

A New Interpretation of “Soft Power” for Taiwan

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Abstract

Professor Joseph Nye of Harvard University coined the term “soft power” to underscore the importance of a nation’s power opposite the traditional “hard power,” military and economic power that is used to coerce the enemy. “Soft power” is the ability to get what a nation wants by attracting and persuading other nations to adopt its goals. This ability is derived from a nation’s culture, political ideals, and policies.

Vice President of Taiwan, Annette Lu, apparently borrowed the concept of soft power from Professor Nye after she assumed the vice presidency in 2000. She identified five elements of Taiwan’s soft power: human rights, democracy, peace, love, and high technology. This author believes that Professor Nye’s theory and Vice President Lu’s concept of soft power for Taiwan are both well taken. However, this author proposes to modify the concept of Taiwan’s soft power by adding three elements, namely, the will and confidence of Taiwan’s people to defend Taiwan, a civilian-based defense mechanism, and a closer alliance with the US and Japan.

Keywords: soft power, culture, human rights, democracy, peace, love, high technology, will and confidence, civilian-based defense, alliance.

Soft power is a term coined 15 years ago in his book entitled “Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power,” (1990) by Joseph Nye who is a political science professor and Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Since then, Professor Nye has written many more books and essays to dwell on this subject and its relevance to US foreign policy in the wake of the 911 terrorist attacks.

Vice President of Taiwan, Annette Lu, apparently borrowed the concept of soft power from Professor Nye after she assumed the vice presidency in 2000. She has reiterated the concept of soft power in the context of Taiwan on many important international occasions.

Needless to say, the concept of soft power applies to Taiwan as well as any other country in the world. This paper intends to present a new interpretation of Taiwan’s soft power on the basis of Professor Nye’s concept and Vice President Lu’s theory of soft power for Taiwan.

Definition of “Soft Power”

As the term indicates, soft power is the opposite of hard power. Nye defines *soft power* in different terms but with essentially similar meaning in his various books and essays.¹ In one book, he defines soft power as “the ability

1. Professor Nye’s writings on the subject of soft power include following books and essays, among other: *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1990).
Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. (N.Y.: Public Affairs Books, 2004).
Power in the Global Information Age. (N.Y.: Routledge, 2004).
The Paradox of American Power: Why the World’s Only Superpower Can’t Go It Alone. Paperback Ed. (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2003).
“Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer 2004).
“The Decline of America’s Soft Power,” *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2004).
“The Velvet Hegemon,” *Foreign Policy* (May 2003).

to get what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals.”² In his more recent essay, he writes “Soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. Soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced.”³ Soft power includes propaganda, but is considerably broader. It is much more than “image, public relations and ephemeral popularity.” It constitutes very real power—an ability to gain objectives.

Soft power in international politics arises from such nebulous but very real factors as the dominant values, internal practices and policies, and the manner of conducting international relations. Soft power can establish institutions, beliefs and values that set the agenda and determine the framework of debate. More than just influence or persuasion, soft power is the ability to entice and attract, which may lead to acquiescence or imitation, and may facilitate efforts at leadership.

Culture, the collective set of societal dominant values, is a significant source of soft power. Culture can be found in the country’s languages, literature, customs, traditions, societal values, social behavior and openness, societal tolerance and upward mobility, rules of conduct, and so forth. Cultural image projected through books, music, arts, scientific achievements, Nobel laureates, foreign students, immigrant and tourist flows, and even behaviors of multinational corporations in foreign countries can all influence a country’s soft

“U.S. Power and Strategy after Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2003).

“The Limits of American Power,” *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 2002/2003).

“The Dependent Colossus,” *Foreign Policy* (March/April 2002).

² Nye, “Soft Power: The means to Success in World Politics.” *Public Affairs*, 2004.

³ Nye, “Soft Power and American Foreign Policy,” *Political Science Quarterly* (Summer 2004).

power. In a global information age, culture is often transmitted through such devices as films, TV programs, internet websites, and other electronic gadgets.

Popular culture may be even more powerful than high culture. It transmits widely American values that are open, mobile, individualistic, anti-establishment, pluralistic, populist, and free. The downfall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 would not have been possible without the years-long transmission of images of the popular culture of the West.

Political ideals, institutions, and internal practices and policies can have a powerful or negative impact on foreign perceptions and favorable perceptions can translate into soft power. Efforts to promote human rights and democracy, policies on capital punishment and gun control, liberal immigration policy, and a trustworthy legal system and a free market system can all strengthen a country's soft power. Those which can inspire dreams and desires of others are the most effective.

The substance and style of foreign policy is also a powerful factor. Policies based on broadly shared values are more likely to attract cooperation. Policies based on broadly inclusive and far-sighted definitions of the national interest are easier to make attractive to others than policies that take a narrow and myopic perspective. Assistance to poor countries, for example, is a policy that is always an important source of soft power. Other examples include foreign aid, investment, migration and environmental policies, intellectual property rights protection, and peacekeeping.

Nye states that the countries that are likely to gain soft power in an information age are:⁴

- (1) Those whose dominant culture and ideas are closer to prevailing global

⁴ Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

norms (which now emphasize liberalism, pluralism, and autonomy);

(2) Those with the most access to multiple channels of communication and thus more influence over how issues are framed; and

(3) Those whose credibility is enhanced by their domestic and international performance.

Smaller countries and even “non-state actors” can and frequently do wield soft power effectively enough to achieve objectives well beyond their hard power capabilities. The revolution in information and communications technology has vastly empower minor states that successfully take advantage of modern technology to general financial backing and public support.

Soft power cannot be discounted as just a question of image, public relations, and ephemeral popularity. It is a means of obtaining desired outcomes.

Application and Examples of Soft Power

Many of the crucial soft power resources are outside the control of government, and their effect depend heavily on acceptance by the receiving countries. Soft power resources often work indirectly by shaping the environment for policy, and sometimes take years to produce desired outcomes. Mass media propaganda and cultural diplomacy such as art, books and cultural exchanges are essential. Public diplomacy is much more than public relations. It is no mere euphemism for propaganda. It also involves building long-term relationships that create an enabling environment for government policies. There are three tasks:

The first task is daily communications that explain the context of domestic and foreign policy. The communications should be channeled to foreign as well

as domestic media.

The second task is choosing and developing a set of simple themes. Public diplomacy efforts will be quickly undermined by contradictory policies, arrogant conduct or narrowly self-serving actions.

The third task is development and maintenance of elite relationships. Scholarships, cultural exchanges, seminars, training, conferences, and access to media channels, are all appreciated and can have lasting impacts.

During World War Two, Allied advances received huge help from the most unlikely people giving Allied forces tactical advantages. For example, illiterate Solomon Islanders chose to help the Allies and made possible the coast watchers who played a vital role in the campaign.

American political ideals favorably influenced Europe after World War Two. Radio Free Europe built support behind the Iron Curtain during the cold war era. Television built support in Iran for Western political ideals. Chinese students demonstrating in Tiananmen Square used a replica of the Statue of Liberty as a symbol.

Chinese activists are inspired by Hollywood films to use lawsuits to assert rights. This inspiration may be more effective than speeches by the American president or ambassador about the importance of rule of law.

Tourists and business people traveling to the US, foreign students studying in the US, and immigrants flocking into the US give US a powerful resource to transmit its political and economic ideals and policies.

Many channels may be used to wield soft power including businesses, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, ethnic diasporas, and various democratic political parties.

All power has limits and soft power is no exception. All power depends on context—who relates to whom under what circumstances—but soft power

depends more than hard power on the existence of willing interpreters and receivers. Moreover, attraction often has a diffuse effect, creating general influence rather than producing an easily observable specific action.

Soft power is also likely to be more important when power is dispersed in another country rather than concentrated. A dictator cannot be totally indifferent to the views of the people of his country, but he can often ignore whether another country is popular or not when he calculates whether it is in his interests to be helpful. In democracies where public opinion and parliaments matter, political leaders have less leeway to adopt tactics and strike deals than in autocracies.

Public perceptions can change quickly. Soft power is volatile. Political leaders must often make unpopular decisions because they are the right thing to do, and hope that their popularity may be repaired if the decision is subsequently proved correct. The soft power cost of unpopular decisions must always be taken into account in the prudent conduct of foreign policy.

All forms of power are interrelated in complex ways. The way one type of power is wielded can enhance or detract from other types of power. Military force and resolve may attract favorable alliances. Several small countries with little hard power wield considerable political clout because of their soft power activities. Canada, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries are cases in point. They use such causes as economic aid and peacekeeping to broaden their influence.

Examples of large countries are also prominent. Britain during the 19th century enhanced its position by broadly establishing free trade and the gold standard—a soft power use of economic power. After World War Two, the US established various international organizations to facilitate world trade and international diplomacy. If a country can make its power legitimate in the eyes

of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes.

Annette Lu's Theory on Taiwan's Soft Power

Vice President (VP) of Taiwan, Annette Lu, apparently borrowed the concept of soft power from Professor Nye and expanded it in the context of Taiwan when she assumed the vice presidency in 2000. Since then she has reiterated the concept on all important international occasions.⁵ Her purpose of underscoring the concept of Taiwan's soft power is to tell the world as well as to reassure the people of Taiwan that Taiwan's national strength lies not only in its respectable hard power but also its genuine soft power.

The VP believes that soft power makes use of mercy and wisdom to fight against corruption, poverty and injustice. She emphasizes that Taiwan's soft power consists of the spirit of peace and love, cooperation and sharing, respect and tolerance, that is the fountainhead to create a prosperous and diverse situation in which countries are mutually benefited. Soft power is the way of

⁵ Vice President Lu's speeches and remarks on Taiwan's soft power include the following, among others:

Address to the 2001 Global Peace Assembly (2001/8/13).

A New Horizon for Taiwan: Soft Power in the Era of Globalization, Remarks delivered to the 6th Taiwan Roundtable (2001/11/19).

Soft Power Changes the World, Address to WFWP Conference in the USA (2002/3/18).

Liberalism and Soft Power, Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Congress of Liberal International, Budapest, Hungary (2002/3/22).

Buddhism and Soft Power, Remarks delivered to the 7th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women (2001/7/11).

Address to the Opening Ceremony of the Democratic Pacific Assembly Preparatory Meeting (2002/12/14).

Address at the Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Asian-Pacific Security (2003/1/17).

Keynote Speech at Forum 2000: Bridging Global Gaps Conference (2004.10.19). These speeches and remarks can be found on website www.president.gov.tw/1_vice_president/subject-03a4.html.

thinking that will create well-being for humankind in the 21st century.

She identified Taiwan’s soft power as a collection of five elements: human rights, democracy, peace, love, and high technology. Among the five elements, she considers human rights to be the most fundamental element because human rights are the starting point from which everything else flows. (Intl Symposium on Human Rights) Today Taiwan is frequently cited around the world as a model of democracy and human rights, which was accomplished through patient, compassionate, and non-violent methods.

She elaborates how Taiwan’s soft power has come about. Economically, in the last 50 years, Taiwan has transformed itself from a poor, agricultural based economy into a knowledge-based, high technology economy with one of the highest credit ratings in the world. Most recently, the World Economic Forum ranked Taiwan 11th among 60 major nations in its global competitiveness, a jump from 12th in 2004, and 17th in 2003. (Taipei Times 05/5/14) up until the present,

Politically, Taiwan has continuously undergoing a series of democratization steps including lifting of martial law, abolition of ban on political parties, and removal of restrictions on the press and assembly. In 2000, Taiwan peacefully transferred power from a half-century-long rule by one party to another through an open, democratic election, without any foreign interference or arm conflict. From the early democratic movement to the struggles for international recognition of Taiwan’s sovereignty, Taiwan has transformed itself from an authoritarian regime to a mature democracy, not with guns or money, but with the conviction for human rights and justice. Soft power, rather than hard power, created Taiwan’s democratic miracle.

Internationally, Taiwan has maintained over 50 years of peace in a region plagued by bloodshed and warfare and with China, a bullying neighbor who

claims that Taiwan is a “sacred and inseparable” part of China and threatens to use military force to achieve its hegemonic claim.

The VP also notes that the 21st century is a digital era in which technology has become the leading source of productivity, and information has become the backbone of the new economy. With the emergence of the knowledge-based economy era, digital assets have surpassed traditional resources, widened the gap between the rich in the North and the poor in the South, and the political and economic confrontation between the East and the West, and deteriorated into conflicts of civilizations. As a consequence, bridging the digital disparities and empowering people around the world—regardless of race, nationality, gender and religion—with equal access to information, technology and the internet, is indeed the realization of the concept of digital human rights.

The VP urges that when pursuing technological development and expanding the arena of IT development, Taiwan should start from humanitarian thinking; use love and care as core values to resolve conflicts between technology and the humane world; adopt the internet to help the disadvantaged and people in the developing world, so that Taiwan can create a just society of rationality and knowledge, and a new information world of equal wealth and mutual prosperity.

The VP asserts that to achieve cross-Strait and even world peace, Taiwan should all disregard the hard power thinking of scrambling and fighting for power. Taiwan should adopt the soft-power thinking of co-existing, cooperating and sharing to resolve hatred, avoid wars and promote stability and prosperity.

Looking toward the future, Taiwan should regard human rights, democracy, peace, love and technological development as universal values in the 21st century. Governments and people of Taiwan should not

be held back by the old thinking and should adopt the new thinking to be able to think globally and act first in the Asia-Pacific region. Taiwan should seek co-existence, prosperity and sustainable development across the Taiwan Strait.

A New Interpretation of Taiwan’s Soft Power

China’s threat with military hard power is increasingly pressing. Compared with China, Taiwan is a small country in many ways. It is rather insensible and unwise for Taiwan to engage in a hard power competition or confrontation with China. Therefore, Taiwan has been pursuing a defensive military strategy vis-à-vis China.⁶

While China’s quantitative military hard power is far superior to Taiwan’s Taiwan has held a qualitative edge over China up until the present time. However, the edge has been eroding in the face of China’s military modernization efforts in the past two decades. China’s high economic growth and increasing involvement in the international community have permitted its military to acquire foreign advanced military equipment and technologies. US Pentagon and private think tank reports all suggest that China’s military buildup opposite Taiwan is leading to a situation where the cross strait military balance has been shifting steadily in favor of China. In its latest defense reviews, Taiwan’s Ministry of National Defense also admits that the balance of power will tilt toward China’s favor within four years if Taiwan does not respond to China’s increasing defense modernization with procurement of new weaponry

⁶ The 2004 National Defense Report (of Taiwan) emphasizes the “defense” posture in the overall strategy, reaffirming the policy that Taiwan will not stage the first strike but will launch retaliative attacks at the military establishments on China.

from the US.⁷

As hard power competition between Taiwan and China does not seem likely to reverse in favor of Taiwan, the element of soft power in the overall defense posture of Taiwan becomes increasingly important. But in view of the imminent nature of the threat from China's hard power, Taiwan's soft power as advocated by Vice President Lu would seem to be "distant water that cannot quench a fire nearby" and needs a new interpretation.

Taiwan's survival does depend on its hard power capabilities to counter China's threats to invade Taiwan. Hard power is also necessary in fending off China's actual invasion, at least for a certain length of time that Taiwan needs to amass domestic power and international assistance to deal with the invasion. More importantly, it gives the people of Taiwan a sense of security to conduct its normal political and economic life.

But eventually Taiwan's survival lies in its will to protect its sovereignty and its soft power to win the support of the international community—the kind of soft power that Professor Nye advocates and Vice President Lu borrows to Taiwan.

Professor Nye's concept of soft power is well received, but it addresses mostly to the foreign policy area, particularly the foreign policy of the US as a world's superpower. His recent writings focus on the importance of soft power in the global campaign against terrorism. Vice President Lu's theory for Taiwan speaks well in terms of Taiwan's national strength in the face of an international context in which China's influence increasingly escalates and the international community hesitates to confront China. However, neither Professor Nye's

⁷ Ming-Yen Tsai, "Taiwan's Security Environment Towards 2004: Challenges and Opportunities," paper presented at the *Taiwan's Security and Democracy International Conference*, Taipei (2004/1/17).

concept addresses the specific need of Taiwan, nor does Vice President Lu’s theory directly respond to the urgent need of Taiwan

VP Lu’s theory on Taiwan’s soft power is tellingly important. I agree with her in stressing that Taiwan’s security eventually depends on its soft power rather than its hard power because Taiwan is unlikely to defeat China in a prolonged and all-out hard power war.

The five elements of human rights, democracy, peace, love, and high technology, as identified by the Vice President, are the result of Taiwan’s economic development in the last three to four decades and a political transformation from an authoritarian system to a democratic one, thereby allowing the people of Taiwan to enjoy various forms of human rights. Democracy and human rights have indeed won the support of the US and many other countries.

Various US administrations have different specific policies towards Taiwan such as arms sales and official contacts between government personnel, but they have been consistent in insisting that the future of Taiwan has to be decided by the people of Taiwan, because they believe that Taiwan is a democratic country and its people have the right to decide their own future. This is indeed an illustration of Taiwan’s soft power at work.

The Vice President believes that “peace and love” elements of soft power can bring about the spirit of cooperation and sharing, and respect and tolerance. They can be taken to mean Taiwan’s efforts in promoting such compassionate undertakings as contributing cash and other forms of assistance for the economic and/or social development of underdeveloped countries or providing relief funds and materials for natural disasters whenever and wherever they happen. These efforts have indeed won a great deal of praise, friendship, and support for Taiwan.

However, the praise, friendship, and support that Taiwan has won have not been transformed into concrete actions of international support where Taiwan definitely needs. For example, Taiwan's bids to join the United Nations and other international organizations such as the World Health Organization have failed for many years. Therefore, while peace and love are a universal value, they seem too general and too ambiguous to show their effectiveness for Taiwan.

High technology is an area where Taiwan may have better leverage. High technology is accountable for Taiwan's global competitiveness. In a recent report by the World Economic Forum Taiwan is ranked 7th in global competitiveness; in the areas of innovation and high technology, Taiwan's competitiveness scores the 3rd and the 4th in the world. Taiwan is rated the 4th of the world's 21 elite countries that are most advanced in developing science and technology.

But Business Week reports, "Taiwan's success is also China's. No one knows for sure how much of China's exports in information and communications hardware are made in Taiwanese-owned factories, but the estimates run from 40% to 80%. As many as one million Taiwanese live and work on the mainland. All the manufacturing capacity in China is overlaid with the management and marketing expertise of the Taiwanese, along with all their contacts in the world."⁸ This places Taiwan's high technology in a very precarious situation.

Three New Elements of Taiwan's Soft Power

Therefore, I propose to modify the concept of Taiwan's soft power as

⁸ Business Week (2005/5/16).

preached by the VP. In my modification, I would emphasize three elements in addition to five elements of Taiwan’s soft power as identified by the VP.

The first element I would add is the will and confidence of Taiwan’s people to defend Taiwan. According to military experts, while China may be prepared to wage a total war against Taiwan in the future, its strategy has been to intimidate Taiwan into accepting its terms without waging a total war. It will use a combination of political, military and economic strategies and threats to overwhelm Taiwan’s will. For example, it extends its welcoming hands to opposition politicians in Taiwan to deal with the cross strait issues so as to divide the government and the opposition. It continues to increase its missile deployments aiming at Taiwan and launches frequent military exercises with Taiwan as the imaginary enemy. It entices Taiwan’s businesses with favorable investment conditions. It initiates internet warfare to cripple Taiwan’s information network. In other words, what China wants is a psychological warfare that can shake down the will of the people of Taiwan.

In view of this, what Taiwan urgently needs is what I would call a “soft power of deterrence” that can deter China from trying to conquer Taiwan either by a total war or by a psychological warfare. It is a total mobilization of the people and the government to stand up for the country and to repel foreign invasions.

The soft power of deterrence comes from the determination of the people to build a country they love and to defend the country at all costs. It also comes from the confidence of the people who earnestly believe they can prevail with such determination.

At the present time, Taiwan has rather weak determination or confidence to defend itself. In fact Taiwan is in a national identity crisis seriously endangering Taiwan’s survivability. The conflict between the pro-unification

force and the pro-independence force has continued to plague Taiwan since the first ever transfer of power in 2000 when the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Chen Shui-bian won the presidential election. After the 2004 reelection of Chen Shui-bian, the conflict escalates. In recent months, two opposition leaders, Kuomintang (KMT) chairman Lien Chan and the People First Party (PFP) chairman James Soong, both visited China, claiming to build a peace bridge between Beijing and Taipei. The visits took place right after China passed the so-called "Anti Secession Law" which legalizes China's non-peaceful means of resolving the so-called Taiwan question. Lien and Soong unabashedly took credits for opening up the door for both sides to restore dialogues, while the ruling DPP lambasted their visits as failures and even degrading Taiwan's sovereign status.

These and many other incidents signify that China has succeeded in playing one side (the opposition and the pro-unification) against the other (the ruling and the pro-independence) and in aggravating the existing conflict in Taiwan and thus weakening the will of the people of Taiwan to defend its de-facto independent status.

The second element I would add is a civilian-based defense mechanism. It is a state of social alertness as well as a deliberate policy intended to deter and defeat foreign military invasions, occupations, and internal usurpations. Deterrence and defense against external aggression is to be accomplished by reliance on social, economic, political, and psychological tools and means. These non-violent tools and means are used to wage widespread non-cooperation and to offer massive public defiance. The aim is both to deny the attackers their objectives and to make impossible the consolidation of their rule, whether in the form of foreign administration, a puppet regime, or a government of usurpers.

Civilian-based defense rests on the theory that political power, whether of domestic or foreign origin, is derived from sources within each society. By denying or severing these sources of power, populations can control rulers and defeat foreign aggressors.

Historical prototypes of civilian-based defense are abundant. Recent examples include national defense struggle in Czechoslovakia against the Soviet and Warsaw Pact invasion and occupation in 1968-69 and the resistance of Baltic States against Soviet aggression in 1989. Civilian-based defense struggles show that non-violent struggle for defense can be powerful and effective.

The third element I would add is the enhancement of alliance with the US and Japan. Though Taiwan has no diplomatic relations with the US, there have been very close economic and other relations between the two countries. Their relations are governed by a very peculiar form, the Taiwan Relations Act, which is a US domestic law passed by the US Congress to govern US foreign relations with Taiwan. The Act makes it possible for the US government and the people to maintain relations with Taiwan as existed prior to the severance of diplomatic relations in 1979.

The Act states, “It is the policy of the US—

(1) to preserve and promote extensive, close, and friendly commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan, as well as the people on the China mainland and all other peoples of the Western Pacific area;

(2) to declare that peace and stability in the area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States, and are matters of international concern;

(3) *to make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means;*

(4) *to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States;*

(5) *to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character,*
and

(6) *to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.*

The Act further provides, *“The absence of diplomatic relations or recognition shall not affect the application of the laws of the US with respect to Taiwan, and the laws of the US shall apply with respect to Taiwan in the manner that the laws of the US applied with respect to Taiwan prior to January 1, 1979.”*

These provisions and others throughout the Act provide in effect a framework only short of a formal military pact for Taiwan's defense and security as well as a legal basis for Taiwan to conduct political, economic, cultural, and other relations with the US. It is abundantly clear that a warm and healthy relationship between Taiwan and the US is a critical element of Taiwan's soft power.

No less important is the relations between Taiwan and Japan. Taiwan has very special historic ties with Japan and traditionally Taiwan has been one of Japan's major economic partners. Furthermore, Taiwan is one of the closest neighboring countries of Japan and situated in a sea lane that is crucial to Japan's energy supply. They share a common geo-political position and both

are under military threat of China. In other words, they share a common purpose of preventing Taiwan from being annexed by China.⁹

Japan severed diplomatic relations with Taiwan in 1972. But for geo-strategic reasons, the peace and security in the Taiwan Strait is crucial to Japan. Like the US, Japan has maintained close relations with Taiwan in many ways.

In recent years, Japan/Taiwan relations have been moving closer, for example, Japan becomes Taiwan’s number one trading partner while Taiwan is Japan number 4 trading partner. Japan granted a tourist visa to former Taiwanese president Lee Teng-hui in spite of China’s anger.

Japan has generally been inclined to sidestep conflict with China. But in recent years, China has dramatically modernized its military while expanding its sphere of influence in Asia on the strength of its booming economy. The effort to extend its reach has included exploring for natural gas near Japanese-claimed waters only 110 miles north of Taiwan and countering Japan's claims to exclusive economic zones in the Pacific. Japan has also shifted course in the past year, moving to defend its territorial claims in the East China Sea. Last November, Japan dispatched aircraft on a two-day hunt for a Han-class Chinese submarine which briefly intruded into Japan's far southern waters in what many here saw as a test of Japanese resolve in the event of Chinese aggression against Taiwan.¹⁰

Particularly, Japan had joined the Bush administration in identifying security in the area around Taiwan as a "common strategic objective" following the 1997 “Guidelines for US/Japan Defense cooperation” which as a consensus of the government and non-government sources seems to apply to the

⁹ Michael Chen notes that strategically Japan and China are in a collision course. Michael Chen, “Strategic Relations Among Taiwan, Japan, and China and Japan/US Alliance,” *Taiwan’s Security and Democracy International Conference*, Taipei (2004/1/17).

¹⁰ Washington Post (2005/2/18).

protection of areas neighboring Japan, including the Taiwan Strait.¹¹

Shinzo Abe, the acting secretary general of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party who is widely considered a likely successor to Junichiro Koizumi as prime minister once said, "It would be wrong for us to send a signal to China that the United States and Japan will watch and tolerate China's military invasion of Taiwan."¹² Most recently, Japan/China's relations soured even further. Japan lodged a formal protest against China over violent anti-Japanese demonstrations in Beijing and other cities in southern China, causing serious damages to Japanese government offices and businesses and threatening the lives of Japanese citizens.

Taiwan must seize the opportunity to build a more solid cooperation and informal alliance with Japan economically and militarily. Taiwan's efforts towards improving relations with Japan should include facilitating a Japanese legislation similar to the Taiwan Relations Act of the US¹³ and resolving relatively minor irritating issues between Taiwan and Japan such as fishing rights in overlapping exclusive economic zones near Diaoyutais (Senkaku Islands).

A close alliance with the US and Japan is not only desirable and possible for Taiwan, but also a crucial element of Taiwan's soft power.

Conclusion

When Professor Nye writes about soft power, he writes from the US

¹¹ Washington Post (2005/2/21).

¹² Washington Post (2005/2/18).

¹³ In May of this year, an opposition member of the Canada's House of Commons, Bill Siksay, proposed a bill (C-357) entitled Taiwan Affairs Act to regulate the relations between Canada and Taiwan, much like the US Taiwan Relations Act. It is not impossible that a bill similar to that may be proposed in Japan's legislature.

perspective, focusing on US foreign policy and anti-terrorist campaign. Nevertheless, his concept of soft power is universally valid and should be heeded by all countries, especially a relatively small country like Taiwan which is faced with a potential enemy with formidable hard power. The concept of soft power is extremely important in the context of Taiwan’s security.

Thanks to Vice President Lu, the concept of soft power is brought home to Taiwan. The VP’s identification of the five elements of Taiwan’s soft power reminds all Taiwan’s people of what soft power Taiwan possess. She urges the people of Taiwan to strive to develop this soft power further because it is essential to winning international support for Taiwan and it can boost people’s confidence in repelling foreign invasions.¹⁴

However, I believe there are at least three elements of soft power that are more imminently important to Taiwan. First, Taiwan must build up the will and the confidence to defend Taiwan. Taiwan is in a national identity crisis which makes Taiwan terribly vulnerable to China’s psychological warfare. Political leaders both in the government and in the opposition must come to the senses of this crisis and quickly embark on building a national consensus. The people must relentlessly press their leaders to heed this problem immediately.

The second element is the establishment of a civilian-based defense (CBD) mechanism. CBD has proved to be an effective deterrent against foreign invasions in many historical incidents and in many countries. It stresses national effort, national organization, and national will and it also emphasizes non-violent means. Once this mechanism is in place, potential foreign invaders will

¹⁴ The importance of Taiwan’s soft power is also underscored by many. For example, Chu Hsin-min and Chen Min-shian, “Developing Taiwan’s Soft Power While Facing China’s Peaceful Rising,” *United Daily News* (2004/9/7), Editorial, “Soft Power Can Counter PRC’s Three Warfares,” *Taiwan News* (2004/9/7), and Lin Bih-jaw, “Reforms Come First in Using Soft Power,” *Taipei Times* (2004/5/31).

be less likely to take any rash decision to invade and the citizens of the country will have more confidence in defending the country.

Finally, Taiwan must work to improve alliances with the US and Japan. The national interests of the US and Japan are much more compatible with Taiwan's than with China's. This is a reality Taiwan must grasp and take advantage of. Alliance itself is an intangible but tremendous power and is important to any country's defense strategy. It is particularly vital to a relatively small country in face of a huge power.

Taiwan has depended on and will continue to depend on US assistance for its security and the peace in the Taiwan Strait. There is every reason for Taiwan to maintain good terms with the US at all costs as long as the US remains a world superpower.

Taiwan's alliance with Japan is just as important. Historically, geopolitically, economically, and even culturally, Taiwan/Japan relations have been special and close. On the other hand, historically Japan/China relations have been problematic and recent developments in their relations attest to that. Like the US, Japan is an ally that Taiwan must cling to at all costs.

With the addition of these three elements, Taiwan's soft power will be more consolidated and will form a much stronger defense against any potential foreign invasion.

台灣柔性國力之新解釋

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摘 要

哈佛大學的奈伊教授提出「柔性國力」的概念，並強調「柔性國力」相對於傳統的「硬性國力」靠軍事和經濟的力量來強壓敵人的重要性。「柔性國力」是靠吸引和說服敵人來達到其目的的能力。這種能力來自於國家的文化、政治理念、和政策。在 2000 年上任後，台灣的副總統呂秀蓮借用奈伊教授的概念。她指出台灣「柔性國力」的五個要件—人權、民主、和平、愛、和高科技。本文作者認為奈伊教授和呂副總統的說法都值得重視，但建議台灣的「柔性國力」要件要加上三個—台灣人民保衛台灣的決心和信心、以民防為基礎的國防機制、和與美國及日本更親近的聯盟關係。

關鍵字：柔性國力、文化、人權、民主、和平、愛、高科技、決心和信心、民防為基礎的國防、聯盟。