theory" completely contravenes the democratic principle of popular sovereignty. The ultimate unification theory shows no respect for the right to free choice that is enjoyed by the 23 million people of Taiwan; it restricts them and deprives them of this right. We were surprised that Chairman Ma would go on to state that he was right, that the Guidelines for National Unification were based on the ultimate unification theory. After a detailed study, we found that the guidelines were formulated by the NUC, whose establishment was discussed and approved by the Central Standing Committee of the then-ruling KMT. Neither the guidelines nor the NUC were passed with the consensus of the people or the legislature.

When the KMT was in power, Taiwan was under the rule of a party-led government. This ran counter to the very essence of democracy. After the ruling party changed in 2000, the new DPP government, of course, was not obliged to execute an internal resolution of the KMT. We have to safeguard Taiwan's democracy, freedom, and human rights, as well as the existing peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. We must address this serious issue.

Mainstream opinion in Taiwan does not support the ultimate unification theory. A number of surveys have shown that less than 10 percent of our people support the ultimate unification theory, whereas over 80 percent support the view that Taiwan's future should be determined by its people. In addition, KMT Chairman Ma later changed his statement, saying that independence is also an option for the people of Taiwan.

Since the KMT insists that unification is the party's ultimate goal, we are returning the Guidelines for National Unification to the KMT. Mainstream opinion in Taiwan does not

support the government pursuing a policy of ultimate unification, nor is this the national objective of the government. We must respect our people's right to free choice. We cannot restrict nor deprive them of this right. Our approach has been to restore to the people of Taiwan their right to choose and decide the future of Taiwan.

Perhaps the 23 million people of Taiwan will choose unification as Taiwan's future or the form they would like to see cross-strait relations take. At present, however, we cannot allow unification to be the only option for Taiwan. In other words, maintaining the status quo absolutely does not mean that only unification is possible but independence is not. The NUC and the guidelines tell us that we can only seek unification but not independence. It offers no other choice. This goes against the spirit of democracy. With the international community strongly affirming and encouraging Taiwan's democracy, we hope it will also respect Taiwan's democratic choice.

Q3. In your inaugural speeches of 2000 and 2004, Your Excellency announced the "four noes plus one" pledge. You now have removed one item from this pledge; does this indicate that the other four noes might be changed in the future?

A: First of all, I would like to stress again that what we decided was that the National Unification Council should "cease to function" and the Guidelines for National Unification should "cease to apply." We do not want to see this meaning being interpreted too broadly nor extended beyond its limits.

Second, there existed a precondition for my "four noes plus one" pledge of 2000. I said at that time that I made the "four noes plus one" pledge "as long as China has no intention to use military force against Taiwan." Over the past sixteen or seventeen years, however, China's defense budget has increased at an annual double-digit rate. In 2000, China had 200 missiles aimed at Taiwan; a number that has grown almost fourfold to today's 784. Moreover, as everyone knows, on March 14, 2005, China passed its anti-separation law. The intention of this law was to establish a legal foundation for the use of force against Taiwan, that is, as a legal base for China to annex Taiwan.

In fact, the goal behind my "four noes plus one" pledge, under the precondition that China had no intention to use force against Taiwan, was to safeguard the peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. It is most regrettable, however, that the status quo of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait has been damaged and changed incrementally by China.

Third, in the seven-point statement I made at the high-level national security conference on February 27 this year, I specifically pointed out that the decision that the National Unification Council should cease to function and the Guidelines for National Unification should cease to apply did not involve changing the status quo. Since the wording we used was "cease to function" and "cease to apply" rather than "abolish," the issue of breaking my pledge does not arise.

Q4. How will this policy decision affect Taiwanese businesspeople's livelihoods and work in China? Will this decision create difficulties for Taiwan's overseas commercial relations in the

future?

A: I believe the situation is similar to that of Germany, in which the fall of the Berlin Wall did not hinder the two countries' subsequent unification. I do not think Germany's unification could have occurred if East Germany had deployed 784 missiles targeting West Germany. Nor do I believe we would see the two countries united into a single state today had the East German parliament passed an "anti-separation law" (so-called anti-secession law), similar to that passed by China, requiring the unification of Germany by military force or "non-peaceful means." The unification of Germany completely adhered to the four principles of democracy, sovereignty, peace, and parity.

Before unification, both East and West Germany were official members of the United Nations. Both were sovereign, independent states that respected and recognized each other. Moreover, both respected the free choice made by the German people of both sides instead of appealing to force or non-peaceful means. In other words, East Germany and West Germany were equals and treated each other as equals.

The situation existing between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, however, is that China does not recognize or respect Taiwan, nor does China accept Taiwan as a nation of independent sovereignty. China even considers Taiwan as a province of China, that is, as a part of the People's Republic of China. China regards one side, itself, as the central government and the other side, Taiwan, as a local government. This is not a relationship of equals. Although China's slogan of "placing hopes on the people in Taiwan" has a beautiful sound to it, in fact China does not respect the right of Taiwan's 23 million people to make their choice under free will. The true situation is that China has passed its "anti-separation law," which aims to annex Taiwan, to invade Taiwan, and intends to do this by adoption of military force or other non-peaceful means.

Our decision that the National Unification Council should cease to function and the Guidelines for National Unification should cease to apply is aimed, therefore, at retrieving the right of free, democratic choice for the 23 million people in Taiwan. This is because the universal values of democracy, freedom, and human rights have taken root in Taiwan's soil. China may have no use for democracy, but Taiwan still craves democracy and will continue to implement it. All of Taiwan's people, including our businesspeople in China, can enjoy the benefits of Taiwan's democracy. Nevertheless, we must maintain an awareness of the dangers when investing in China, as well as a sense of distress and of the enmity borne against us. China is not like Germany, Japan, or the United States. It is not a normal country. It is a country that is extremely hostile to Taiwan, and even intends to annex Taiwan. Taiwanese businesspeople should also be aware of and make evaluation of political dangers such as these. Businesspeople go where the profits are, but the government must take the responsibility to inform them of the political dangers. In particular, it would be extremely disadvantageous for Taiwan's national security should Taiwan's economy excessively tilt toward or depend on China. We must adhere to the autonomy of Taiwan's economy and not let it become subordinate to that of another country. Taiwan is an island nation, but an island that has global perspectives. We should not restrict ourselves to fixed ways but should look at the whole world as our market. Although China is indeed a very large market, it should not be allowed to

become Taiwan's only market, nor should it be the last one we develop. Taiwan should neither lock itself away from the world, nor should it lock its economic lifeline and resources into China.

Q5. Taiwan's opposition parties recently have had close contact with China and such contact does not involve the government. What impact will this situation have on Taiwan's politics?

A: As everyone knows, China is not a democratic country. Democracy is the practice of multiparty politics, and China lacks well-established multiparty politics. A genuine democratic country must have multiparty politics and transfers of power between political parties. Moreover, in a genuine democratic country, the people, rather than political parties, have the final say. Such a country will not be always ruled by one particular political party but will experience transfers of power. A genuine democratic country will not be a party-led state.

We all know that, for a long time, China has been a party-led state and that the Chinese Communist Party alone has ruled the country. The People's Liberation Army is the military force of the Chinese Communist Party and has to absolutely comply with the orders of the party's leadership. China's leaders, therefore, avoid the government of Taiwan and deal instead with the opposition parties. This shows a complete ignorance of democracy. Taiwan was indeed led by a single political party in the past, but since 2000 the ruling party has changed and it has become a genuine democracy. What we have seen recently seems a return to the period when the Kuomintang held talks with the Chinese Communist Party. On the one hand, this is the Chinese Communist Party employing united front tactics. On the other hand, Taiwan's people are ignored.

I was elected by Taiwan's 23 million people through a democratic election. Taiwan's government is formed by the people of Taiwan, so the Chinese Communist Party's refusal to deal with Taiwan's democratically elected government is to ignore the existence of Taiwan's people and to display its complete ignorance of democracy. No political party or individual will ever be entitled or have the right to forever replace the government.

The US government, from President Bush downwards, including Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, who I saw in today's television news reports attending a congressional hearing, all have emphasized that China's leader should engage in dialogue with Taiwan's democratically elected government. We still hope to have dialogue with the Chinese government and its leader. Cross-strait differences and disputes can be resolved peacefully only through dialogue. Under the principles of sovereignty, democracy, peace, and parity, we are willing to have contact, dialogue and consultations with the Chinese government at any time and in any place.

Q6. Mr. President, you have announced that you will work toward constitutional re-engineering a new constitution. Will this happen during your term of office? What is your view on this?

A: This is a very difficult political project, and also something of a "mission impossible." As long as conditions in Taiwan's society are ripe, however, and we have the people's support and

the Legislative Yuan's approval, nothing is impossible. Taiwan needs a new constitution that is timely, relevant, and viable. As Taiwan is a democratic country, it is natural that there will be different opinions, different proposals, and different draft versions for the Constitution. Nevertheless, be it a new constitution or an amendment to the existing one, in the end, it has to follow the constitutional procedure now in place. According to the current procedure, a proposed constitutional change must first be approved in the Legislative Yuan by a three-quarters majority of a quorum of at least three-quarters of the total number of legislators, which is a high threshold, and then be subjected to the approval of the 23 million people of Taiwan via a referendum. That is, more than half of the citizens of Taiwan eligible to vote must consent for the change to become law. Therefore, sensitive sovereignty issues, including the name of the nation, the national flag, and territory, must all follow such a constitutional procedure. Any sovereignty issues that do not observe such a constitutional procedure will be disregarded.

I hope that your newspaper will understand that the road to democracy and freedom has indeed been very difficult for the people of Taiwan. The international community often has double standards. On the one hand, it approves of Taiwan's democracy. On the other hand, it wants to restrict or even destroy Taiwan's democracy. We clearly object to any such preset conclusion as "ultimate unification." We do not rule out any possibility, however, as long as democratic procedures are honored and the people's free choice is respected. Unification is one option, but definitely is not the only option.

Q7. If unification is not the only option, then how about de jure independence?

A: We adopt an open attitude and respect the people's freedom to choose. We must safeguard the people's right to free choice and also respect the results of the people's choice.