

Appendix 44 – Deng Xiaoping “An Idea for the Peaceful Reunification of the Chinese Mainland and Taiwan (1983)

Source: Excerpt from a talk with Professor Winston L. Y. Yang of Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, USA.

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The most important issue is the reunification of the motherland. Peaceful reunification has become the common aim of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. The idea is not that one party should swallow up the other. We hope the two Parties will work together for national reunification and both contribute to the Chinese nation.

We do not approve of “complete autonomy” for Taiwan. There must be limits to autonomy, and where there are limits, nothing can be complete. “Complete autonomy” means two Chinas, not one. Different systems may be practiced, but it must be the People's Republic of China alone that represents China internationally. We recognize that the local government of Taiwan may have its own separate set of policies for domestic affairs. And although, as a special administrative region, Taiwan will have a local government, it will differ from local governments of other provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Provided the national interests are not impaired, it will enjoy certain powers of its own that the others do not possess.

After reunification with the motherland, the Taiwan special administrative region will assume a unique character and may practice a social system different from that of the mainland. It will enjoy independent judicial power, and there will be no need to go to Beijing for final adjudication. What is more, it may maintain its own army, provided it does not threaten the mainland. The mainland will not station anyone in Taiwan. Neither troops nor administrative personnel will go there. The party, governmental and military systems of Taiwan will be administered by the Taiwan authorities themselves. A number of posts in the Central Government will be made available to Taiwan.

Peaceful reunification does not mean that the mainland will swallow up Taiwan. Needless to say, it doesn't mean that Taiwan will swallow up the mainland either. It is unrealistic to call for “reunification of China under the Three People's Principles”.

Reunification must be brought about in a proper way. That is why we propose holding talks between the two Parties on an equal footing to achieve a third round of Kuomintang-Communist cooperation, rather than talks between the central and local governments. Once the two sides have reached an agreement, it can be formally proclaimed. But under no circumstances will we allow any foreign country to interfere. Foreign interference would simply mean China is still not independent, and that would lead to no end of trouble.

We hope that the Taiwan authorities will consider carefully the nine principles proposed by Ye Jianying in September 1981 and Deng Yingchao's opening address at the First Plenary Session of the Sixth People's Political Consultative Conference in June 1983 and that they will clear up

their misunderstanding.

In March of this year you held a forum in San Francisco on the prospects for China's reunification. That was a very good thing to do.

We shall complete the unfinished task of reunification left to us by our predecessors. If the KMT and the CPC can join efforts to complete it, Chiang Kai-shek and his son will have a better place in history. Of course, it takes time to bring about peaceful reunification. But it would not be true to say that we are in no hurry. People like us, who are advanced in years, wish to see reunification as soon as possible. We should have more contacts to enhance mutual understanding. We are ready to send people to Taiwan at any time, just to look around without any formal talks. And they are welcome to send people over here. Personal safety would be guaranteed and the whole thing would be kept confidential. We say all this in good faith. We do not play petty games.

We have achieved genuine stability and unity. Our principle of peaceful reunification of the motherland was formulated after the Third Plenary Session of the Party's Eleventh Central Committee. Related policies have been gradually defined. We shall adhere to them.

There has been some improvement in Sino-U.S. relations recently. However, those in power in the United States have never given up their "two Chinas" or "one-and-a-half Chinas" policy. The United States brags about its political system. But politicians there say one thing during a presidential election, another after taking office, another at mid-term elections and still another with the approach of the next presidential election. Yet the United States says that our policies lack stability. Compared with its policies, ours are very stable indeed.