



World Affairs Councils of America

Leadership Mission to the Republic of China (Taiwan) Report

September 8-14, 2013



Sponsored by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative
Office

**2013 World Affairs Councils of America Leadership Mission
to the Republic of China (Taiwan)**

**Sponsored by:
The Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office**

September 8 to 14, 2013

Delegation

Steven E. Sokol - Head of Delegation

Director, World Affairs Councils of
America National Board
President & CEO, World Affairs Council of
Pittsburgh

Anna Berry

Executive Director, World Affairs Council
of New Hampshire

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Rochester, NY

David Edick

President and Chairman of the Board of
Directors, San Diego World Affairs Council
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Cities Association

Susan Fairchild

Board Chair, World Affairs Council of
Seattle

Nels Hamilton Granholm

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Douglas LeVien

Member of 1918 Society Leadership Circle,
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Rajeev Narayan

Member, Board of Directors, International
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Associate Director, The William R. Kenan,
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Board Member, World Affairs Council -
California Central Coast
Vice President and Commissioner, Port of
Hueneme

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September 8 to 14, 2013

Sunday, September 8, 2013

21:05 Arrive at Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport. Transfer to hotel.

The Sherwood Taipei
111 Min Sheng E. Road, Section 3, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC

Monday, September 9, 2013

9:00 Briefing with the Honorable **Dr. Stephen Shu-Hung SHEN**, Minister,
Environmental Protection Administration, Executive Yuan

10:10 Tour of the Legislative Yuan

14:30 Briefing with **David HSU**, Deputy Director General, Bureau of Foreign Trade,
Ministry of Economic Affairs

15:45 Visit Taiwan Handicraft Promotion Center

17:00 Briefing with **Dr. Joseph WU**, Executive Director, Policy Research and
Coordinating Committee, Democratic Progressive Party

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

9:30 Briefing with the Honorable **Chu-Chia LIN**, Deputy Minister, Mainland Affairs
Council, Executive Yuan

11:00 Briefing with Ambassador **Stephen CHEN**, Senior Advisor to the National
Policy Foundation and National Policy Advisor to the President of the Republic of
China on Taiwan

12:30 Luncheon hosted by the Honorable **Ting Joseph SHIH**, Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

Transfer to train station for travel to Hsinchu via Taiwan High Speed Rail.

16:30 Meeting with **Michael Kramer**, Spokesperson for the Taiwan
Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC)
Return to Taipei via Taiwan High Speed Rail

20:00 Visit to one of Taipei's famous night markets

Wednesday, September 11, 2013

9:30 Security Briefing with **Hsi-Min LEE**, Vice Chief of the General Staff (Navy), and other senior military staff at the Ministry of National Defense, ROC

11:00 Briefing with the Honorable **Bi-Duan HUANG**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education

14:00 Visit Hsing-Tian Temple

15:30 Meeting with **Dr. William VOCKE**, Executive Director, Foundation for Scholarly Exchange

20:00 View performance of the "Legend of Eight Celestials Crossing the Sea" at Taipei EYE Theater

Thursday, September 12, 2013

8:00 Briefing with **W. Brent CHRISTENSEN**, Deputy Director of the American Institute in Taiwan, and other AIT senior staff

10:00 Visit to the National Taiwan University of the Arts

Discussion with **Dr. Yung-cheng HSIEH**, President of the Nation Taiwan University of the Arts, and other senior staff and students at the University

15:00 Visit to the Port of Taipei for briefing and tour

Friday, September 13, 2013

Day-long visit to the Taroko National Park

Saturday, September 14, 2013

9:30 Visit to the National Palace Museum

Departure. Return to the United States.

Narrative Report

Often described as a “small island” without a voice on the global stage and as an “economic powerhouse” which “punches above its weight,” Taiwan is well worth watching. With a population of just over 23 million, and an area of 36,000 square kilometers (smaller than Delaware and Maryland combined), Taiwan is located just over 100 miles off the southeastern coast of Mainland China across the Taiwan Strait.

From September 8 to 14, 2013, the World Affairs Councils of America sent a delegation of Council directors, board members, and members from World Affairs Councils across the country on a week-long leadership mission to Taiwan to learn more about this small island off the coast of mainland China. None of the participants had ever traveled to Taiwan before. The trip was generously sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China (Taiwan) through the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO), and the program was structured to include a mix of substantive briefings on a range of issues as well as cultural activities to enable the participants to gain a deeper, more nuanced understanding about Taiwan.

The delegation met with government officials, opposition members, business people, and educators to learn more about Taiwan’s history and the domestic and foreign policy challenges it faces. The group also had the opportunity meet with several Americans living in Taiwan as well as the senior staff at the American Institute of Taiwan. During these briefings, several key themes emerged. This report addresses some of those themes.

Historical Background



Following the Chinese civil war, the Communist Party of China took full control of Mainland China and founded the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. At that time, some two million Chinese Nationalists fled to Taiwan and established a government using the 1947 constitution of the Republic of China (ROC) – however, its jurisdiction became limited to Taiwan and its surrounding islands. Beginning in the 1950s, Taiwan’s ruling authorities democratized and incorporated the local population in the governing structure. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Taiwan evolved into a multi-party democracy with universal suffrage. And, in 2000, Taiwan underwent its first peaceful transfer of power from the Nationalist Party to the Democratic Progressive Party. In 2008, the Nationalist party took back power and remains in government today.

In tandem with its political development, Taiwan experienced rapid economic growth and industrialization during the second half of the 20th century. It is now a prosperous advanced industrial economy, and is considered to be one of the East Asia’s economic “Tigers” – along side Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea. Taiwan is the 18th or 19th largest economy in the world, and its advanced technology industry plays a key role in the global economy.

In addition to domestic political and economic reform, the dominant political issue in Taiwan is the on-going relationship between Taiwan and China – and the question of Taiwan’s eventual status. In 1971, the PRC assumed China’s seat at the United Nations, which the ROC had previously occupied. International recognition of the ROC has gradually eroded as most countries switched recognition to the PRC. Although the ROC government claims sovereignty over all of China – including Taiwan – the PRC has denied the ROC status as a sovereign state and asserts that it is the sole legal representative of China. The PRC claims Taiwan as its 23rd province.

This tension between the PRC and the ROC is at the core of many economic and political developments in Taiwan. Cross-strait relations and issues of national identity within the country are important factors in Taiwanese politics and a cause of social and political division.

Taiwan’s Political Culture

Arriving in Taipei in the midst of a political scandal, the World Affairs Councils of America delegation was able to gain a unique insight into Taiwan’s political culture. A fight between President Ma Ying-jeou and Speaker Wang Jin-pyng – both members of the Chinese Nationalist Party (or KMT) – was unfolding in the media each day of the trip. Both party loyalists and members of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (or DPP) were critical of the conflict. A senior member of the DPP described President Ma’s attempt to oust Speaker Wang – a party leader who was respected on both sides of the aisle – as an “anti-democratic power grab.”



It became clear in countless conversations that the Taiwanese take their national politics as seriously as many Americans do although their politicians sometimes have to be even more ruthless than their American counterparts. As a staff member at the Executive Yuan noted: “The female members have become the muscle of their party to fight.” Literally, female politicians might pull a colleague’s hair or the opposition party will camp out to control the speaker’s podium. This was an indication of how difficult it might be to bridge some of the political differences in Taiwan. Yet, it was interesting for the delegates to learn that the Executive Yuan aims “to create the largest happiness index for the people” of Taiwan.

Nearly three decades after it was founded, Taiwan’s first opposition party is thriving, despite losing the 2008 Presidential election. Joseph Wu, the Executive Director of the Policy Research and Coordinating Committee of the Democratic Progressive Party, described his party as the “first, locally-grown political party” that “made Taiwan democratic.” He expressed his optimism about the party’s chances of winning local elections in 2014 and already looking ahead to national elections in 2016. “Even though we are in opposition now, we are in a very good position to take power again in 2016,” he said, describing the DPP as the party of the regular people.

In past elections, a DPP platform has always been Taiwanese independence. Despite losing the last two elections – and public sentiment that supports the status quo – Mr. Wu remained firm on the issue. The DPP is also attempting to regain ground by arguing that the current government has not kept its promise to invest in the country's military, has not worked to strengthen U.S.-Taiwan relations, and has not collaborated across party lines. Further, Mr. Wu accused the President of being anti-democratic, using bribery to gain support, and signing a major trade agreement without enough transparency. The opposition party also believes its main platforms of equality, democracy and social justice will continue to resonate as Taiwan's economic and social divisions become greater.

However, the DPP admittedly is always “swimming upstream” and faces not only the longstanding clout and financial power of the KMT juggernaut but also public sentiment that does not support the DPP's goal to assert Taiwan's independence. Further, as staff at the American Institute in Taiwan noted, both the United States and China are more comfortable with KMT leadership than the DPP and that the opposition party lost the last election due to its too-rigid stance on independence.

Despite the challenges, Mr. Wu remained confident in Taiwan's democracy. “Taiwan is a young democracy,” he said, “We cherish that achievement. DPP is the party pushing for that democratization...”

It is important to remember that Taiwan is one of the strongest democracies in Asia – and that there is a high level of public participation in elections. Some 75 percent of the eligible populations votes in elections.

Taiwan's Economy



2012, however, growth fell to 1.3%, because of softening global demand.

Taiwan has a robust capitalist economy with gradually decreasing government intervention regarding investment and foreign trade. Exports – led by electronics, machinery, and petrochemicals – have provided the primary impetus for the island's economic development. However, this heavy dependence on exports exposes Taiwan's economy to fluctuations in world demand. In 2009, Taiwan's GDP contracted 1.8%, due primarily to a 13.1% year-on-year decline in exports. In 2010, GDP grew 10.7%, as exports returned to the level of previous years, and in 2011, grew 4.0%. In

To provide context, The United States is Taiwan's third largest trading partner for imports and exports, and Taiwan is the United States' 11th largest partner for exports and 16th in imports. Taiwan is the 18th largest trading partner in the world – and produces goods that have the same quality as those produced in Japan at 20 to 30 percent lower cost. However, due to its terrain and

limited area, Taiwan is dependent on imported agricultural products because the island does not produce enough food for its population. It imports agricultural products from the United States. Because of the goods it produces and their quality, Taiwan is considered to be one of the most important value chain connections. For example, Taiwan's position in the global supply chain is very strong with 50 to 70 percent of the world's laptops produced in Taiwan.

Free trade agreements have proliferated in East Asia over the past several years, but except for the landmark Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) signed with China in June 2010, Taiwan has been largely excluded from this greater economic integration due to its diplomatic status. In a briefing at the Bureau of Foreign Trade at the Ministry of Economic Affairs and in several other sessions, the delegation had the opportunity to discuss the cross-strait agreement with Mainland China in greater detail.

Since 2008, 19 agreements have been negotiated with Mainland China. Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou has made the agreements a priority for his administration. The agreements cover trade in goods and services, tourism and travel, food safety, fishing, and other economic and finance areas – and there is hope for more agreements with the Mainland. There seemed to be consensus from all of the speakers that the agreements are just as much focused on building trust between Taiwan and Mainland China as they are on achieving progress in the various areas. There is hope that these agreements can lead to stronger ties between the two and eventually help provide the basis for deeper political and economic negotiations.

The Ma administration has said that the ECFA will serve as a foundation for trade agreements with other key trade partners, and Taiwan has subsequently launched trade talks with Japan, Singapore, and New Zealand. Taiwan hopes to sign new economic agreements in 2014. The Philippines, India, and Indonesia have also expressed interest in exploring trade negotiations.

It became clear in several conversations that Taiwan sees itself as a potential gateway to China's vast markets. Many speakers cited the many economic agreements established between China and Taiwan as the economic engine for growth, from increasing tourism from Mainland China to setting up standards on preserving intellectual property rights. Citing the Japanese gaming industry, one speaker said: "If you want to open yourself to the Chinese market, come through Taiwan."

The Case for the Environment and Business

At the Taiwan Environmental Protection Administration, the delegation was shown a video outlining Taiwan's environmental challenges and goals. Taiwan is eager to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions, and increase recycling – which is already at a rate of 65.6 percent due to the compulsory separation of recyclables. Taiwan has set ambitious goals for reducing emissions. The Taiwanese hope to achieve 2005 levels by 2020; 2000 levels by 2025; and fifty percent of 2000 levels by 2050.

In an effort to educate the public about environmental issues, the Environmental Education Act of 2011 stipulates that all government officials, including the President, teachers, and students

need to participate in environmental education training annually. Much emphasis has also been placed on waste reduction.

The delegation was impressed to see evidence of the Taiwanese government's commitment to creating "blue skies and green earth" during its travels within Taipei and elsewhere on the island. One participant commented that "the air was always crisp and clear, despite the heat. [This] observation was only reinforced when we landed in smoggy, hazy Los Angeles on the way home."



In a lively discussion with Minister Shu-Hung Shen of the Taiwan Environmental Protection Administration, he said that Taiwan is fighting environmental pollution not industry. He talked about the strict enforcement of environmental laws. He also said that one of Taiwan's key issues is global warming. Taiwan imports most of its energy from abroad in the form of coal and oil – but seeks to increase its renewable energy sources. He said that there is a good cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency slated to run through 2018. Given some of

the challenges China faces with regard to energy and environment, there is some hope that Taiwan can forge additional cooperation agreements with China around climate change, carbon emissions reduction, and water issues.

The focus on environmental awareness and industrial development was underscored with a site visit to the Taiwan Semi-Conductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) in Hsinchu (more than 50 miles outside of Taipei, but only 30 minutes with Taiwan's high-speed railway). The group learned about the key role Taiwan plays in semi-conductor technology but also that the buildings are state of the art. Any building built for fabrication after 2006 is LEED certified and helps reduce and recycle waste. All fabrication plants can recycle 80 percent of the water used in production and the new buildings can recycle over 90 percent. The TSMC has presented at international forums to show companies in other countries how to recycle water.

The delegation was also able to visit the Port of Taipei – and to see its rapid growth from a small port to an international commercial port in the space of two decades. At only 92 nautical miles from Mainland China, the Port of Taipei is the closest port to China.

Education and Taiwan's "Economic Miracle"

Taiwan has seen significant growth in the number of international students coming from around the world to study in the ROC, and education is considered to be a major contributor to the "economic miracle of Taiwan." Since 2008, the number of international students coming to Taiwan has doubled. And, many programs are being developed for training in Mandarin and other Chinese languages. Taiwanese teachers are being sent around the world to teach Chinese.

While students once left to pursue higher education, Taiwan is now preparing its students to compete in a global marketplace by establishing strong technical training programs and increasing the number of higher education schools that are full universities. Dr. Pi-Twan Huang, Deputy Minister of Education, said that Taiwan developed from a poor country to a successful country with a foundation in science and technology as a result of two main initiatives:

1. strong technical training starting at the secondary school level with technical colleges and universities to further train students in technical and vocational areas, and
2. research universities to train high-tech graduates. In the 1970s and 1980s, students would go abroad for technical training and advanced study.

Today, Taiwan has the resources to teach technical subjects and the sciences. The development – and growth – of technology parks like Hsinchu and Tainan has been a central aspect of this strategic development.

In 2012, Taiwan began to systematically link industry with vocational institutions – thereby providing students with chances for internships and practical training in industry and ultimately employment upon graduation.

From an education standpoint, the biggest challenges facing Taiwan are quality control and the falling birthrate. In order to continue to succeed, Taiwan needs to maintain the high-quality education system it has developed. However, over the last two decades, Taiwan's birthrate has dropped and as a result fewer and fewer Taiwanese students are enrolling. As a result, Taiwan will be unable to sustain its education system unless it can increase the number of international students studying in the ROC. Further, Ms. Pi-twan Huang emphasized the need to create more public kindergartens, expand early childhood education programs, and foster "family education."

Several ex-pats said that the real challenge is the "over-education" of Taiwan. The low cost of education coupled with the demand by employers and the high value of education to families has created a community of people with degrees but without the employment opportunities.

The delegation was able to visit the National Taiwan University of the Arts and hear from the President Yung-cheng Hsieh, as well as the deans and faculty from the University's five colleges – Fine Arts, Design, Communications, Performing Arts, and Humanities. In addition, the group saw music and dance performances and a toured Art Industry – a collaborative project with industry housed within the NTUA Cultural and Creative Industry Park to promote student artistic creation of sculpture, glass and metal works, paper and wool products, lacquer works, and multimedia production.

Key components of NTUA include five colleges, fourteen departments and twenty-five graduate institutes, three independent educational centers, 158 full-time faculty, 800 adjunct faculty, over 5,000 students, a unique Cultural and Creative Industry Park, and partnerships with 60 institutions globally. Distinguished NTUA alumni include Oscar-winning film director Ang Lee; internationally-acclaimed director Hsiao-Hsien Hou; painters Kuang-Nan Huang and Feng Nan Su; founder of Ju Percussion Group - Tzong-Ching Ju; designer Erh-Ping Tsia; and composers Shui-Long Ma and Tai-Hsiang Lee.

China and Taiwan: Cross-Strait Relations

Economic ties between Mainland China and Taiwan have improved in recent years. President Ma has focused on the normalization of relations with China, and this has led to an array of agreements – including increased travel between Taiwan and the Mainland. Previously it was not possible to fly directly. Now, there are 670 scheduled weekly flights between 10 cities in Taiwan and 57 cities in China. And, there has been increased travel. Some 2.5 million Chinese tourists travel to Taiwan each year and some 5.2 million Taiwanese travel to the Mainland.

There have been large investments by Taiwanese citizens in China – amounting to approximately US \$150 billion. Since an investment ban was lifted in 2009, there has also been more Chinese investment in Taiwan amounting to roughly US \$700 million.



The section of this report on Taiwan’s economy offered some insight into relations with Mainland China, but there are also security issues that shape the relationship. In a briefing with high-level military officers, one official said that “Taiwan is facing a unique strategic environment” and that – with up to 1,500 nuclear missiles pointed at Taiwan – a military threat is still emanating from Mainland China. He expressed concern that Taiwan’s military budget has been decreasing, and outlined three lines of national defense as set out by President Ma: First, Taiwan seeks to institutionalize cross-strait relations through stronger economic and people-to-people ties. Second, Taiwan is trying to elevate it’s place on the world stage. Third, Taiwan is engaging in diplomacy. The basic mission of Taiwan’s military is to safeguard national security and uphold the universal values of democracy and freedom.

From a national security standpoint, Taiwan’s national defense strategy is to prevent war from happening and to defend the homeland. In addition, the military seeks to contribute to peace and stability while remaining prepared to respond to any contingency. In the event of a conflict with China, the Taiwanese military will offer a credible deterrence and a resolute defense. It will also protect the sea-lanes and lines of communication around Taiwan and prevent an enemy invasion. However, in the event of a conflict, the military is aware that it needs allies or it will be overwhelmed by China’s larger military force. The Taiwanese military seeks support from the United States to implement free trade agreements and to provide defense equipment.

The 19 agreements signed with China under the auspices of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) offer some incentives for an economic alignment between Taiwan and Mainland China, and many hope that once there are stronger economic and social ties across the Taiwan Strait greater political alignment can unfold. The PRC government has proposed military negotiations with Taiwan, but most Taiwanese opinion leaders do not believe relations are mature enough to move beyond the current status quo. In order to move forward, confidence-building measures are necessary, but, China does not see Taiwan as an equal partner.

The Taiwan Strait can be described as a potential tinderbox for conflict given that the Chinese military regularly practices exercises against Taiwan, and the Taiwanese military prepares for response for a potential military attack. However, Taiwan's military leaders do not believe the chance of an armed conflict is high. One official said that the "political harmony" between Taiwan and China is "high enough to minimize chances of conflict." Economic and political relations are vital to strong cross-strait relations, and Taiwan is working to institutionalize those relations. Across the board, the Taiwanese officials want to use diplomacy to improve relations with China, and see the use of force as a last resort.

Several speakers commented on China's efforts to block Taiwan's participation in international affairs. Although China allowed Taiwan to become an observer at the World Trade Organization in 2010, "we found the price we had to pay," one speaker said referring to Taiwan being described as a province of China.

Several speakers expressed the sentiment that if Mainland China wants unification with Taiwan, doing business is not enough. China will need to make significant social changes to its Communist system. The "one country-two systems" policy that seems to work for Hong Kong is not supported by many in Taiwan.

Through conversations with a diverse group of people, the World Affairs Councils of America delegation was exposed to a variety of views regarding Taiwan's independence. What was striking, however, was that most people – regardless of where they were on the spectrum with Taiwan's independence at one end and reunification at the other – favor maintaining the status quo despite the unique challenges it brings. One speaker said that the percentage of Taiwanese who believe in a "reunification" with Mainland China is very small.

Taiwan-U.S. Relations

A senior U.S. official said that "Taiwan deserves our support because it's a democracy. The government is responsible to its people." Several other speakers commented that Americans are respected and liked in Taiwan.

The United States has had an unofficial relationship with Taiwan since 1970 – governed by Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and a "One China" policy. The American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) operates as a medium to large embassy with various departments. A new facility is being built and will be completed in 2015.

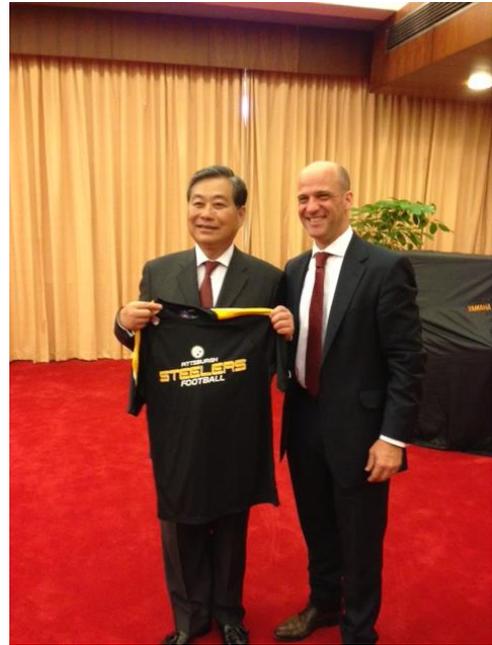
From a U.S. perspective, the focus of the relationship is on security and defense, economics and business, and people-to-people diplomacy. Under the TRA, the United States has obligations to help Taiwan build its defenses, and U.S. support has allowed Taiwan to be more confident in dealing with Mainland China.

Taiwan is the 11th largest trading partner of the United States – and the 18th or 19th largest economy in the world. If not for its current political status, Taiwan would be a member of the G20.

An official in the Ministry of Economic Affairs said that Taiwan is interested in serving as a trading partner with the United States – not as a competitor. He added that Taiwan is interested in a Free Trade Agreement with the United States and in branding Taiwan as a “trusted trading partner” in the United States and elsewhere.

One of the most significant areas of Taiwanese-American collaboration is in the area of higher education, with hundreds of American students studying in Taiwan each year at universities and in programs to learn Mandarin. Taiwan is the sixth largest source of foreign students to the US – and first or second in the world per capita.

Several government officials commented that Taiwan wishes to make contributions to the global community. One person said that “if opportunities are offered to us, we are willing to make contributions.”



Head of Delegation Dr. Steven E. Sokol presents a gift to Ambassador Ting Joseph Shih, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China (Taiwan), a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh

Conclusions

As one speaker commented, it is impossible to understand China without understanding Taiwan. Another said that “You are making a really serious mistake to accept the Chinese fantasy that Taiwan is just a renegade province.” Each side thinks time is on its side. After a week in Taiwan, it was clear that Taiwan is a bigger player in the world than any of the delegates had appreciated, but a smaller player in Asia.

Taiwan’s diplomatic isolation and demographic trends will remain Taiwan’s long-term challenges. With a birthrate of 0.85 percent, Taiwan has the lowest birthrate in the world and a rapidly aging population. Some observers worry that Taiwan’s economy will stagnate as young people achieve higher levels of education and lose interest in working in factories. They may be lured to jobs in Mainland China.

Despite the challenges it might face, Taiwan is one of the strongest democracies in Asia. It is one of six countries in the world to develop ambitious environmental education goals aimed at slowing climate change. And, it hopes to use its “soft power” to influence China.

Having learned a great deal about this economic powerhouse just off of Mainland China, all the delegates left Taipei with more questions about the future of Taiwan at the end of the leadership mission than they had before arriving.

