

Preface

In a thought-provoking article entitled ‘What is Development About?’ Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen argued, ‘Freedom is both the primary objective of development and its principal means.’ True stories of successful economic development are few and far between. There are even fewer models of success when one adopts Sen’s perspective that political freedom is a criteria of economic development. The island nation of Taiwan is one the few models of ‘double miracles’ in which political transformation toward democracy has accompanied successful economic development.

However, this model of successful economic development and democratization faces ever-increasing challenges from a dynamic yet hostile neighbor. The gap between the socio-political systems lying on each side of the Taiwan Strait, already distinct due to decades of socio-economic developments, was further widened by a leap in democratization in Taiwan since the late 1980s. Despite strides towards an open, democratic country, the claim for Taiwan’s sovereignty continues to face challenges from China within all international organizations, and is exemplified in the form of ballistic missile intimidation. At stake are not only the economic miracle achieved in the past 50 years, but also the accomplishments and gains in socio-political freedoms and democracy.

The US policy of simultaneously supporting a democratic Taiwan while engaging a rising China under authoritarianism is a delicate and complex balance, with outcomes critical to economic, security and strategic interests in Asia. At the same time, rising Taiwanese identity amid the emerging power of China continues to shift the paradigm on the triangular relations between China, Taiwan and the US. Furthermore, the stability of this balance affects the development of freedom and democracy, as well as peace, stability and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region.

In conjunction with Asian Heritage Month, the City College of New York hosted an international conference on Challenges and Opportunities in the Triangular Relations Among the US, China and Taiwan: Prospects in the Second Bush Administration, on 21 May 2005. A group of high-caliber scholars gathered together for brainstorming sessions on economic integration, democratization, security and strategic issues on these relations. Their outputs contributed to the mapping out of scenarios of the

shifting paradigm, carrying significant policy implications for the Bush administration and beyond.

The conference was co-chaired by The Honorable Benjamin A. Gilman and Alexander K. Young. Their leadership and social networks made my job as the conference coordinator that much easier. In addition, I would like to express my appreciation to the administration of the City College of New York, especially my Department Chairman, Malcolm Galatin, for his support on this project. Generous grants from the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy and from the Chinese Development Fund are gratefully acknowledged. In addition, enthusiastic support from the Taiwanese-American community further convinced me of the strategic importance of airing these issues during this time. However, the usual caveat applies; the opinions expressed in the book represent neither the host's, nor the sponsoring institutions'. Each contributor speaks for himself or herself.

Editing an interdisciplinary book requires enormous efforts far beyond my capability. Fortunately, more than a dozen prominent scholars offered me their timely assistance to review the manuscripts constructively. Intellectual interactions between anonymous referees and respective contributors have made the final version of the conference volume a quality book as presented here. Special gratitude is due to Michael Yuhada for writing the Foreword and delivering the book to its readers. I am indebted to all those scholars for their cooperation and contribution to this joint venture. Needless to say, I am solely responsible for the quality of this book.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Alice. Without her tireless support and passionate companionship, the completion of this book would not have been possible.

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