

# Full Evaluation of the Taiwan Referendum, March 22, 2008

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.

---

## Table of Contents:

### Evaluation of Taiwan Referendum

1. Self-determination .....	7
2. National Security .....	12
3. Trade .....	14
4. Religion .....	16
5. Culture .....	19
6. International Politics .....	21
Overall Assessment .....	24

## Self-determination:

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

## Main Factual information:

Taiwan population of 23 million—larger than 142 of the 192 UN countries; self-governing since 1996, Taiwan has held fully democratic elections "within specified boundaries by specified citizens for a government exercising exclusive control over a territory."

- Self-determination is a right recognized by the United Nations, and it is the people who are masters of their nation's future," the Taiwanese foreign ministry said in a statement. "In no way should the independence of one nation be denied by another."

The US says that Taiwan is provoking China. How is Taiwan provoking by seeking self-determination? When it is not a military threat to China?

Again the issue resolves around self-determination versus control by China.

Chinese likely do not fear the result of the referendum as much as the precedence of it---whereby the Taiwanese have unilateral say to their existence. "Taiwan can't decide its future for itself."

Democracy, freedom, and all that are not the cause but the effect of Taiwan being independent from PRC in the beginning.

Taiwan must not be intimidated by China into giving up its right to hold referendums, as human beings battle not only for survival, but also for dignity, he said.

"The referendums are like an amulet for Taiwan -- externally they protect Taiwan's sovereignty and ensure its safety; internally they help reach a consensus," said Lai.

" - It is known to all that as a part of China, Taiwan has no right or eligibility to give the so-called 'recognition' (to Kosovo)," foreign

ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said in a statement.

Despite ruling over its island as a 'de facto' independent nation and having full internal sovereignty, Taiwan has diplomatic ties with just 23 countries due to a territorial claim by neighboring China. The strategy which China uses to deny formal relations to Taiwan is to force other countries to choose between relations with either Taiwan or China, but not both.

United Nations, Article 2

To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;

18 (2) Decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting. These questions shall include: recommendations with respect to the maintenance of international peace and security, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, the election of the members of the Economic and Social Council, the election of members of the Trusteeship Council in accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of Article 86, the admission of new Members to the United Nations, the suspension of the rights and privileges of membership, the expulsion of Members, questions relating to the operation of the trusteeship system, and budgetary questions.

73. Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories, and, to this end:

- a. to ensure, with due respect for the culture of the peoples concerned, their political, economic, social, and educational advancement, their just treatment, and their protection against abuses;
- b. to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive



development of their free political institutions, according to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and their varying stages of advancement;

c. to further international peace and security;

The United Nations

INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON  
CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Article 1

All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Arguments in favor of Self-determination (of Taiwan):

1. Autonomy/more control/ independent choice.
2. Control over their existence—economy, global economy, governing, identity as a people.
3. Become stronger through independence.
4. Taiwan qualifies as a state under the 1933 Montevideo Convention—(“a permanent population, a defined territory, government, and capacity to enter into relations with other states.”)

5. The main international body, the UN, says implicitly in its INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, that Taiwan has a right to self-determination.

Arguments in favor of no self-determination (Control by China)

1. Big brother in the form of China will look after Taiwan's interests, including security.
2. Taiwan would be part of trading bloc with China.

Counter arguments:

1. Taiwan would lose its allies.
2. Taiwan's civil rights and freedoms would be diminished significantly.
3. Taiwan would have a contained existence within China realm.

Comparative Evaluation based on Soundness:

In terms of preserving Taiwan's identity/existence, the FDPA Committee determines overwhelmingly that self-determination was better than no self-determination.

Scores:

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.)

### Main Factual information:

March 2005, Anti-Secession Law---authorizes use of Chinese force to prevent a “serious incident” which breaks the One China Policy. (“non-peaceful means” against the “Taiwan independence movement”)

Along China’s southeastern coast there 1,328 missiles deployed....  
China’s defense budget has increased by double digits over the last 20 years... and 17.8% in 2008

Taiwan has 390 combat aircraft; China 2,250 operational combat aircraft with 490 within range of Taiwan and can operate against island without refueling

Taiwan 97 ships; China 232 ships including 32 attack submarines, 17 destroyers, 36 frigates, 47 amphibious assault ships...

Taiwan protected by the Taiwan Relations Act with the United States.

### Arguments in favor of Taiwan Military Conflict with China:

1. If Taiwan wins the military conflict, it would establish Taiwan’s independence.
2. The military conflict would test who are really Taiwan’s allies, and those who are would be become stronger allies with Taiwan.
3. Taiwan is capable of inflicting military damage on China, and it has a militarily strong allies.

Counter argument:

1. Taiwan could get annihilated by China's military superiority and no or limited allies aiding Taiwan.

Arguments in favor of Taiwan Peace with China (and control by China)

1. It would prevent the possibility of Taiwan being annihilated by Taiwan's military.

Comparative Evaluation based on Soundness:

In terms of preserving Taiwan's identity/existence, the FDPA committee determines that both positions (military conflict versus no military conflict) were overall positive but deficiencies.

Scores:

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.)

### Main Factual information:

In 2006, China accounted for over 27% of Taiwan trade and almost 40% of Taiwan exports. Japan was next largest with 15% and 23%, and the US with 14% and 11%.

In 2006, an estimated 70,000 Taiwan companies operate in China.

### Arguments in favor of No Trade with China:

1. Taiwan has significant trade with countries other than China. So Taiwan could increase its trade with them, and possible others, thereby survive the short-terms consequences of no trade with China.
2. Economically Taiwan would maintain its independence, further establish its independence, and strength existing trading partners.
3. Potentially for increased tourism to Taiwan from it being independent.

### Counter argument:

1. Taiwan loses its natural and top trading partner.

### Arguments in favor of Trade (Control by China)

1. Natural trading partner already established—common language, culture, and close proximity.
2. Trade with China good for Taiwan economy.

Counter argument:

1. From being controlled by China, the Taiwanese may lose their motivation.

Comparative Evaluation based on Soundness:

In terms of preserving Taiwan's identity/existence, the FDPA committee determines that both scenarios for trade are less than ideal.

Scores:

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.)

### Main Factual information:

13 religions practiced by nearly half of the Taiwanese population....  
With Buddhism and Taoism most popular about 5 million people and 4.5 million....

China has--Chinese folk religion, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Chinese Constitutions supports freedom of religion. The main religions of modern mainland China are Buddhism, Daoism (or Taoism), Islam and Christianity. Buddhism and Daoism are tolerant religions and many Chinese followers of these religions seek comfort in the other or in Confucianism, when needed. Ancient Chinese folk religion also forms an additional basis for faith. Buddhism is more widely followed by urban Chinese, while Daoism is more widely followed by rural Chinese. There are active Buddhist and Daoist temples all over China. However, people usually only go to the temples on special occasions. Faith and good works seem to be preferred over overt worship. Also, many households have a small shrine for private worship. There are Christian churches in many cities of China, with small but active congregations. The state insists on independence of churches from foreign control and must approve the appointment of senior Catholic clergy, a point of friction with the Vatican. Confucianism involves ancestor worship, which is frowned upon by the authorities. Confucian temples have been converted into museums and tourist attractions, and Confucianism is discouraged. The Falun Gong religion is a strong religious body, and has been recently very severely persecuted by the communist ruling elite.



## Arguments in favor of Independent Taiwan Religion:

1. More freedom of religion in Taiwan than in China.

Note, the Committee determined that though Taiwan is still only a developing democracy, it should be evaluated on the state of its current human rights. Consequently, the Committee could not site any religious intolerance in the Taiwan.

## Arguments in favor of Chinese Religion (Control by China)

1. There is overlap on religions between Taiwan and China.

## Counter Argument:

1. China has significant religious persecution and control like in Tibet, and against the Confucian and Falun Gong religions, and overall persecution of religion stemming from the atheist communists/ruling elites.

## Comparative Evaluation based on Soundness:

In terms of preserving Taiwan's identity/existence, the FDPA committee determines that independent Taiwan religion is significantly preferable over Chinese religion.

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.)

### Main Factual information:

Culture difference---Taiwan---democracy and relative freedoms as compared to China control by the communist ruling elites....

Overlap of culture in terms of language, arts, etc.,

### Arguments in favor of Independent Taiwan Culture:

1. Independent Taiwanese culture is entirely consistent with the preservation of Taiwanese culture.
2. An independent Taiwanese culture should flourish more and more as the democracy/freedom elements of Taiwanese society mature.

### Arguments in favor of Chinese Culture (Control by China)

1. There is significant overlap of culture between China and Taiwan, in terms of language, literature, arts etc.,

### Counter argument:

1. Chinese cultures lack the democratic/relative freedom element of Taiwanese culture.

## Comparative Evaluation based on Soundness:

In terms of preserving Taiwan's identity/existence, the FDPA committee determines that independent Taiwan culture is the ideal of preserving Taiwan culture, and that Chinese culture due to the lack of democratic/relative freedom element would threaten Taiwanese culture and its development.

Independent Taiwan Culture: 10/10

Reason: Independent Taiwan culture is 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.)

### Main Factual information:

The US says that Taiwan is provoking China. How is Taiwan provoking by seeking self-determination? When it is not a military threat to China?

Again the issue resolves around self-determination versus control by China.

Chinese likely do not fear the result of the referendum as much as the precedence of it---whereby the Taiwanese have unilateral say to their existence. "Taiwan can't decide its future for itself."

"But we and the PRC are not military allies but antagonists and as Taiwan invests more and trades more with China, the PRC oppresses our international relations more and adds more missiles aimed at us," the Taiwan Thinktank chairman stated.

US, Britain, Russia, EU, China criticize Taiwan's referendum on UN membership.

Arguments in favor of Taiwan apply for UN membership under the name "Taiwan":

1. Important symbol, say by the Taiwanese over the destiny of their existence.
2. Formal popular support for Taiwan independence will pressure the world to accept it.

3. Establish precedence via the referendum for Taiwan self-determination.

Counter arguments:

1. Even if the referendum is successful, it will ultimately fail because China has a veto in the UN Security Council.
2. Referendum could cause a military conflict with China, and thereby possibly Taiwan's annihilation. (China has stated publicly that it considers the referendum within the parameters of its Anti-Secession Law.)
3. The referendum once applied, will set precedence for more, and thereby add to the tension between China and Taiwan.

Arguments in favor of Taiwan does not apply for UN membership under the name of "Taiwan":

1. Less antagonistic with China, and thereby less possibility for military conflict with China.
2. Through less tension, increase trade could result between China and Taiwan.

Counter arguments:

1. Send a message to China and world that Taiwan is not serious about independence, which in turn cause of downward spiral of Taiwan into Chinese control.
2. Sensing lack of will of Taiwanese for independence, China may increase its pressure on Taiwan to join Mainland China. This pressure could result in a military conflict or Taiwan being absorbed into China.

## Comparative Evaluation based on Soundness:

In terms of preserving Taiwan's identity/existence, the FDPA committee determines that a successful referendum is more in Taiwan's interest than an unsuccessful referendum, because it will do more to safeguard Taiwan's identity/existence.

### 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).