

Executive Summary of the Taiwan Referendum, March 22, 2008

Synopsis: Based on the preservation of the Taiwan identity/existence, the evaluation results favor 71.6% to 35% Taiwan becoming a formal independent State versus Taiwan becoming part of China.

However, based solely on the risk to world peace, the evaluation results favor 65% to 20% Taiwan becoming part of China versus Taiwan becoming a formal independent State.

This is the Taiwan dilemma. (Independence versus world peace)

The FDPAA concludes that Taiwan should press ahead with independence, because of its right to self-determination, and the onus should be on the world, not Taiwan, to deal with China's intimidation and isolationist policy towards Taiwan. For Taiwan to put off independence because world powers are unwilling to act decisively against China, even though they are capable of acting decisively, would be contrary to the very existence of being Taiwanese.

Evaluation Completed by the Foundation for Democratic Political Advancement (March 15, 2008)

Purpose: Determine based on the better interest of the Taiwanese people, whether or not the Taiwanese People should support Taiwan application for U.N. membership under the name “Taiwan.”

This determination is an outside perspective to give the citizens and politicians of Taiwan, and the outside world, a different perspective on the March 22nd, Taiwan Referendum. The views in this Study are the views of the FDPA. Also, the evaluation and final determination is an example of governmental decision-making in Evaluative Democracy.

The FDPA and its members are in no way affiliated with any of the relevant parties in this study.

The study represents an independent assessment of the Taiwan Referendum based on objectivity, transparency, and non-partisanship.

Methodology for Evaluation of Taiwan Referendum:

Overall: Establish the basic priority of the Taiwanese people as a whole, and use the basic priority to evaluate the Taiwan Referendum.

The basic priority of the Taiwan people as a whole:

Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

Sections for Evaluation:

Self-determination (Taiwan self-determination versus no Taiwan self-determination, control by China)

National security (Taiwan military conflict with China versus no Taiwan military conflict with China.)

Trade (No Taiwan trade with China versus Taiwan trade with China.)

Religion (Independent Taiwan religion versus Chinese religion. (Control by China))

Culture (Independent Taiwan culture versus Chinese culture. (Control by China))

International politics (Successful Taiwan referendum versus unsuccessful Taiwan referendum.)

Evaluate the areas for evaluation based on the basic priority of the Taiwanese people.

One evaluation sub-sections will be adopted for each section:

Soundness of argument

Soundness sub-section will have a score from 1-15.

* Note, the evaluation will hinge on the pros and cons of Taiwan's move toward independence versus Taiwan's absorption into China, based on the basic priority of Taiwanese preservation. Each of these sides will receive a weighted score for each section. The scores from each section will be added up to give an overall assessment of the Taiwan referendum.

Information sources:

Media articles and analysis of Taiwan society and referendum.
Government and NGO statements/views of the referendum.
Articles on the history of Taiwanese and Chinese relations.

Evaluation committee comprised of Stephen Garvey, BA, MA, CEO of the FDPA, Simon Brown retired Charter Account and member of the FDPA, Hillary Brown education facilitator and associated with the FDPA, and Colin McKenzie, retired engineer, college instructor, and an advisor for the FDPA.

Self-determination:

Basic Priority of Taiwan: Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

Evaluative issue: self-determination of Taiwan versus no self-determination of Taiwan. (Results based on the basic priority of Taiwan.)

Self-determination: 8/10

Reason: self-determination itself implies identity/existence. Though the score was not 10/10 because of the effect of the losing China as a protector and the Chinese trading bloc.

No self-determination 2/10

Reason: no self-determination is counter to identity/existence, though there would be a semblance of existence for Taiwan within the realm of China.

National Security:

Basic Priority of Taiwan: Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

Evaluative issue: Taiwan military conflict with China versus Taiwan no military conflict with China. (Results based on the basic priority of Taiwan.)

Military conflict: 4/10

Reason: The conflict could potentially resolve the Taiwan's independence issue in its favor, and it would identify and strengthen Taiwan's allies. Though Taiwan could get annihilated—yet Taiwan is capable of inflicting military damage on China, and it has militarily strong allies.

No Military Conflict: 3/10

Reason: Though Taiwan prevents its possible annihilation by the Chinese military, its existence suppressed by China and it loses its allies.

Trade:

Basic Priority of Taiwan: Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

Evaluative issue: Taiwan no trade with China versus Taiwan trade with China. (Results based on the basic priority of Taiwan.)

No trade with China: 6/10

Reason: Though it attains independence, Taiwan loses its natural and top trading partner.

Trade with China: 6/10

Reason: Though it maintains trade with its natural and top-trading partner, Taiwan loses its independence and allies.

Religion:

Basic Priority of Taiwan: Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

Evaluative issue: independent Taiwan religion versus Chinese religion. (Results based on the basic priority of Taiwan.)

Independent Taiwan Religion: 10/10

Reason: There were no religious intolerances cited against Taiwan, so it received a score of 10.

Chinese Religion: 4/10

Reason: Though there is clear overlap of religion between Taiwan and China, there is a significant difference in terms of religious tolerance and freedom.

Culture:

Basic Priority of Taiwan: Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

Evaluative issue: independent Taiwan culture versus Chinese culture. (Results based on the basic priority of Taiwan.)

Independent Taiwan Culture: 10/10

Reason: Independent Taiwan culture is the ultimate in preserving Taiwan identity/existence (in terms of culture).

Chinese Culture (Control by China): 3/10

Reason: Chinese culture lacks the Taiwanese democratic/relative freedom element, and therefore would be a significant threat to the preservation of Taiwan culture, and more so, would change it. Three points were awarded on grounds that there is overlap in cultures between China and Taiwan.

International Politics:

Basic Priority of Taiwan: Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

Evaluative issue: successful Taiwan referendum versus unsuccessful Taiwan referendum. (Results based on the basic priority of Taiwan.)

Successful Taiwan Referendum: 5/10

Reason: Though a successful Taiwan referendum will do a lot to establish Taiwan self-determination and ultimately independence, and risks the strong possibility of military conflict with China. Therefore it was give a score of 5.

Unsuccessful Taiwan Referendum: 3/10

Reason: Though an unsuccessful referendum would likely reduce tensions between China and Taiwan, it would severely weaken Taiwan's claim for sovereignty (due to lack of popular support), and therefore be a precursor to China control of Taiwan. Moreover, there is a possibility that China may step up the pressure on Taiwan for absorption into China, which could lead to military conflict and Taiwan capitulation. Hence, it was give a score of 3, which acknowledges at least a short-term reduction in tension.

Overall Assessment:

Basic Priority of Taiwan: Preservation (of the Taiwanese identity/existence, which includes the religious, economic, cultural aspects of being Taiwanese.)

The scores below are based on the basic priority of Taiwan.

Self-determination:

Self-determination: 8/10

No Self-determination: 2/10

National Security:

Conflict with China: 4/10

No conflict with China: 3/10

Trade:

No trade with China: 6/10

Trade with China: 6/10

Religion:

Independent Religion: 10/10

Chinese Religion: 4/10

Culture:

Independent Culture: 10/10

Chinese Culture: 3/10

International Politics:

Successful referendum: 5/10

Unsuccessful Referendum: 3/10

Totals: 43/60 (71.6%)

21/60 (35%)

Analysis:

The results clearly show that in terms of preservation of their identity/existence, it is in the better interest of the Taiwanese people to support independence over control by China. The separation between the two positions is more than double.

Therefore, the Taiwanese people should support the application for UN membership under the name of “Taiwan.”

Though if only conflict and no conflict with China was considered then the separation changes significantly:

Conflict with China: 4/10	No conflict with China: 3/10
Successful referendum: 5/10	Unsuccessful referendum: 3/10
Totals: 9/20 (45%)	6/20 (30%)

Though the results still favor the Taiwanese people supporting the application for UN membership under the name of “Taiwan.”

If the National Security section was weighted three times the other sections, and the International Politics section was weighted double the other sections (to give more weight to potential conflict scenarios—which are more a direct threat to Taiwanese identity/existence), then the results would be:

65/90 (72.2%)

36/90 (40%)

The result reduces the gap, but it is still a separation of 32.2% or nearly double.

Therefore, the FDPA committee concludes as before that it is in the better interest of the Taiwanese people (in terms of preserving their Taiwan identity/existence) to support the referendum or application for UN membership under the name of “Taiwan.”

A Caveat to the Results:

The FDPA Committee took it upon itself to look at the Risks to World Peace for a scenario of Taiwan declaration of Independence versus Taiwan absorption into China.

The basic priority for the evaluation is the maintenance of world peace.

Taiwan declares independence: 8/10

Reason: based on Chinese military buildup, public statements, and the Anti-secession Law, it is clear that there is high risk of military conflict between China and Taiwan, if Taiwan declares independence. Though it was weighted down from a score of 10, because there is a possibility in such a scenario China may not attack Taiwan.

Taiwan becomes part of China: 3.5/10

Reason: tensions between China and Taiwan would be eliminated, because Taiwan would no longer exist except as a province of China. Though there is a possibility China may become more militarily aggressive in the Asian region. Therefore, we added a risk of 3.5.

Results:

Taiwan independence 8/10 (80%) Risk level to world peace

Taiwan becomes part of China 3.5/10 (35%) Risk level to world peace

Analysis:

Clearly, without considering the preservation of Taiwan identity/existence, it is in the better interest of world peace that Taiwan becomes part of China, as opposed to Taiwan declaring independence.

This conclusion does not mean that the Taiwan people should not support the application for UN membership under the name of “Taiwan.” It simply means that when factoring in world peace, the risk is much less through the One China approach as opposed to an independent Taiwan approach.

This is a disturbing conclusion, because it runs counter to the self-determination of the Taiwanese people, and it is them who would suffer in the long run, when in reality, it is the international community, including the UN, to blame for tolerating the situation between China and Taiwan. China is suppressing, threatening the existence of the Taiwan people by military and legal threats, and denying it international/state status by making no formal relations with Taiwan a precondition for relations with China.

In reality and to be consistent with the UN charter under self-determination and protection of emerging states (or territories) like Taiwan, the international community should collectively not tolerate China’s intimidation and isolationist policy towards Taiwan. How? Threat of sanctions from a collective of western countries, and/or threat of collective military action from some or all of these countries—U.S., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and India.

The situation for Taiwan is a dilemma. Because if it furthers its path to independence, Taiwan increases the possibility of brinkmanship and the risk to world peace, while if it does not further the path to independence, Taiwan threatens its identity/existence.

The questions arise: Why should Taiwan bare the brunt of the flawed, imperfect international structure/law? Why should Taiwan

sacrifice its very identity/existence, when the world has the capabilities to end Chinese intimidation and isolationist policy toward Taiwan?

It appears to the FDPA Committee that it is likely in the better interest of Taiwan to pursue independence, in hope that the world responds to the fundamental right of the Taiwanese people. In other worlds, the onus should be on the world to respond, rather than Taiwan, because that is where the problem originates.

It has been suggested by some of the FDPA Committee members, that Taiwan should wait for a better time to move for independence. But that time may never come, especially in the backdrop of China getting stronger and stronger economically and militarily.

The irony is that an independent, strong Taiwan, would be in China's better interest in the long term, because Taiwan and China are natural trading partners and have strong ties culturally and religiously. Viz., they are both of Chinese origin.

Note, the threat to world peace could manifest itself in the form of a world war or cold war (in the case of Chinese aggression on Taiwan), or Chinese colonial expansion (in the case of Taiwan peaceful absorption into China).