

## Timeline : Taiwan

### Key Events In Taiwanese History From World War II To Its Recent Admission To The World Trade Organization. By John Gettings



**1945 Sept. 2**

Japan formally surrenders on the deck of the U.S. battleship Missouri, ending World War II. **Japan begins the process of returning to China all the territories it had colonized**, including Taiwan (then called Formosa), which it had acquired in 1895 after the first Sino-Japanese war.

**1947** After the handover, **life for Taiwan's citizens doesn't change much** under the rule of China's Nationalist forces (called the Kuomintang, or KMT). Their hopes that the end of Japan's rule would liberate Taiwan turned to frustration. The KMT and immigrating mainlanders prolong the country's problems. Inflation slows the economy and unemployment rises.

**Feb. 28**

Monopoly bureau officials in Taiwan beat up a woman they suspect of selling cigarettes on the black market and shoot a passerby who tries to intervene. The incident, **which is known as the "2-28 Incident,"** ignites an island-wide revolt and thousands of angry citizens pour out into the streets. The protesters are met by KMT troops on March 8. Upwards of 20,000 people are brutally slaughtered in the confrontation.

**1949 Dec.**

After two decades of fighting a bloody civil war, Chinese Communists, led by People's Republic of China (PRC) founder Mao ZeDong, **capture the final pieces of mainland China, and drive Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist forces onto Taiwan.**

Mao stresses the importance of eventual unification with Taiwan under **a principle of "one China,"** which will be foundation for the Chinese government's policy on Taiwan for the next 50 years.

The United States stops military aid to Taiwan. Both the U.S. and the United Nations **fail to give the PRC diplomatic recognition.**

**1950 June 25**

Korean War begins when Communist forces in North Korea cross into South Korea.

**June 27**

U.S. President Harry Truman agrees to protect Taiwan against a possible attack from mainland China and **sends the Seventh Fleet to patrol the waters between Taiwan and China.**

**1951**

Economic and military aid from the United States resumes with the establishment of the Military Assistance and Advisory Group in Taiwan. From this time until the mid-1960s **the U.S. offers \$1.5 billion in aid** to the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan with the hope of changing the island into an industrialized nation. Taiwan begins a giant land reform project that redistributes the country's farmland and helps turn the economy around.

**1954 Sept. 3**

Mainland China punctuates its promise to "liberate" Taiwan. The first of several attacks are launched on

Quemoy and Matsu, the two largest island groups along the mainland coast held by the ROC.

**Dec. 2**

**Sensing the possibility of a conflict in the waters between China and Taiwan**, U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower signs a Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROC promising protection from the U.S. for Taiwan.

**1960-1968**

Taiwan experiences **steady economic growth**. During the 1960s the economy has an average growth rate of 10%, and dependence on economic and technical aid from the U.S. wanes.

**1971 July**

The U.S. formally announces its "two China" policy, **supporting admission of the People's Republic of China into the U.N.** while preserving Taiwan's membership in the General Assembly. This highlights America's shift towards improved relations with Communist China throughout the 1960's early 1970's.

**Sept. 15** U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger secretly visits China.

**Oct. 25**

**Taiwan is "expelled" from the United Nations.** The seat is given to the People's Republic of China.

**1972 Feb.**

U.S. President Richard Nixon makes a historic visit to China and issues the Shanghai Communique, an official statement **further severing the country's diplomatic ties with the ROC.**

The actions of the U.S. and the U.N. cause a domino effect around the world with several major countries

switching their diplomatic recognition from Taiwan's capital city, Taipei, to Beijing during the 1970s.

**1978 Dec. 15**

The United States announces it will **terminate its diplomatic relations** with Taiwan on Jan. 1, 1979.

**1979 March**

The U.S. outlines its new relationship with Taiwan in the Taiwan Relations Act. **The U.S. hands over the responsibilities of its embassy** in Taipei to a new non-governmental agency called the American Institute in Taiwan and allows the U.S. president and Congress to take appropriate action against aggression towards Taiwan.

**1987 July 15**

The end of martial law is declared in Taiwan.

**1988 Jan. 13**

President Chaing Ching-kuo, the eldest son of Chiang kai-shek and former defense minister and premier, dies and is succeeded by Lee Teng-hui, **the country's first native-born president.**

**1991 Dec.**

The ruling Kouomintang regime wins 71% of the vote in national elections and defeats the Democratic Progressive Party, which advocated Taiwan's independence, in the battle for seats in Taiwan's National Assembly.

**1995 June 7-11**

**Taiwan president Lee Ten-hui visits the United States** as an alumnus of Cornell University.

**1996 March**

China launches what it calls "military exercises" in the ocean near Taiwan on the eve of the country's first free presidential elections. Taiwan and the U.S. consider the exercises an act of intimidation by China and the U.S. responds by sending a fleet of naval reinforcements to the area in what would be **the biggest U.S. envoy in Asia since the Vietnam War**. Incumbent President Lee wins the election, garnering 54% of the vote.

**1997 July 1**

Hong Kong, a former British colony, is reverted to Chinese rule.

**1998 June–July**

U.S. President Bill Clinton visits mainland China. At a seminar to discuss China's future **Clinton embraces the "three no's" policy**: no "two Chinas", no independence for Taiwan, and no membership for Taiwan in international organizations that require statehood for membership.

**1999 July**

Taiwan President Lee says in a German radio interview that China and Taiwan should **deal with each other on a "state-to-state" basis**, implying that Taiwan is moving towards a formal declaration of independence. Chinese officials responds to Lee's statement a day later, saying that it was "a monumental disaster."

**Dec. 20**

Macau, a former Portuguese territory on the Chinese coast is reverted to Chinese rule.

**2000 Feb. 2**

China protests the passage of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill (approved 341 to 70) seeks

more direct military communications between American and Taiwanese forces, expanded American training of Taiwan's officers and an annual report on Taiwan's security. Clinton Administration officials voice their disapproval of the bill as well, **calling it dangerous to the security of the Taiwan Strait**.

**Feb. 21**

China **issues a White Paper** warning more explicitly than before that Taiwan's further heel dragging on reunification—let alone any declaration of independence—could force China to take "drastic measures."

**Mar. 18**

Taiwan holds its second free presidential elections in history. Voters elect pro-independence candidate Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party, **ending more than 50 years of Nationalist rule of Taiwan**. China states in response that it will be keeping a close eye on Chen and reiterates that "Taiwan independence, in whatever form will never be allowed."

**June 20**

During his first news conference since being inaugurated on May 20, Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian invites Chinese President Jiang Zemin to join hands at **a summit for peace**. Chen says he was inspired by the historic agreement signed by North and South Korea on June 15 to work towards reunification. Chinese officials respond coldly to the invitation, re-iterating the country's long-standing policy that Taiwan accept the "one China" principle before any talks can begin.

**2001 April 24**

President George W. Bush approves the **largest package of arms sales** to Taiwan in nearly a

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decade. China responds with a **formal protest**. White House officials stress that the sale is in response to recent Chinese military buildup in the area, and that it has nothing to do with a recent standoff over the detained crew of a U.S. Navy surveillance plane that collided with a Chinese fighter jet (Apr. 1). China's ambassador warns that U.S.-China relations are "at a crossroads."

### **Oct. 20—21**

China chooses not to invite Taiwan to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Shanghai. A press conference before the event becomes a **bickering match** when a Chinese official prevents Taiwan's representative from speaking.

### **Nov. 7**

Taiwan eases restrictions for business that wish to **invest in companies on mainland China**. Although many businesses had already found loopholes in these 50-year-old policies, economists hope that the rollback will boost Taiwan's slumping economy and speed up the integration of the economies of Taiwan and China, which are expected to join the World Trade Organization later this month.

### **Nov. 11**

Representatives of the **World Trade Organization** **make Taiwan an official member** at a meeting in Doha, Qatar, one day after China is unanimously admitted.

### **Dec. 1**

Parliamentary elections are held in Taiwan. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) wins enough seats to replace the Kuomintang (KMT) as the largest party in Taiwan's legislature. KMT nationalists had controlled the legislature since it fled from mainland China to the island in 1949.