Taiwan in World Politics:
Paradox, Predicament, and Prospect

Paradox: Taiwan has conformed to virtually every global standard of membership in international society, such as democracy, economic advancement, social mobility, and commitment to international laws. But Taiwan has been relegated to the status of an outcast in the international community.

Predicament: Economically, does the rise of Chinese economic power tend to marginalize Taiwan in regional and global economy? In this, Taiwan is confronted with Beijing’s denial of Taiwan’s right to be by itself and the “realism” of the major powers, especially Taiwan’s quest to be part of international society, such as World Health Organization.

Prospect: It is said that elites have more impact on foreign relations of small states than major powers. In Taiwan, the current political elites are survivors of half a century of precarious political opposition. It is natural that President Chen and members of the ruling DPP want to live up to their ideal of national independence. At the same time, the current leadership in Beijing feels insecure of their legitimacy in face of rising social tension and it is prone to divert public attention to confrontation with Taiwan and the U.S. Will transition to future elites in both states bring better relations between the two states and societies?

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Center for Taiwan Studies, East Asia Center, Department of East Asian Languages, University of California, Santa Barbara and TECOLA