

The Experience of Two Germanies and Its Implications for the Future of Cross-Strait Relations

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After Germany was divided in 1945, the two German governments passed through successive periods of confrontation, coexistence, and commonality which culminated in reunification at the end of 1990. Insofar as Germany is at present the only postwar divided nation to achieve unification through a process of patience, pragmatism, equality, mutual trust, and respect for public opinion, its experience is a worthy topic of research for both scholars and administrators. It may also offer useful lessons to currently divided countries, as long as none of the parties concerned intends to carry out unification by non-peaceful means.

Assuming the reader's familiarity with the course of German history from division to reunification, I shall concentrate in the first part of this paper on aspects of the German experience that are worthy of general attention and further consideration. Then, after examining current government policies on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, I shall conclude by offering my predictions concerning the future development of cross-Strait relations.

The Experience of East and West Germany

At the end of World War II, Germany was occupied by the four allied powers: Great Britain, the United States, France, and the Soviet Union. With the beginning of the Cold War, the zones occupied by the three Western powers were united to form the Federal Republic of Germany, or West Germany, while the Soviet zone became the German Democratic Republic (GDR). In its Basic Law of 1949, the Federal Republic declared the reunification of Germany to be its fundamental objective. But in the twenty years following 1949, Bonn, though it would have liked to improve its relations with the GDR, had no choice but to take into account the unrelenting confrontation between East and West which dominated the world scene. In addition, the Bonn government's Hallstein Doctrine, which stated

that there could be only one Germany, was rejected completely by the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. Though the two sides did engage in certain limited functional exchanges during this period, it was not until the Social Democratic Party (SPD) under Willy Brandt came to power in 1969 that Bonn adopted a more pragmatic policy toward the GDR, abandoned the Hallstein Doctrine, and recognized that Germany was divided. In doing this, Brandt hoped to lay the foundations for mutual trust and mutual security, develop governmental and person-to-person functional exchanges, and dispel the suspicions of West Germany's communist neighbors and the Soviet Union. In a statement to the Bundestag on October 28, 1969, Brandt indicated that West Germany would recognize East Germany as a second state on German territory and hoped the two sides would develop exchanges on an equal basis (Rovan, 1978: 340-341, 366-367). This action won the confidence of the Soviet Union, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, and all three countries subsequently signed treaties with Bonn.¹ Bonn then signed a basic treaty with the GDR. From that time on, though the possibility that Germany could someday be reunited by peaceful means and the will of its people was not excluded, the two German states coexisted in the international community, holding separate memberships in international organizations and regulating their exchanges through a series of functional treaties and agreements. Though the East German government proposed a theory of "two nations, two states" in 1972 which opposed Bonn's "one nation, two states," it was not taken seriously by Bonn and the rest of the international community, which continued to conduct relations with the GDR according to the basic treaty and other agreements. By acknowledging that Germany was divided, Bonn demonstrated that it would not seek to reunify Germany by force, thus facilitating the growth of inter-German functional exchanges. Finally, after Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew Soviet support for the East German government, Germany was reunified according to the will of its people.

Close examination of the German experience reveals aspects that can be applied to the interaction between Taiwan and mainland China.

Reunification as a Long-term Goal

Germans on both sides believed that division was the result of foreign occupation, and from the very beginning the two governments saw reunification as their long-term goal. Reunification according to the will of the people was written into the West German constitution as the Basic Law, and prior to 1974, the East German constitution listed reunification as one of the goals of the state. The revised East German constitution of 1974 made no mention of reunification, though Erich Honecker stated that the question would be reconsidered if West Germany should become a socialist country (Rovan, 1983: 194). So despite its advocacy of "two nations, two states," the East

German government by no means excluded the possibility of reunification. Reunification was for both sides a long-term goal, one that could not be achieved until conditions were ripe.

International factors aside, the wide gap between their socioeconomic systems was the most important reason why both East and West Germany saw reunification as a long-term goal. Until the gap was narrowed, reunification was impossible, despite the fact that both sides were part of a single German nation. By accepting that Germany was, for the time being, divided, West Germany was able to consolidate its socioeconomic system and, through functional exchanges, narrow the gap between the two sides and provide the material foundation for reunification.² The East German leaders, on the other hand, repeatedly stressed that East Germany was a socialist country and that the two sides were “two nations, two states,” one capitalist and one socialist (Rovan, 1983: 192). According to this view, the two sides’ different socioeconomic conditions had produced two different nations with different cultures and ways of life. East Germany’s efforts after 1972 to promote the idea of two nationalities and its desire to achieve equal status with the West was motivated by a need to achieve a sense of security in the face of pressure from West Germany (Rovan, 1983: 193-6). However, East Germany did not entirely reject the possibility of future reunification after the two societies had grown more similar.

For different reasons, therefore, leaders on both sides saw reunification as a long-term goal. Recognizing that the gap between the two sides was large, they took a pragmatic attitude, thereby preparing the ground for realization of the long-term goal.

A Relationship Based on Pragmatism

Despite both Germanies’ recognition of the need for pragmatic relations, at least for the short term, during the Cold War the ferocity of East-West confrontations made any improvement impossible. Leonid Brezhnev had demanded that the West German government relinquish its claim to represent the entire German people and acknowledge the status quo in Europe and the existence of two German states as early as March 10, 1967 (Rovan, 1978: 327). But with no positive response forthcoming from Berlin, West German Chancellor Kiesinger occasionally adopted a hard-line tone similar to that used during the Konrad Adenauer era in the 1950s. In these circumstances, it was impossible for the two Germanies to improve their relations.

Adenauer was aware that reunification would be impossible without the agreement of the Western powers, and for that reason he sought to identify his policies with the West and became an active participant in the postwar reconstruction of Western Europe. West Germany became a member of NATO and along with France formed the nucleus of the

European Community. It was during this period that West Germany, fearing that the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bonn and Moscow in 1955 would lead to indirect recognition of East Germany as an entity in international law, formulated the Hallstein Doctrine, announced by Foreign Minister Walter Hallstein on December 8 that year (Rovan, 1983: 10). The doctrine stated that the West German government was the only legitimate representative of the whole of Germany, and that West Germany would break off ties with any country, except the Soviet Union, that accorded diplomatic recognition to the GDR. In other words, Bonn adopted a "one Germany" doctrine. This policy, which held sway until 1969, did nothing to improve Bonn's relations with the GDR or any other East European countries, and the Eastern bloc, together with the Soviet Union, accused Bonn of adopting a "revanchist policy." Bonn gradually operated a more open approach and acceded to some East German demands in the period December 1966-September 1969, as leaders of the "grand coalition" government of the Christian Democrats (CDU) and the SPD realized that East Germany would never agree to family visits and functional exchanges unless Bonn accepted the status quo in Eastern Europe and admitted that Germany was divided (Rovan, 1978: 324-328). Thus in the spring of 1968, Chancellor Kiesinger expressed willingness to sign a treaty on the renunciation of force with East Germany (Rovan, 1978: 328). This more temperate policy was stalled due to dissension within the ranks of the CDU; but rigid principles were being undermined, and with the development of East-West détente, Bonn was preparing to shift to a more pragmatic position even before Willy Brandt came to power. When Brandt did form a government in September 1969, he launched his new *Ostpolitik*, building a foundation of mutual trust and security for short- and medium-term relations between the two Germanies.

The Brandt government realized that the only way to change relations between the two Germanies was by a process of rapprochement. It was necessary first of all to acknowledge that Germany was a divided nation. To attempt to obscure reality by clinging to the "one Germany" principle would only serve to heighten tension between the two sides, as there was no way that Bonn could really isolate the GDR. Bonn's change of attitude was partly attributable to the gradual easing of tensions in the international arena, but the most important motive was a genuine feeling for compatriots in East Germany and desire for eventual unification. Thus Bonn acknowledged that East Germany was a second state on German territory, and though their relations could not be governed by international law, they could be based on the concept of "one nation, two states" or "one country, two governments."

Bonn's subsequent attitude towards the GDR's adoption of the "two nations, two states" formula in 1972 was quite restrained. West Germans realized that the GDR's motives for separating itself entirely from the rest

of Germany stemmed from insecurity and the need to attain equal status. While continuing to hold that Germany was divided, Bonn never adopted any confrontational measures but continued to handle inter-German relations in a pragmatic way (Rovan, 1983: 192-200). For this reason, the two Germanies were able to sign treaties and other agreements governing bilateral exchanges in the years before reunification.

Building Mutual Trust and Security

Bonn believed that having acknowledged that Germany was divided, it should satisfy East Germany's demands, particularly by adopting measures to establish mutual trust and security. As early as 1968, Kiesinger had conveyed his willingness to conduct negotiations with the East German government and sign a treaty renouncing the use of force, though his rather reserved tone persuaded the East Germans and their East European allies that he was insufficiently sincere (Rovan, 1983: 328).

With the development of détente in the 1970s, West Germany signed a treaty on the renunciation of force with the Soviet Union and a treaty normalizing its relations with Poland. The four occupying powers—the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union—subsequently signed a quadripartite agreement on the status of Berlin. Finally, Bonn signed the Basic Treaty with the GDR. In the preamble to the Basic Treaty, the signatories agreed, in line with demands from the Soviet Union and the other East European countries, to respect existing national borders in Europe and the sovereign integrity of all European nations. In Article 3 of the treaty, the two sides agreed to relinquish the threat or use of force against each other and conduct bilateral relations by peaceful means alone, thus ending more than two decades of hostility. In Article 4, both East and West Germany agreed to give up any claim to speak or act on behalf of the other in the international community, while Article 6 stipulated that the two Germanies should respect each other's autonomy in domestic politics and foreign relations. In these two articles, the Federal Republic relinquished the Hallstein Doctrine and acknowledged the existence of two states on German territory. However, relations between the two Germanies were not entirely governed by international law. For example, Article 8 stipulated the stationing of "permanent representatives," rather than ambassadors, in each other's seats of government. Also, the declaration in Article 2 that the two sides would abide by UN Charter stipulations regarding equal sovereignty, respect for independence, territorial integrity, and right to self-determination, was chiefly designed to leave room for reunification in the future.

The Basic Treaty established a framework for mutual trust and security between the two Germanies, firstly by ensuring that West Germany, the stronger of the two sides, would not attempt unification by force, and secondly by allowing the two sides to coexist on equal terms in the interna-

tional community as "one nation, two states" or "one state, two governments." By thus allaying suspicions between them, the Basic Treaty allowed the two Germanies to further develop functional exchanges.

Establishing Norms for Functional Exchanges

Although functional exchanges and family visits were permitted before the signing of the Basic Treaty, they were extremely limited in scope on account of the GDR's distrust and insecurity. Once the treaty was signed, the two sides began to develop cooperation in the fields of economy, science and technology, culture, health, postal communications, environmental protection, and transportation. In all these fields, treaties and agreements were negotiated between the two governments. For example, detailed regulations for setting up their respective representative offices were hammered out by representatives appointed by Bonn and East Berlin (Kuo, 1991: 16-17).

The two sides also expressed a willingness in an additional protocol attached to the Basic Treaty to reach an agreement at the government level on the development of cultural cooperation (Kuo, 1991: 31-34). Negotiations to this end commenced on September 27, 1973 but were called off owing to irreconcilable differences between the two sides. They were only resumed after East German leader Erich Honecker agreed in 1982 to include West Berlin in the agreement. The agreement was finally signed in 1986.

Progress with economic exchanges followed a similar course. After the signing of the Basic Treaty, exchanges were further developed within the existing framework for inter-German economic and trade relations and new measures were introduced (Kuo, 1991: 61-62). On September 19, 1973, the Industry and Trade Trust Office held negotiations with the East German Ministry of Foreign Trade on non-ferrous metals, iron and steel, and machinery manufacturing. On September 5, 1979, the two sides reached a long-term agreement on coal and petroleum exports to East Germany and exports of petroleum products from the GDR to the Federal Republic. On September 7, 1978, the two sides reached a long-term agreement on exporting production materials within the framework of the Berlin agreement and clearance was given for credits to facilitate cooperation between East and West German firms. On May 19, 1976, the two Germanies agreed to exploit lignite deposits in their border region at Helmstedt/Harbke. There were other similar agreements, and West Germany even undertook revision of its domestic law in an effort to strengthen economic and trade relations with the GDR. In 1972, bilateral trade totalled 5.35 billion accounting units (adopted to avoid giving the East and West German marks equal value for other purposes), with West German exports to East Germany accounting for 2.39 billion and East

German exports accounting for 2.96 billion. By 1986, total bilateral trade had risen to 15.18 billion accounting units, with West German exports standing at 7.84 billion and East German exports worth 7.34 billion (Kuo, 1991: 68).

The two sides began discussing a traffic agreement as early as November 1970, just after Willy Brandt announced his pragmatic *Ostpolitik*. In September 1971, these talks were raised to official levels and on May 26, 1972, the Traffic Treaty was signed, with an additional protocol note on air traffic. It would have been impossible to conduct the kind of government-level talks that led to the Traffic Treaty had the West German government not been willing to recognize that Germany was a divided nation. Once the Traffic Treaty had been signed and the Basic Treaty had come into force, the two Germanies continued to improve measures to facilitate travel between the two sides. This brought about a rapid increase in the number of family visits (Kuo, 1991: 87; McCauley, 1983: 190).

In brief, once West Germany had adopted a pragmatic policy and acknowledged that Germany was divided, and once the Basic Treaty had established a framework of mutual trust and security, relations between the two Germanies developed enormously. This occurred despite the fact that the GDR, in pursuing its own interests, occasionally tried to make things difficult for the Federal Republic; for example, Berlin raised the minimum amount each West German visitor was required to exchange into East German currency to 25 West German marks, thus causing a 33% drop in the number of West German visitors. Despite such instances, bilateral exchanges were for the most part regulated through increasing government-to-government negotiations and the signing of agreements.

Respect for the Will of the People

In West Germany's view, reunification had to be decided by a process of self-determination. The GDR's 1974 constitution also stipulated that any fundamental change in the country would have to be decided by the people themselves (McCauley, 1983). Although the constitution made no mention of reunification and East Germany was shifting towards a "two nations, two states" stance, Honecker announced that his government would reconsider unification if West Germany became socialist. In other words, if the people wanted reunification, it could take place. It is therefore obvious that both German states respected the will of their people with regard to reunification.

The Federal Republic's Basic Law also contained a clause stipulating that reunification should be decided by the free will of the German people. When West Germans were asked in an April 1973 opinion poll whether this clause should be retained or deleted, 73% of respondents wanted it retained, 11% wanted it deleted, and 16% expressed no opinion (Rovan, 1983: 189).

When this question was posed again in February 1982, a few weeks before Chancellor Helmut Schmidt left office, 77% wanted the clause retained, 9% wanted it cut, and 14% expressed no opinion. It is clear from these results that the great majority of respondents believed that reunification based on the free self-determination of the people should be one of the goals of the West German state.

Although the GDR government promoted the idea of “two nations, two states” in an effort to uphold its power and equal status, most West German visitors to East Germany reported that ordinary East Germans were even more strongly in favor of reunification than their West German counterparts (Rovan, 1983: 190). Of course, this might have been simply because West Germans enjoyed more freedom and a higher standard of living than citizens of the GDR. However, East Germany, like the Federal Republic, considered that any fundamental change would have to be decided by the people and could only take place after the gap between the two societies had been narrowed. From this it is clear that the GDR government respected the right of its people to decide the issue of reunification.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the communist regime in 1989, East Germany established a free and democratic political system. At the end of 1990, the East German people voted in favor of reunification with West Germany. Bonn respected the decision of the East German people and finally achieved reunification.

From the above account we can understand how much the German experience has to offer other divided countries in the handling of their bilateral relations. Taiwan and mainland China could certainly learn a few lessons which would help them improve relations across the Taiwan Strait.

Future Prospects for the Two Sides of the Taiwan Strait

Since the ROC government lifted the ban on Taiwanese travelling to mainland China in 1987, relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have progressed rapidly. Economic ties, family visits, and tourism have all increased substantially, and commercial, transportation, and postal links have all been established. However, there has been no sign of improvement in political relations between the two sides. Neither side has achieved a policy breakthrough despite the climate of international détente, and the PRC in particular shows no inclination toward pragmatism in dealing with cross-Strait relations. Instead, Beijing insists that Taiwan, as the smaller of the two entities, should submit to Beijing's arrangements for the future of China and refuses to accept any different suggestions from Taipei. If there is to be any breakthrough in relations between the two sides, the PRC, the larger of the two sides, will have to be more pragmatic and accept the fact that China is a divided country. Below, after offering an evaluation of ROC and PRC policies on the cross-Strait issue, the author will try to predict the

future of cross-Strait relations.

PRC and ROC Policies on Cross-Strait Relations

The PRC and the ROC differ considerably in their policies toward each other. The main reasons for these differences are that mainland China is very much bigger than Taiwan and the two sides have different social systems and ways of life. The PRC has a hegemonistic attitude and is attempting to force Taiwan to accept its formula for China's future. On the other hand, Taipei hopes that by adopting a pragmatic outlook and working to narrow the gap between the two sides' social systems, it can negotiate the reunification of China. Taipei holds that once relations between the two sides are normalized on the basis of equal coexistence in the international community, the two governments can further promote functional exchanges. These policy differences account for the fact that although both sides want a reduction of tension, they have found it impossible to improve their relationship.

*The PRC's Taiwan Policy.*³ The substance of Beijing's Taiwan policy is that prior to full unification under a socialist system, the two sides should adopt the formula "one country, two systems," under which Taiwan would become a special administrative region (SAR) of the PRC and the Taipei government a local government. Overall authority would reside with the communist regime in Beijing. In the meantime, Beijing holds that there is only one China over which it has sovereignty; dual recognition is out of the question. If Taipei wishes to join any international economic organizations, it may do so only under the title "Chinese Taipei" or "China Taiwan," and not the "Republic of China." Taipei's foreign minister is not permitted to attend any meetings of these organizations, because since there is only "one China," there can only be one Chinese foreign ministry — the one in Beijing. The "one country, two systems" formula would, of course, allow Taipei to maintain its own armed forces and its existing capitalist economic structure and political system, but all the SAR's laws would have to be approved by the National People's Congress in Beijing.

In an effort to coerce Taipei into accepting its "one country, two systems" formula, Beijing has threatened the use of force and attempted to isolate it from the rest of the international community. If Taipei refuses to come to the negotiating table, Beijing has said, it will not hesitate to annex the island by force. In addition, Beijing has said that a declaration of independence, foreign intervention in the island's affairs, and Taiwan's development of nuclear weapons will all constitute reasons for armed attack. Beijing's efforts to isolate Taiwan are also chiefly aimed at forcing Taipei to accept "one country, two systems." Lacking any status in international law and having few diplomatic partners, Taiwan would have no international support should Beijing use force against it.

In addition to the threat of force and international isolation, Beijing has also offered incentives to attract Taiwan investors to the mainland and intensify trade relations between the two sides. The purpose of this is to pressure Taipei to establish direct trade and transportation links. Beijing has tried to exert similar pressure on cultural and academic exchanges. Because Taiwan's businessmen ignore their country's overall interests and rush to profit from trade and investment with the mainland, Beijing does not need to make any political concessions to Taiwan; in the PRC's view, all that is necessary to attract investment and weaken the Taipei government's ability to resist Beijing is for the latter to satisfy the private interests of Taiwan's business community. Why, in these circumstances, should Beijing bother to revise its Taiwan policy? Thus there has been no change in the PRC's policy toward Taiwan since 1979.

*Taipei's Mainland Policy.*⁴ In the period immediately after Taipei lifted the ban on family visits to mainland China in November 1987, the main principle governing relations with the mainland was the "three nos": "no contact, no negotiation, no compromise." However, as functional exchanges between the two sides have developed, Taipei has gradually formulated a systematic policy toward mainland China which is summarized in the *Guidelines for National Unification*.

The guidelines adopt a pragmatic attitude toward reunification and acknowledge that China is a divided country. From this starting point, they hold that unification is a long-term goal which can only be achieved once the social systems on the two sides of the Strait have converged. Prior to unification, the two sides should recognize each other as equal political entities and coexist side by side in the international community. The *Guidelines* also advocate that the two sides give up the option of settling their dispute by military means. During what the *Guidelines* define as the "short-term phase"—the period in which Beijing refuses to recognize Taiwan as an equal political entity—exchanges will chiefly take place on a person-to-person basis and the Taipei government will refuse to negotiate or compromise with Beijing. Government-to-government negotiations can only take place after the two sides have recognized each other's equal status, and this will mark the beginning of the "medium-term phase" of relations, the phase of mutual cooperation. During this time, the two governments will negotiate agreements of various kinds that will vastly promote functional exchanges and help narrow the gap between the two societies.

The *Guidelines* acknowledge that China is a divided country and take that as the starting point for establishing a framework of mutual trust and security between the two sides of the Strait. Beijing, on the other hand, wants to skip the establishment of mutual trust and security and directly enter the medium-term phase of relations, though it wants to engage in "party-to-party" rather than "government-to-government" negotiations. In a one-party dictatorship like the PRC, the party represents the state. In

Taiwan, however, the ruling Kuomintang cannot represent the government, for in a democracy, government policymaking must take place under the supervision of the opposition. This is particularly true of Taipei's mainland policy and foreign policy, as the government is doing its best to allow opposition participation in these aspects of policymaking. As in the United Kingdom and the United States, these policies should transcend party politics so as to ensure that both majority government and opposition will abide by them.

Taipei is also conducting a policy of "pragmatic diplomacy" in an effort to break out of the diplomatic isolation imposed by Beijing, and the government is doing all it can to fulfill international responsibilities and gain membership in international organizations. To combat Beijing's threat to use force against the island, Taipei has strengthened its military preparedness and consolidated its defense in order to ward off attack, while at the same time seeking détente with Beijing.

Evaluation. On the surface, Beijing's Taiwan policy is a formula for the peaceful reunification of China. But in actual fact, Beijing has never wavered from its hegemonistic stance of forcing Taiwan into submission; its fundamental strategy is to achieve reunification by force.

The "one country, two systems" formula is quite unrealistic because the people of Taiwan will never accept their government's subordination to a communist central government in Beijing. In an effort to persuade the Taiwan people to accept "one country, two systems," Beijing has tried to isolate Taiwan and lower its international status. This has bred insecurity among some sections of the Taiwan population who have sought to achieve an international identity through independence. But Beijing threatens that if Taiwan declares itself independent, it will launch a military attack. From this it is clear that Beijing's Taiwan policy is by no means one of peaceful reunification; it envisages a military solution to the dispute between the two sides (see figure 1).

Of course, there are many other reasons why some Taiwan people support the independence movement, but Beijing's policy toward Taiwan is

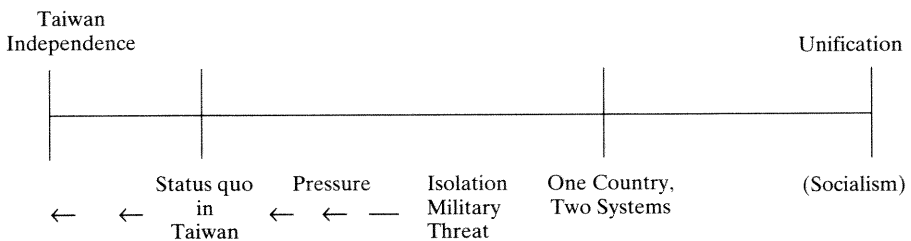


Fig. 1. The PRC's Formula for the Peaceful Reunification of China

one external contributing factor, and this should give the PRC pause for thought.

Beijing has suggested a number of grounds for launching a military attack against Taiwan. For example, in the past it said it would attack if Taipei established any contacts with the Soviet Union, if unrest broke out on the island, if there was foreign (i.e., American or Japanese) interference in Taiwan's affairs, if Taiwan developed nuclear weapons, or if Taipei refused to negotiate. Now that the Soviet Union has disintegrated into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Taiwan has established contacts with Russia, Ukraine, and the three Baltic states, having already signed agreements and established representative offices with some of them. However, Beijing has not used this as an excuse to attack Taiwan, chiefly because the PRC's relations with Russia and the other CIS states have eased on account of changes in the international situation. For this reason, we may say that contacts with Moscow have been struck off Beijing's list of excuses for launching an armed attack on Taiwan.

Of the other excuses, internal unrest and foreign interference are most puzzling. The Taipei government is quite capable of dealing with any unrest without any assistance from the PLA, and if there was any foreign interference in Taiwan's affairs it would surely make more sense to launch an attack on the foreign country concerned rather than on Taiwan. In reality, if one country wishes to attack another, it can always find an excuse to do so, regardless of whether the two countries have signed a mutual non-aggression treaty. Though Beijing claims that its desire for rapid reunification is based on nationalistic feeling, this is hardly likely to evoke a response from the people of Taiwan. It is well known that Beijing conducts its relations with foreign countries according to the "five principles of peaceful coexistence," yet its own compatriots are excluded from these five principles and even threatened with military attack. No wonder the Taiwan public doubts the sincerity of Beijing's expressions of affection. This is particularly apparent when we compare Beijing's behavior to that of West Germany. West Germany's territory and population were nearly four times bigger than that of East Germany, and its economic strength was slightly more than ten times as great, yet it was prepared to act pragmatically in order to help the East German people raise their living standards and promote exchanges between the two sides. This seems like a genuine expression of affection for one's compatriots. Beijing, in contrast, seems to be "lenient toward foreigners and hard on its own countrymen": if foreigners try to interfere in Taiwan's affairs, Beijing will not dare attack them; instead it will turn around and attack Taiwan.

Beijing's hegemonistic attitude is one of the reasons for its refusal to treat Taipei as an equal political entity; another is that it believes that if it loosens its grip on Taiwan, unification will be impossible. Thus Beijing clings to the same policy, desperately trying to restrict Taiwan's freedom of

action and refusing to recognize that China is divided. In addition, Beijing rejects the *Guidelines for National Unification* because it believes they are designed to undermine the socialist system (i.e., achieve “peaceful evolution”). Instead, the PRC leaders want to jump straight into the medium- and long-term phases of relations without bothering to establish a framework of mutual trust and security as required in the *Guidelines*. Beijing should, however, face up to the fact that the social systems and even the behavior and thought patterns on the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are so different from each other that immediate unification would be impossible. What is more, the people of Taiwan would never willingly surrender their fate to a communist dictatorship. In these circumstances, Taiwan has had no choice but to adopt certain measures to guarantee its own security.

Beijing has interpreted cross-Strait relations from a legalistic and ideological point of view. The PRC’s attitude is that since both sides of the Taiwan Strait admit that there is only one China and most countries recognize the PRC, the PRC is China and the ROC on Taiwan is not. Therefore Beijing has always demanded that the ROC change its title so that it can become a province of the PRC. This interpretation takes no account whatsoever of the concept of effective administration. In actuality, the PRC has never ruled Taiwan, and since 1949 the Taipei government has not ruled the mainland. For historical reasons, both sides have claimed to represent the whole of China. But now, with the global trend toward détente and the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, most countries are adopting conciliatory foreign policies and substituting cooperation for confrontation in order to seek solutions to their economic problems. Although Beijing has been fairly open and pragmatic in its economic policies, its attitude towards cross-Strait relations has not changed for more than four decades. Taipei, on the other hand, has responded to the new global trend and sought to ease tension with Beijing by permitting family visits to mainland China. It has accepted that China is a divided nation, undertaken a reassessment of its domestic situation and foreign relations, and adopted a series of measures beneficial to both sides of the Strait.

The *Guidelines for National Unification* are obviously influenced by recent pragmatic politics on the world scene. Based on convergence theory, they call for the two sides of the Taiwan Strait to acknowledge that China is a divided country and, with the proviso that there is only one China, to recognize the existence within its borders of two equal political entities. When that has been done, the two governments will negotiate and sign an agreement governing their relations similar to the Basic Treaty between East and West Germany. This agreement should include renunciation of the use of force and a willingness to coexist on an equal basis in the international community. When this agreement is reached, the two governments will promote expanded functional exchanges in order to narrow the gap between the two societies. Once the social systems on the two sides

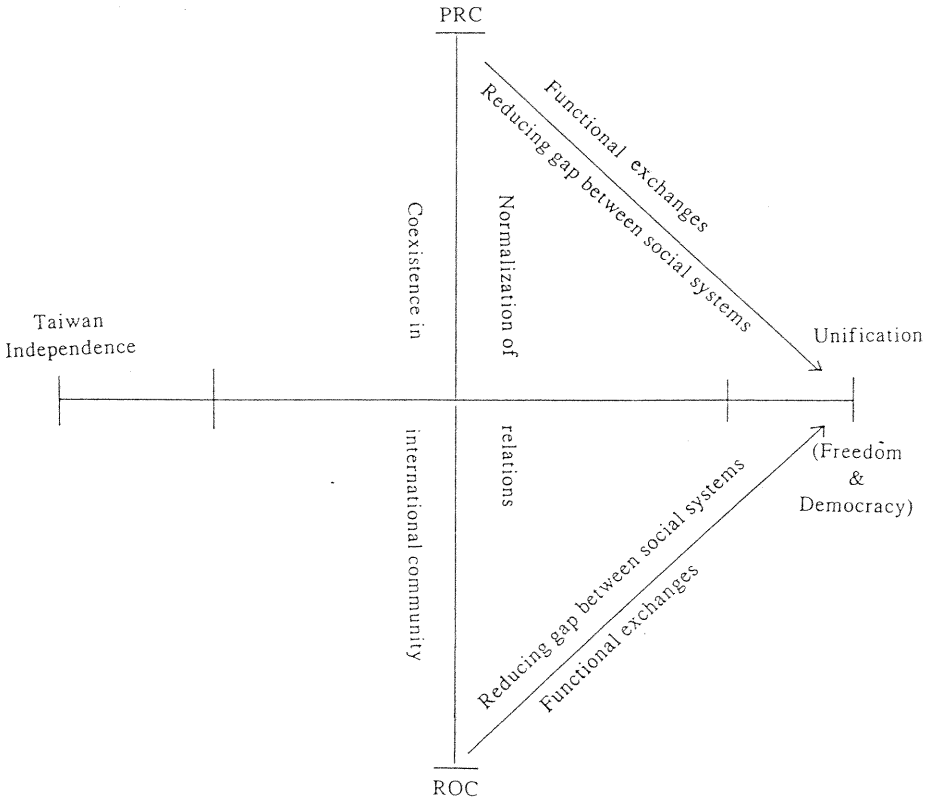


Fig. 2. The Guidelines for National Unification

converge, it will be possible to let the people on both sides decide whether they wish to be united. We can have a clearer idea of the content of the *Guidelines* for National Unification from figure 2.

As for the question whether the *Guidelines* are designed to undermine socialism, this has nothing to do with any schemes thought up by Taiwan. The concept of peaceful evolution is recognized by both Western theories of political development and Marxism. Scientific and technological innovations promote industrialization, which in turn affects the socioeconomic structure or "infrastructure." A growing middle class will then put forward demands for freedom and democracy which will bring about the liberalization of the political structure, or in Marxist terminology, the "superstructure." If this liberalization and democratization fails to take place (that is, if the superstructure is not transformed), revolution will break out. It is clear from this analysis that the impetus for change comes from

scientific developments and innovations in production technology within the country. This change cannot be resisted, and although the political system can be protected from the influence of changes in the socioeconomic system for a certain period of time, this is only possible if the authorities are prepared to resort to repression. Change must come in the end, as we can see from the postwar history of Eastern Europe. The changes wrought by a decade of economic reform in China's eastern coastal provinces, combined with the example set by other socialist countries, were responsible for the outbreak of the 1989 democracy movement in the PRC. Though the movement was suppressed by the military, these material forces have already brought about a change in the environment which in turn will affect the political structure. This is the price that an authoritarian regime must pay when it promotes modernization. It may be possible to slow the rate of change, but it is impossible to stop it altogether. Beijing has no reason to be suspicious of the *Guidelines for National Unification*; indeed, it should recognize that peaceful evolution will help reduce the differences between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

For Taiwan, recognition that China is a divided country automatically implies that the two sides should coexist on equal terms in the international community. "One China, one Taiwan" and "two Chinas" simply reflect the fact that the country is divided and there should be no reason for criticism. These terms are no different from those used by West Germany after it recognized that Germany was divided into "one nation, two states" or "one state, two governments." When the East German government started using such terms as "two nations, two states" and "two states, two nationalities," its motive was the same: a wish to be given equal status. Neither Bonn nor the rest of the international community attached any great significance to it. Beijing has no reason to criticize Taipei's diplomacy or the idea of two equal political entities contained in the *Guidelines*; the most important thing is to be pragmatic.

Beijing has persistently demanded that Taipei permit direct trade and communications between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait, and that exchanges be conducted at an official level. However, the Taipei government has quite naturally refused to comply. Without a framework of mutual trust and security, it is impossible for the Taipei government to promote large-scale exchanges. We can see from the German experience why it is necessary for the two sides to renounce the use of force and agree to coexist on an equal basis in the international community before bilateral functional exchanges can be expanded.

Prospects for Cross-Strait Relations

A comparison between the German experience and the unification policies of Beijing and Taipei reveals one very important fact: Beijing's

policy toward Taiwan is similar to that of West Germany toward East Germany during the Adenauer-Erhard era; it has not yet progressed as far as the era of the Kiesinger-Brandt Grand Coalition. Taipei's mainland policy and the *Guidelines for Unification*, on the other hand, resemble Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*.

It is clear from this comparison that there is still no prospect of a breakthrough in relations between Taiwan and mainland China. Beijing still claims to represent the whole of China (as West Germany did under the Hallstein doctrine) and refuses to renounce the use of force or its "four cardinal principles." The "one country, two systems" formula and the attempt to impose diplomatic isolation on Taiwan are logical outcomes of this. The international situation has eased since the 1970s and most countries are more willing to strengthen their economic cooperation and trade ties. What is more, international relations are not so limited by ideology, political alliances, and historical enmity. However, Beijing, unlike West Germany in the 1970s, has not kept up with the times; its Taiwan policy is still stuck in the Cold War era. Taipei, in contrast, has understood the tenor of the times. Responding to the changes in Eastern Europe, the Taipei government has proposed a pragmatic policy which, like that of the Brandt government in the 1970s, turns its back on the dogmatism of the past. However, the two sides' failure to establish a framework of mutual trust and security makes it very difficult to end their confrontation.

The competition between Beijing and Taipei in the international arena is similar to that pursued by the U.S. and Soviet blocs during the Cold War, when the two sides both tried to win friends in the Third World. Though a new world order is in the making in the 1990s, détente seems to have had no effect on Beijing. In fact, Chinese on both sides of the Strait seem to be embroiled in a fierce diplomatic confrontation similar to that of the 1950s. One side is trying to undermine the other's diplomatic support, while the other is trying to win new diplomatic partners, and both are employing "dollar diplomacy." In Korea, another divided country, both Seoul and Pyongyang have kept up with the global political trend and, recognizing that Korea is a divided country, coexist on an equal basis in the international community. Although functional exchanges between North and South Korea cannot presently be developed because of various political conflicts, the two sides, having agreed to coexist, are sure to make further progress in their relations in the future. As for Taiwan and the mainland, their diplomatic rivalry will continue unless (1) Beijing changes its Taiwan policy, recognizes that China is divided, and acknowledges that the PRC and the ROC are equal political entities that can coexist on an equal basis in the international community; or (2) Taipei strengthens its international position and wins the support of some fairly powerful countries, thus forcing Beijing to be more pragmatic. However, there is no sign that either of these will happen in the near future. The two sides of the Strait will continue to

play their diplomatic game, and both will have to continue paying considerable aid to Third World countries in return for their friendship. But this form of rivalry will at least prevent a more direct confrontation.

Détente is a growing trend in the international community, and cooperation is replacing strategic confrontation and ideological conflict. Washington is scaling down its international role and Moscow, preoccupied with domestic economic problems, no longer has the resources to intervene in international affairs. In the Asia-Pacific region, however, Japan is building up its military in order to take part in international peacekeeping operations, and the PRC is also increasing its military capability, particularly that of its navy and air force through the purchase of an aircraft carrier and modern fighter planes. These developments are likely to upset the regional strategic balance and increase anxieties among other Asia-Pacific countries. It is inevitable that Taipei will respond to Beijing's military buildup by strengthening its own military preparedness to cope with a possible attack from the PRC. Thus we appear to have returned to the East-West arms race of the 1950s. The two sides will continue this race in an effort to maintain the military balance between them. Although Beijing is attempting to stop the West from selling arms to Taiwan, some countries are still willing to do so in order to relieve their own economic difficulties. If a balance cannot be preserved, or if Taiwan's military capability is insufficiently intimidating, Beijing will be even less likely to change its stance. From the Cold War confrontation between East and West and from the German experience, we can see that détente must be conducted from a position of strength, otherwise it will be difficult to obtain a reciprocal response from the other side. If such a response is to be obtained, détente must be backed up by determination.

Although there are similarities between Beijing's and Taipei's cross-Strait relations and the German experience, Beijing and Taipei seem to be on different tracks and their policies do not converge at any point. They have yet to reach a consensus on their political relations or even to agree to renounce the use of force, and for this reason, Taipei refuses to progress beyond the short-term phase of relations as specified in the *Guidelines for National Unification*. The only point of consensus is that exchanges should be reinforced, but due to Beijing's refusal to change its Taiwan policy, the two sides differ as to their manner and extent. Instead of making any political concessions, Beijing has tried, in the course of cultural, academic, and economic exchanges, to influence the Taipei government to change its policy. Despite these efforts, Taipei's mainland policy is unlikely to change dramatically, though functional exchanges will continue to be expanded within certain limits.

In brief, Beijing and Taipei are unlikely to achieve any breakthrough in their relations as long as there is such a wide gap between their respective cross-Strait policies. Diplomatic rivalry will remain an important part of the

game, and Beijing's use of "united front" tactics to undermine the Taiwan people's consensus on mainland policy will become an important topic of debate in the political arena and the media. As for the PRC, modernization facilitated by investment from abroad and from Taiwan will inevitably result in "peaceful evolution." Although both sides have adopted a less hostile tone of voice, there has been no fundamental change in their relationship; the only improvement is that person-to-person contacts are now permitted.

The Chinese are generally acknowledged to be a wise people, yet their rulers have rarely taken any notice of the people's wishes in their handling of domestic affairs. Political leaders in Taiwan have long since recognized this shortcoming and undertaken democratic reforms to ensure that the political elite take account of the people's preferences in the formulation of government policy. The PRC, however, is still an authoritarian country, and although its leaders take a patriarchal interest in the people's welfare, they ignore any demands the people might have apart from a higher standard of living. They simply arrange things according to their own way of thinking, and if the people do not like these arrangements they are forced to accept them. This way of doing things may pass muster on the mainland (though only for the time being) but it will not work in relations with Taiwan. Though Beijing refuses to learn from the German experience and declares it inapplicable to the Chinese case, it is clear that like Germany, China is a divided country and that, like Germany, neither Beijing nor Taipei can exercise its authority over the other's territory. These are the facts. However, unless Beijing changes its policy toward Taiwan, détente between the two sides will continue to be tinged with tension for some time to come.

Notes

1. West Germany signed a treaty on the renunciation of force with the Soviet Union on August 10, 1970 and a treaty on the normalization of relations with Poland on December 7, 1970. The quadripartite agreement on Berlin was signed on September 3, 1971. The Basic Treaty between East and West Germany was signed on December 21, 1972, and West Germany signed a treaty on the normalization of relations with Czechoslovakia in December 1973.
2. The West German authorities had by 1971 collected a total of 158 works on convergence theory. See Marie Lavigne, "Une symétrie beaucoup plus formelle que réelle," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (August 1975), 11; Rovin, 1978, 375-382.
3. For an evaluation of Beijing's Taiwan policy see Tsai Cheng-Wen and Lin Chia-ch'eng, *Taihai liang'an zhengzhi guanxi* (Political relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait) (Taipei: State Policy Research Materials Center, 1989), first section.
4. *Ibid.*, section two.

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