

Republic of China at a crossroads as national elections approach

by Our Special Taipei Correspondent

The massacre of thousands of Chinese by the Communist government in Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, gave the 78th anniversary celebrations on Taiwan of the founding of the Republic of China on Oct. 10, 1911, even greater meaning this year. The R.O.C. is both the first, and longest-lived republic in all Asia. For more than 15 years, the Republic of China on Taiwan apparently vanished from the international stage, ever since the R.O.C. was forced to both withdraw from the United Nations and break diplomatic relations with the United States, leading to general recognition of the Communist People's Republic.

But the world woke up with a horrible shock, when, before its very eyes, the tanks ran over the bodies of the unarmed students and guns fired on helpless civilians. There could be no more pretense about "reform." Finally, people were forced to realize that to attempt reason with the Communists is even more dangerous than throwing oneself into a lion's den.

The R.O.C., with strong government leadership in coordination with the hard work of the population, has created on Taiwan a miracle of economic progress, similar to Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea. Trade has spread worldwide. This has put the P.R.C. in a very embarrassing position because of its terrible backwardness.

Mainland China is so poor, that it cannot clothe its own army. Pictures from Beijing during May and June show People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers, who had to march many hours to enter the city, all wearing different canvas shoes, and, under their uniform jackets, civilian shirts—if they wore any shirts at all. It is standard practice for families to have to pay for the bullets when a member is executed by the government; after Tiananmen, families had to pay 7 yuan (about \$1.75) each for every bullet found in the bodies of students shot down.

When Deng Xiaoping seized power in late 1976, he stated that he was determined to settle the "Taiwan problem" by the 1990s. The end of his timetable is fast approaching. On Sept. 25, the new leadership appointed in mainland China after Communist Party head Zhao Ziyang was ousted, reiterated that the crackdown in Beijing "had not changed the goal of the recovery of Taiwan and the use of force cannot be ruled out." Even though the new Communist Party General Secre-

tary Jiang Zemin stated that there was no timetable for reunification of Taiwan and China, he did not deny that the possibility of using force to "solve the Taiwan problem." This situation deserves close attention.

The Communists have one way open for them to take action: Use the general national elections to be held by the R.O.C. on Dec. 2. These will be the first national elections since 1979, and the first election in the R.O.C. in 40 years in which political parties in opposition to the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) will be able to participate. The biggest and loudest of the opposition parties is the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which models itself on the Green parties of Europe. Its members have been involved in elections for the past 10 years, and a number were elected to the national legislature, but only proclaimed themselves DPP members after the party was officially recognized early this year. Since then, some 38 new political parties have "sprung up like bamboo shoots"—which can grow three feet in a few hours after a heavy rain. They have joined in an opposition faction for the elections.

The fundamental issue of the elections is whether the R.O.C. will remain committed to reuniting China under a republican government. The radical Movement Faction inside the DPP is committed to immediate "independence" for Taiwan, while the moderate Formosa Faction wants to concentrate on political "reform." Since Beijing regards Taiwan as nothing but a renegade province, any move towards independence would be *casus belli*—an open invitation to the PLA to invade and "recover" the island. High-level intelligence sources in Taiwan confirm that the radical DPP is working with Beijing to bring about just such a situation.

One critical issue in the R.O.C. is the "mainland deputies" in the National Assembly—some 900 deputies elected in the last election held on the mainland before the Communist takeover in 1949. They have remained in office, because, since the R.O.C. is the legitimate government of China, no legal elections for these posts can be held while the government is in exile. Opposition parties, and even some younger KMT members, have been campaigning to forcibly retire these deputies. On Oct. 15, a group of 150 "stood up" and formed a faction inside the KMT, committed to carrying out the goals of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founder of

the Republic of China, and to unifying China under the "Three Principles of the People." The group wants to ensure that the President and Vice President of the R.O.C., who will be elected in March following national elections Dec. 2, will not allow any movement toward "independence" of Taiwan. The group elected Gen. T'eng Chieh, a member of the Central Advisory Committee of the KMT and author of *Turning Defeat into Victory—A Total War Strategy Against Beijing*, as its leader. They are supporting Gen. Wego Chiang, the youngest son of the late R.O.C. President Chiang Kai-shek, for Vice President. The group is also determined to demonstrate the power of their policies to the opposition.

The R.O.C. elections will be nationwide. Not only will 101 members of the National Assembly—who next spring will elect the next President of Taiwan—be elected, but also provincial assemblymen, 21 mayors, county commissioners, and city councilors will be elected.

Kuomintang hit with scandals

The KMT, which has led the Republic of China during its entire existence, including against the Japanese invasion in World War II, in the civil war against Mao Zedong's Communists, and in building Asia's second most prosperous nation in just 40 years on Taiwan, is facing several dangerous situations. The opposition is successfully using a number of scandals for propaganda, hurting the KMT badly.

The biggest scandal is the so-called "First Golf Course" bribery case. A number of high-ranking government officials, including just-resigned Justice Minister Hsiao Tien-tzang, have been implicated. Hsiao was investigated for expediting approval for the building of a golf course by Education Ministry official Ho Min, who has since been jailed. (The Education Ministry also deals with sports.) The golf course was built on government property—something which usually requires about 100 different official approvals—and reportedly violated land conservation regulations. Hsiao was cleared of all charges, but in the process he took leave from office several times, and announced that there was a conspiracy against him.

Prime Minister Lee Huan, who was the top-ranking official in the Education Ministry at the time of the transactions, and other cabinet members could potentially be implicated in the scandal. The Taipei *Independence Morning Post* reported Sept. 26, that one of the reasons why the KMT has been reluctant to force Hsiao out of office, is that he "has evidence that many key KMT and government officials have engaged in lobbying." The scandal is being used to attack the entire judicial system. Taiwan's leading magazine, the *Journalist*, wrote, "Hsiao's various maneuvers to protect his post only demonstrate to the public the deteriorating mores and discipline of the judiciary. . . . This might wake up authorities to the fact that the judiciary needs to be reformed." The DPP has asked President Lee Teng-Hui to form a special task

force to investigate the Hsiao case, because it has seriously damaged public confidence in the government, the *China Post* reported Sept. 25. The KMT will not recover easily from the damage.

The second scandal rocking Taiwan is the violent death of Yu Teng-fa, one of the founders of the opposition party which later became the DPP, and was twice elected governor of Kao-hsiung County, which includes Taiwan's second-largest city. Yu was a very powerful politician, with great influence in the DPP. His daughter-in-law Yu Chen Ye succeeded him as governor of the city, and Yu's grandson is a member of parliament. He was found dead on Sept. 13, a heavy typhoon night. The family insisted that this was not a natural death and that Yu was murdered by KMT secret intelligence or special forces. The DPP is using the scandal to attack the government, although investigators consider the death was most likely accidental.

Communist operations on Taiwan

The case of dissident Hsu Hsin-Liang, who was arrested by R.O.C. police Oct. 2 while attempting to sneak back into Taiwan aboard a fishing boat from Fukien province on the mainland, is being used by the DPP to stage violent protest demonstrations. Hsu was, he said, trying to attend Yu's funeral. Hsu, a former KMT member and the governor of Taoyuen Hsiung County, joined the DPP after he failed to win a primary election in 1979. Hsu was involved in several demonstrations in Kao-hsiung city in December 1979, which were intended to overthrow the R.O.C. The whole movement eventually demonstrated deep connections with Communist China. Before the authorities took any action, Hsu left for the United States, where he continually led the Taiwan Independence movement. Hsu signed a declaration while he was in the United States 10 years ago, stating he would try to overthrow the R.O.C. government by force. While there, Hsu maintained fairly close relations to Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.) and also with other Americans unfriendly with the R.O.C. government. Hsu's lawyer had a 40-minute meeting with officials at the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) Oct. 4 about Hsu's case, and several congressmen have reportedly asked the AIT to look into the case.

DPP candidates have been rushing to Tucheng detention center, where Hsu is being held, every day, to attempt to get his endorsement for their campaigns. They think it will be a guarantee to winning elections. Why? Since the Chinese witnessed how powerful foreign armies destroyed the Imperial Army of the Chinese Empire, they cannot get rid of their fear of foreigners. Some of the Chinese think that the moon shines brighter on foreign soil than in China.

The separatism weapon

While the media has given a lot of coverage to the scandals facing the KMT, it has seldom called public attention to another secret weapon which the DPP could wield against

Taiwanese society, whether or not it wins elections.

Separatism has a long history inside Taiwan. However, apart from a small indigenous population, most of Taiwan's inhabitants are Chinese, who came from the mainland over many generations. The "newcomers" are the mainland Chinese who moved to Taiwan with the central government in 1949 when the Communists took over the mainland. A year before, in 1948, due to the misconduct of the appointed Chinese commissioner in Taiwan, the Communists orchestrated riots there, costing many Taiwanese lives. This planted the seed of the idea that Taiwan belongs to the "Taiwanese," and that mainland Chinese bring only problems. During the 1950s, Taiwanese avoided involvement in mainland Chinese affairs, and even shunned intermarriage with newcomers from the mainland. Later, due to careful handling by the government, a land reform system gave the Taiwanese far better economic interests, and regionalism was disarmed step by step. Currently, Taiwanese have more advantages than other mainland Chinese, because of their social background, and the average Taiwanese is better off financially than those who arrived from the mainland as refugees.

But for 40 years, only a few Taiwanese have been involved in the government service, which is why the DPP is demanding National Assembly elections and free presidential elections. They want to put more Taiwanese in policy-making circles to be able to control the central government.

At the Dec. 2 election, there are 16 important posts, including the mayor and the governor of Kao-hsiung. At present, the DPP holds six of these positions, in I-Lan, Kaohsiung, Tainan city, Hsinchu city, Cianghua city, and Chia-ye city. They intend to win another four positions in different cities and counties.

The DPP is also using more violent methods, essentially to undermine the social stability of the R.O.C. Intelligence sources report that many of the gangsters, also cropping up like bamboo shoots on Taiwan, are in the pay of DPP radicals, and armed from the growing weapons trade from the mainland. There are more than 1,000 "professional" goons throughout Taiwan, who are mobilized whenever the DPP needs to run a demonstration in Taipei city. The same familiar faces appear again and again in the front lines of the DPP demonstrations.

To prevent violence, it is essential that the government deal with these problems. If the DPP wins in the elections, it will push for an independent Taiwan. Even if they do not win, there is great danger of violence at the polls. If this occurs, there is no doubt that the U.S. observers will carry out a replay of their attacks on the elections in the Philippines and Panama, and will attempt to use the scandal against the KMT. The Communists are closely watching the situation, and Taiwan out of control is exactly what they want. If the R.O.C. does not guard its republic now, its citizens will be ashamed to face their ancestors, when they are gone.

South Korea opposes U.S. troop withdrawal

by Lydia Cherry

South Korean President Noh Tae Woo told a joint session of the U.S. House and Senate on Oct. 18 that tragic results would follow any reduction of U.S. troops from his country. "Any hint of weakening in the U.S. defense commitment or a precipitate lessening of the military presence might cause North Korea to misjudge the U.S. commitment to peace in the region," he said. "The results would be tragic. Thus far, security cooperation between our two countries remains strong and effective. Let us not disturb it until necessity dictates change. For this reason, I welcome and applaud the pledge of President Bush and the American government that U.S. ground troops will remain as long as the Korean people want and need them."

In an interview with a *New York Times* reporter timed to be published upon his arrival in the United States on Oct. 14, Noh had specified that "U.S. troops in Korea not only defend South Korea against a possible attack from North Korea. They are an important factor in the overall military balance of power in northeast Asia. There can be a slight modification as time goes by, but the general level of the American presence is not a subject for any possible change."

In reporting on both Noh's message to Congress and his talks with President Bush, the wire services and U.S. press report on a different slant that U.S. officials gave to the results of the talks. In Washington, the "decouplers," who advocate a U.S. military withdrawal, are gaining ground. "Mr. Noh went further [than had President Bush], suggesting the two leaders agreed that the number of U.S. troops in South Korea should remain steady at roughly 43,000," the *Washington Times* reported Oct. 18. "They agreed 'there should be no change in the current level of the Korean-U.S. combined defense capability,' Noh said. U.S. officials, however, refused to rule out future reductions in U.S. troops levels, and, in what could be interpreted as preparations for that eventuality, attempted to steer the issue away from precise numbers of troops."

The *Times* quoted an administration official suggesting that the United States could help South Korea defend itself at less cost, perhaps by changes in the U.S. military command