

by Srdja Trifkovic

The Taiwanese Election: Implications for U.S. Security

The outcome of Taiwan's presidential election in March is potentially the most significant single event affecting American security since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Most analysts have failed to address the fundamental dilemma that Taiwan now presents for the defense strategy of the United States. The issue is fairly simple: Are our overseas commitments permanent and immutable, in which case the future of this country and the rest of the world is at the mercy of some distant land's electoral whims; or should those commitments be reexamined in the light of changing political circumstances abroad?

For over 50 years, Taiwan was ruled by the Chinese nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), which retreated there in 1949 after Chiang Kai-shek was defeated by Mao Tse-tung's Communists in the civil war. The KMT old guard regarded the island as an integral part of China, and for decades it clamped down on any display of Taiwanese particularism, let alone separatism.

By the early 1970's, the claim of "the Republic of China" to represent the only legitimate Chinese government was no longer taken seriously by the rest of the world, and most Taiwanese appeared more interested in economic prosperity than in forcing the issue of their island's ambiguous status. Until three months ago, however, Chiang's successors in Taipei could agree with Mao's successors in Peking on one critical issue: that reunification was desirable and inevitable. This accord provided the basis for an uneasy but manageable status quo.

For decades, the U.S. security guarantee to Taiwan was implicitly based on this key premise. But last March, the separatist Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), supported mostly by the native Taiwanese, won the presidential election (albeit with only 39.3 percent of the vote, due to an internal split within the KMT), and the equation is qualitatively different now. Although the new president, Chen Shui-bian, has toned down his pro-independence rhetoric, Peking is deeply and understandably unhappy with this out-

come. From the mainland Chinese point of view, the KMT Chinese nationalists were schismatics—but the DPP separatists are heretics.

This outcome comes at a time when the Clinton administration's inconsistent policies toward both Taipei and Peking—and especially its decision to sell sophisticated weaponry to Taiwan—have effectively demolished the Chinese-American détente built by Nixon and Kissinger in the early 1970's. The incoherence of the Clinton/Gore team's China strategy emboldened the outgoing KMT government to risk confrontation with the mainland. In addition, it has encouraged Taiwanese separatists to conclude that they would remain under an American security umbrella even if their actions present an intolerable challenge to Peking.

America's allies in the region are very worried. Their fears were summarized by the *Korea Times* on March 20:

Given, on the one hand, the entrenched American mindset and its pattern of behavior with an ever escalating air of invincibility and self-righteousness, and, China, on the other hand, with its increasing irritation and frustration over Taiwan, reinforced by its growing economic power and nationalistic redemption, a war between the two will not be avoidable.

Other Asian countries understand that, while the United States has no vital interest involved in Taiwan, Peking does. This is an issue over which China will fight: If it is seen to waver on Taiwan, its hold over Sinkiang, Tibet, or even Manchuria may become tenuous, and its status as a great power compromised.

China's determination is reflected in its pressure on its neighbors to scale down their relations with Taipei. Significantly, America's allies along the Pacific Rim have responded. Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines have all given discrete notification to Washington that their "mutual defense" treaties with the United States do not cover contingencies in the Taiwan Strait.

In the next stage, the Chinese may present the United States with a clear-cut

question: Would you be prepared to go to war against us if we act to prevent Taiwan from proclaiming independence? If the United States does not ponder this question soon it will paint itself into a corner and reduce its options to the choice between a humiliating retreat or an unpredictable military escalation that could lead to nuclear war. If that happens, not a single country in East Asia will side with America. Tokyo would declare neutrality, irrevocably altering the regional balance. As the Korean editorialist concludes:

[W]ithout good relations with China, the U.S. position will inevitably suffer a downward slide, and without resolving the thorny issue of Taiwan, there will never be good relations with Beijing. . . . Perhaps the U.S. leaders ought to re-read the golden advice of the Founding Fathers concerning the nation's conduct of foreign relations . . .

Indeed, permanent American security guarantees to distant countries are a bad idea in principle. The fact that we don't like the murderous commies who still run the show in Peking is simply irrelevant here: Risking an all-out war with the most populous country in the world—and a nuclear power capable of obliterating a few American cities—over the way one of its provinces is governed is plainly ludicrous. Persisting with the risk, even when the new rulers of that province want to turn it into a new country, is irresponsible and potentially disastrous.

The security of the United States must not be made dependent on the outcome of elections thousands of miles away. Only by disentangling itself from its many passionate attachments around the globe—from the Middle East to Korea, from the Balkans to the Baltics—will America regain its ability to define a strategic doctrine based on its genuine national interests. Then America may rediscover a foreign policy that balances rational objectives and the limited resources used in their pursuit.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

A Spy in the House of NATO

by Justin Raimondo

The recent news that there was a spy at NATO who revealed top-secret plans—including detailed descriptions of targets—during the Kosovo war has thrown the Pentagon and the Western powers into confusion and dismay. According to the London *Guardian* (March 10), a classified U.S. military intelligence report reveals that the Serbs may have been reading the NATO air command's daily orders before the NATO pilots did, starting from day one of the operation (March 24, 1999). The secret report was also discussed in a BBC documentary that aired March 12 with the Orwellian (or perhaps ironic) title, *A Moral War*.

According to the BBC reporters, the spy passed information to the Serbs about the activities of NATO spy planes and unmanned reconnaissance drones, so that Serb military units could move about undetected right before a scheduled bombing raid. The Pentagon also has concluded that the information was not hacked out of NATO's computer systems by Serb cyber-pirates. According to the *Guardian*, Gen. Wesley Clark "suspected early in the bombing campaign that Belgrade had a spy in [NATO's] Brussels headquarters." Clark has vigorously denied this. But the *Guardian* cites a "senior source" within NATO headquarters who quoted Clark as saying: "I know I've got a spy, I want to find him." Another source noted that pilots at NATO's Vincenza base in northern Italy were worried that the Serbs were "picking up on our runs."

There were certainly a lot of potential spies to choose from: The distribution list of the daily "air tasking orders" (ATOs) contained no less than 600 names. When the NATO-crats narrowed it down to 100, that apparently stopped the leak. Still, this alleged spy remains at large, his (or her) identity still unknown to NATO,

nor is it known how this person transmitted the information to Belgrade.

The suspicion that NATO high command had a spy was initially reported last year, in the first week of the bombing campaign, when a U.S. F117A Stealth fighter was downed by Serb anti-aircraft missile fire. According to news reports and rumors coming from the Pentagon, the humiliating attack on the Stealth was successful because its secret flight plan had been obtained by Belgrade. Last August, a NATO official was cited as the source of a story claiming that an Allied military officer had passed the details of the bombing raids to a Russian intelligence operative, who then turned the information over to the Yugoslavs.

Rumor had it that the spy was a Frenchman. This was no doubt based on an admission by Pierre-Henri Bunel that he had given a Yugoslav diplomat access to NATO's bombing plans in October 1998, five months before the bombing began. Apparently, Bunel—who said he acted out of hatred for the U.S. government—was not alone, and the generally more pro-Serb French came under immediate suspicion.

The secret U.S. report, which was drawn up by retired Air Force Gen. James McCarthy for Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre and Gen. Joe Ralston, avers that the Serbs had foreknowledge of NATO bombing raids. The report notes that when the distribution list was reduced, "the effect was immediate," and the Serbs appeared to be in the dark. Before that, things had gotten so bad (as Gen. Clark admitted to Reuters after the *Guardian* article ran), that particularly sensitive information had to be entirely omitted from ATOs. Lt. Col. Vic Warzinsky likewise confessed to reporters that "there was a sense at NATO headquarters that the Serbs were pretty well informed about what we were doing." More importantly, he widened the list of possible suspects, stating that the Serbian David could have been aided in his fight against the U.S./NATO Goliath by any number of possible suspects. According to the *Guardian*, this included spotters placed at the head of NATO's Italian runways; on the other hand, diplomats assert that the information was readily available to an even larger audience once

it reached the various European capitals.

The NATO-crats, while forced to admit the possibility of a spy, are doing their best to downplay the effect that this had on the conduct of the war—and the ramifications for future military action in the Balkans. This supposedly "secret" U.S. report, originally leaked to the BBC, goes to great lengths to imply that the security breach was plugged when the distribution list was shortened. BBC military correspondent Andrew Gilligan reports that the mole remains a mystery, but that "heavy hints are being dropped that it was not a leak from NATO headquarters itself, but from one of the national delegations attached to it or from a national government."

Virtually every news report on the "spy in the house of NATO" contains this allegation by U.S. government officials, which is one good reason to treat it with suspicion. If this is an attempt to steer us away from the truth about a highly placed spy near the top of the NATO command structure, it fits with another twist to this case, provided by the German left-wing newspaper *Tageszeitung*.

In an article published March 10, the newspaper claims that the NATO mole who tipped off Belgrade is a U.S. Air Force officer. This officer contacted the newspaper and authorized it to reveal his nationality after the war ended, under the condition of strict anonymity. It was this American officer who betrayed NATO's ATOs to the Serbs: That downed Stealth fighter fell victim to the dictates of his (or her) conscience.

If this story is true, there can be little doubt that the NATO mole acted because of a conscious moral decision, rather than the more traditional inducements of 30 pieces of silver or a desire to be on the winning side. According to *Tageszeitung*, the officer said he turned over NATO's secrets on the grounds that the attack on Yugoslavia was illegal by the precepts of international law and immoral because of the "blackmail ultimatum" delivered at Rambouillet. While our rulers rampage from one end of the world to the other, this person clearly feels that Americans have a moral obligation to engage in civil disobedience, disruption, and outright sedition, through any and all avenues open to them.