

The UN and the ongoing injustice to Taiwan

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The UN is proud of its *Human Rights Declaration*; it seems to believe though that a population of 23 million people is not entitled to enjoy these rights. Otherwise, how could someone explain the persistent refusal of the UN bureaucratic elite to expand the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Declaration over the territory of the *Republic of China (Taiwan)*?

These discriminatory measures targeted against Taiwan and the Taiwanese citizens are inappropriately justified by the invocation and misuse of 1971's General Assembly Resolution 2758. Indeed, this mistreatment dates back to 1971, when the U.S. foreign policy establishment – along *Henry Kissinger's* line – went on to betray America's old and loyal ally, only to carry favour with Communist mainland China (the *People's Republic of China*). Consequently, the *Republic of China* lost her seat in the United Nations.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that, while it seated the People's Republic of China in the UN, the aforementioned resolution did not address the issue of representation of Taiwan in the organization; much less did it give mainland China the right to represent the people of Taiwan.

Since the mid-20th century, the People's Republic of China has vowed to take control of Taiwan and refused to renounce the use of force to achieve this goal, despite never having ruled Taiwan. Indeed, Taiwan has never been a part of the People's Republic of China. The latter has, therefore, no legitimate claim to the island republic.

Taiwan is a Sovereign State with robust democratic institutions, Armed Forces, foreign diplomatic partners, first class human capital, and one of the world's largest economies – as well as the will and determination of the Taiwanese Leaders and People to maintain and defend their freedom, set of values, and way of life. Taiwan is the world's eighteenth largest trading and eleventh freest economy. Amazingly, Taiwan has brought her laws and regulations into line with the UN's *Human Rights Conventions*; and she has done so of her own free will, since the country has not been subject to any such obligation. Still, the political system and the people of the island republic have long been working as hard as any highly developed society — and perhaps harder than most — to achieve the highest standards in terms of *Rule of Law*, human rights, civil freedoms and democracy.

By the way, Taiwan has proved to be the *only* country in the world, with the exception of the Republic of Korea (a.k.a. South Korea), that succeeded in effectively tackling the recent *public health crisis*, thus gaining universal acknowledge and admiration (see Jaron Lanier and E. Glen Weyl, “Taiwan's initial success against the novel coronavirus is a model for the rest of the world”, *FOREIGN AFFAIRS*, May-June 2020 issue). Most significantly though, Taiwan has invested over \$6 billion in international medical and humanitarian aid efforts since 1996, benefiting millions of people worldwide. In the light of such an extremely generous contribution of the model Republic to the international community, the aforementioned attitude of the UN, and of its various institutions and structures towards Taiwan – which is due to Beijing's blackmail tactics – seems not only running counter to common sense, but also being *devoid of ethical principles*.

Undeniably, Taiwan faces enormous military threats from the People's Republic of China. The intensification of PRC's military activity, as demonstrated in the last years, reflects frustration in Beijing and a realization that, propaganda notwithstanding, the 23.500.000 Taiwanese will not be fooled by Chinese promises of "peaceful unification" under the "one country, two systems" formula – and even less so in the light of the recent Hong-Kong experience.

More and more, hawks from the mainland Chinese ruling state and party elite have unscrupulously expressed the view that only force can "resolve" the Taiwan "issue" once and for all. Remarkably, the People's Republic of China has a heavy record of aggression as shown by the PRC's invasion of Korea in 1950, i.e., hardly one year after *Mao Tse-tung* had achieved to impose his Communist regime, the China-India Wars of 1962 and 1967 as well as the China-India *Sumdorong Chu* Incident of 1987, the Chinese-Soviet border conflict of 1969 and the PRC's invasion of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (1979).

Furthermore, as China's economic and military might has grown stronger, she becomes increasingly aggressive in flexing her military muscle to bully and blackmail Taiwan, including naval violations of the so called *Median Line*, in the Taiwan Strait, as well as intrusions into Taiwan's *Air Defence Identification Zone* (ADIZ). At the same time, China has intensified *hybrid warfare tactics*, such as *Disinformation* and *Economic Coercion*, in an attempt to wear down the will of the Taiwanese leaders and people to fight.

At this point, it must be taken into account that, in case of Beijing's military aggression against Taiwan, the consequences would by no means be limited to the latter. Taiwan's former Foreign Minister *Dr. Joseph Wu*, who currently serves as the country's National Security Council Secretary, reminded us, a few years ago, of the self-evident fact that, *in a globalized world, the economic, geopolitical, and humanitarian consequences of war can no longer be contained within national borders*. It is, therefore, imperative to deter similar threats to International Security from happening in places that one used to regard as a sort of periphery.

Senior researcher *Ian Easton* observed that *Taiwan is the strategic nerve center of the world* (*Taipei Times*, 14 February 2022). It is a fact, indeed, that the author of this article repeatedly used to make clear to his students, over the years, in his former capacity as a Professor of Naval/Maritime History at the Hellenic Naval War College and the American College of Greece: Half of the world's commercial container traffic passes through the Taiwan Strait each day. Additionally, Taiwan produces the majority of the world's semiconductors and microchips: 60 per cent and 90 per cent of the global production, respectively. It is crystal clear that Taiwan plays a key role in global supply chains. Any conflict in the Taiwan Strait would, therefore, have disastrous consequences for the global economy.

Taiwan's secure existence, therefore, is in everyone's best interest – not only because of her huge significance for the smooth functioning of modern economy, administration, and society, but even more importantly, because Taiwan stands as a perpetual reminder of what is possible in international relations. Taiwan offers proof that development – *both* political and economic – is possible; that democratization is possible – and need not require outside intervention or bloodshed.

In fact, Taiwan has grown into a society that represents all important values of what one used to call the Free World – all values the West occasionally tries to promote elsewhere in the world, but in vain, causing rivers of blood (see Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Kosovo, Bosnia, and elsewhere). Instead, Taiwan achieved all of this, all on her own – in spite of all limitations *unfairly* imposed upon her since the 1970s.

Besides, in case of capture of the island republic, the PRC's expansionist appetite will not stop at Taiwan. The People's Republic of China has territorial claims to the South and the East China Seas. In addition to signing a security agreement with *Solomon Islands* in the South Pacific, mainland China has been securing ports for future military use in the major Indo-Pacific geopolitical region, for the first time in Modern History.

Yet, there is another aspect, which is hardly mentioned in international media and think- tanks' articles and analyses dealing with the eventuality of Taiwan's seizure by China: it is the humanitarian aspect of the whole question, or to put it in other words, what this would mean for the population of the island republic. By saying this, we do not only have in mind the expected mass executions, or displacements of hundreds, or thousands of Taiwanese politicians, judges, senior military officers, prominent intellectuals, or opinion-leaders. Moreover, we mean the colossal mass of Civil Servants, men and women working in both the public and the private sector, or serving in the Armed and Security Forces, professors and teachers of all ranks, and any other university graduate in general – bottom line, we are talking about the millions of common citizens who would be forcibly subject to so called “*re-education programmes*”, as it had been the case in each and every country of Asia, and beyond, where *Communist Totalitarianism* had been imposed: any man or woman who was suspect of “*bourgeois*”, or “*reactionary*” education (i.e., anyone who ever had visited high-school!) had to go through “*re-education camps*”, in mainland China, in Vietnam, in Cambodia, etc. All of this might sound strange in Greece due to the absolute ideological hegemony of the Left in the post-1974 Greek society, but it is indisputable fact everywhere in the civilized world.

Even nowadays, the UN went on to publish a report on the state of the Uyghur minority in the People's Republic of China, in which the PRC has been accused of displacement of millions of members of that population group from their homeland Xinjiang (NW China) and of their subsequent confinement in “*re-education centres*”. The PRC is further accused of having committed severe violations of human rights.

Besides, a statement made by former PRC's Ambassador in France Mr. *Lu Shaye* in the last year caused a sensation, for he made the point that the Taiwanese citizens would have to be “*re-educated*” in case of a “*unification*” of their country with mainland China. Bearing in mind that we are talking about a population of 23.500.000 people, we can easily imagine the dimensions of the human tragedy in such case.

In the light of the above, time has come for the UN to show itself consistent with its declarations and cease the ongoing injustice to Taiwan and the Taiwanese citizens. The institutional form of the international community must treat Taiwan fairly, at last. In this regard, several Member States of the European Union and an increasing number of Members of the European Parliament, of all tendencies, stand with Taiwan. The *Hellenic Republic* is absent though, despite the declarations of the ruling political class that our country is committed to International Law and a *rules-based* foreign policy.