

Collective Statement on Taiwanese Independence: Building Global Solidarity and Rejecting U.S. Military Empire

Thursday 23 March 2017, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 21 March 2017).

THE DECEMBER 2, 2016 phone call between Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen and American President Donald J. Trump focused new attention on the issue of Taiwan independence. The call set off two dominant reactions, both problematic. On the one hand, a troubling Taiwanese national enthusiasm celebrated the possibility of American solidarity with Taiwan independence under a Trump presidency. On the other hand, so-called democratic Americans shuddered in anxious fear at the idea that the status of an autonomous Taiwan might be validated, putting at risk the One China recognition policy that has proven profitable to the U.S. since the late 1970s. What's missing, however, is a critical understanding of the extreme danger of fostering Taiwanese independence through a relationship dependent on the paternalism of American empire—made all the more perilous under the increasingly fascist Trump administration—and the false security of U.S. militarized peace in Asia.

As scholars and activists in Taiwan and in the diaspora of the US, we are concerned with both Taiwanese independence and global justice. Therefore, we urge for a critical understanding of the inherent problems in aligning Taiwan independence with the force of American empire. American independence and democracy itself has been built from violent contradictions to liberty, including the genocide of indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Africans, which continue today in different forms. Indeed, the U.S. has historically benefitted from the direct suppression of both domestic and international independence movements. Its One China foreign policy and advocacy for maintaining the status quo in Taiwan is yet another example of this pattern. Trump's stances have been unclear, at times expressing a willingness to break from the One China Policy, and at other times reaffirming it. His inconsistent stance on Taiwan poses fundamental dangers to Taiwanese sovereignty and, moreover, continues the pattern of America using Taiwan for its geopolitical interests.

Trump's America First platform would merely continue a long history of US manipulation of Taiwan for its own interests in the Asia Pacific. This historical pattern has been most recently demonstrated through Trump's comments suggesting that Taiwan may serve as a useful bargaining chip for a trade deal with China. Thus, Taiwanese liberation cannot rely on a dependency model of liberty contingent upon the political whims of the United States, which is especially volatile under Trump's authoritarian brand of American governance.

We also call attention to the context of the racist, xenophobic, misogynist, and Islamophobic platform of Donald Trump and the immediate threat he poses to safety and democracy in the United States and around the globe. His executive orders to institute a Muslim ban, to construct a wall separating the U.S. from Mexico, and to continue development of the Keystone and Dakota oil pipelines are only a few examples of the ways in which the Trump administration has advanced extremist policies that institutionalize white nationalism, exploit the environment, and threaten the tenets of democracy in America and abroad. Therefore, we find it troubling to align Taiwan independence movements with the ongoing project of American empire currently led by Donald

Trump.

Rather than depend wholly on America, we urge for Taiwanese independence movements that not only distance themselves from U.S. empire and Trump, but that build their freedom in solidarity with groups marginalized by American empire and with other global movements for decolonization (including indigenous rights movements in Taiwan as linked to broader international indigenous movements). We must establish strong international alliances with those who are putting their bodies on the line for justice, just as a previous generation of Taiwanese independence leaders have done. In the United States today, this includes the NODAPL, Black Lives Matter, and the ongoing queer and trans liberation movements, to name just a few. In this manner, we can generate global attention for Taiwan independence by working in solidarity with other liberation movements instead of pandering to the political-economic desires of the U.S. empire.

As scholars and activists concerned with both Taiwan independence and global justice, we call for a Taiwan independence movement that solidly rejects American military empire and instead, builds steadfast alliance with marginalized communities and struggles for justice around the world. Liberation must be collective if it will be at all.

In community (institutional/organizational affiliation are listed for identification purposes only),

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If you are interested in adding your name or organization to the petition, please send us your name and institutional/organizational affiliation using this form:
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdBY-9ea37VuuFqCXZ6jXQeOHoz8rc9Isa6vVDVQ4wyFhDXhQ/viewform>

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