<https://www.pf.org.tw/article-pfen-2089-7063>

    In mid-April, US President Biden simultaneously sent special missions to the two countries either side of the Taiwan Strait, and also received Japanese Prime Minister Suga in the White House. A clear strategic blueprint has unfolded: the US and Japan agreed to fight against China and mentioned Taiwan for the first time in 52 years, endorsing their support and protection for Taiwan. No wonder that the Taiwan Strait is turning a new page in its history.

    On April 15, U.S. special envoy Chris Dodd held talks with six Taiwanese legislators from different political backgrounds. At the beginning, the U.S. side directly questioned the KMT’s representatives on their views of the 1992 consensus. Such a frank, somewhat provocative, question implied a U.S. contempt and rejection of the concept. As a matter of fact, in Taiwan, the acceptance of the 1992 consensus has been fading away; the U.S. side’s questioning only accelerated its process. The reality is that the 1992 consensus has been a drag on the KMT. Dodd asserted that “This is the strongest moment for U.S.-Taiwan relations. The United States and Taiwan not only share economic ties, but also adhere to democratic values, and have a vital security partnership.”

    Similarly, Biden and Suga signed a joint statement at the U.S.-Japan Summit on April 17, which stated “the importance of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.” Apparently, by China’s definition, the United States and Japan have formally crossed a red line drawn by Beijing. China has been challenged.

     In response to the United States and Japan, a spokesman for China’s foreign ministry stated on April 17 that Taiwan and Diaoyutai are all Chinese territory, and Hong Kong and Xinjiang related affairs are purely China’s internal affairs; cross-Strait reunification is a historical process. China’s CCTV also reported that the PLA had recently conducted Combat Oriented Training in the north, east and south war zones. It clearly reveals China’s strategic intention of strongly declaring sovereignty but unwilling to escalate confrontation in action.

     Although China has deployed endless military harassment against Taiwan in the past several months, for both China and the US as well as Japan, they have no internal needs or external incentives for war. For China, this year is the centenary party celebration of the Chinese Communist Party and a key year for Xi Jinping to strive for the extension of party power in 2022 at the 20th National Congress of the CCP. Maintaining internal and external stability is both the best and desirable policy. Therefore, Xi’s conducting of military exercises or military harassment against Taiwan are more of a defensive manner. In order to consolidate his power internally, Xi needs to tactically intimidate Taiwan as well as pro-Taiwan forces so as to inspire nationalistic sentiments against foreign interference in China’s internal affairs, but also avoid bringing about war. Hence, after maneuvering, Xi might skillfully turn the external pressure for internal use to fight corruption, for distributive justice, and cleaning up the financial and economic order. Xi’s tactical goals at least are to win the hearts of the people, eradicate dissidents and seek legitimacy for continued political power in 2022 and onward.

     As for the United States, the most urgent issues for Biden are to rectify the weak economic vitality and chaotic social order after the epidemic, so as to lay the foundation for the Democratic Party’s mid-term elections in November 2022. At the same time, it will also take some time for him to return to the international hegemony by remedying US relations with its democratic allies, especially the EU. It seems that war is neither expected by his allies, nor is it conducive to his strategic layout of encircling China. What’s more, the United States is just trying to make China’s economy unable to “grow any longer”; it is not about destroying China. As for Japan, it has always been bandwagoning on U.S. policy.

     Amid U.S.-China confrontation, the DPP government maintains a dynamic status quo and focuses on domestic affairs. In response to international affairs, the DPP government’s diplomatic strategy tends to be “Pro-U.S. and Japan, far away from China.” In fact, realistically, the most urgent issue for the DPP government is to face the coming severe challenges in the “nine-in-one” local elections in November 2022.

     Generally speaking, the advantage of the Asia-Pacific region still lies in the U.S.-Japan alliance, but whether it is stable or not depends on whether China will cause trouble. In Xi’s calculation, it is not an appropriate time for China to challenge the United States and its allies to duels. China’s apparent provocation is actually psychological intimidation, at least before the end of 2022. In a word, the priority tasks in Xi’s mind are two: to successfully celebrate the centenary of the party and to continue his control of the party’s power. Therefore, a “storm in the teapot” type of stability is in Xi’s interest. Certainly, Biden administration’s Pacifism-oriented mentality has indirectly induced China to take a violent strategy toward the United States and the free world.

     The tension in the Taiwan Strait will be escalated and turned into a new normal. At least, before Xi wins the power before late 2022, Beijing will keep drawing red lines to independence advocates on one hand, and offering incentives to pro-unification Taiwanese on the other hand. Nevertheless, such a CCP’s Taiwan policy has become increasingly far away from the actual order; and the red lines are no longer effective. An irreversible fact is that located at the axis of the First Island Chain, Taiwan has gradually been incorporated into U.S.-Japan systems technologically, militarily, socially, and ideologically. Chinese leaders will be set a dilemma: losing Taiwan in the puzzle of Chinese dream for a while longer or triggering a war, and repeating the Qing Dynasty’s defeat by the Eight-Nation alliance in 1900.

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蔡英文總統任期即將屆滿5年，現在可以仔細來分析一下其過去5年的經濟表現及主要經濟政策上的問題。從2016年到2020年的5年之間，蔡政府每年平均的實質經濟成長率為2.87%，略低於馬政府8年期間的3.00%。不過，因為兩任政府都曾遇到前所未有的全球經濟危機，馬政府時代在2008年至2009年間有全球金融海嘯，而蔡政府則面對全球新冠疫情的衝擊，對台灣經濟都造成嚴重的衝擊。所以，從總體面來看，兩任政府的經濟表現相去不遠。

再從經濟政策面來看，蔡政府有的幾個重大經濟政策，不是有嚴重問題就是有跳票的情況，值得吾人關注。在國內方面，蔡政府最大的經濟政策問題之一，就是過於急燥的能源政策，也就是所謂「2025非核家園」的政策目標。在不顧人民通過公投，反對「2025非核家園」的情況下，蔡政府為了快速達到非核家園的目標，一方面花大錢購買綠能，一方面為了彌補核電的不足，於是又快速的改用火力發電，結果增加大量煤碳發電造成嚴重的空氣汙染及其他影響。

雖然蔡政府號稱大力推動綠電，但是依台電最新公佈的資料顯示，綠電發電佔比從2016年的4.8%略為增加到5.4%，離2025年綠電要達到20%的目標相去甚遠。另一方面，在用電需求不斷增加的情況下，核電廠的供電也沒有減少，而且由於供電的吃緊，結果在短短幾年之間出現兩次全國性的大停電，顯示台灣現在供電的不穩定性與電網的脆弱。未來幾年如果還要以供電不穩的綠電來取代核電，台灣供電不穩定與脆弱會不會成為常態現象？

國內經濟的另外一個嚴重問題，就是依然高居不下的房價。過去幾年雖然推動實價登錄2.0與房地合一稅等等，但是仍然無法有效的控制房價。其實真正有效的是大幅提高囤房稅，因為這會讓囤房者每年都必需負擔高額的稅負，從而才有可能減少他們持有住宅的數量。另外，為提供年輕人及弱勢者更多的選擇，當時蔡政府承諾要提供20萬戶的社會住宅，現在五年過去了真正推動的社會住宅只有4.4萬戶，加上規畫中的8.3萬戶，全部也只有12.7萬戶，離當年承諾的20萬戶相差很大，更何況這些規畫中的8.3萬戶根本還不知道何時才可以看到。

在國際經貿方面，CPTPP已經在2018年底生效，RCEP也已經在2020年簽署，預計今年底或明年初就會生效，結果台灣卻仍然無法加入，甚至連申請的動作都看不到。另一方面，蔡政府不顧民意反對，執意開放美國萊豬，但是卻換不到美國的回應，台美FTA完全沒有影子。同時，在開放萊豬民意反彈的壓力下，蔡政府也不敢開放日本福島核食，結果台日FTA也看不到，當然以日本為首的CPTPP也很難有任何進展。

此外，新南向政策當年如火如荼的推動，結果台灣與新南向國家的經貿關係不但沒有增加，反而是逐漸減少。依財政部海關統計資料顯示，東協國家佔台灣出口比重最高的是2013年的19.0%，到2020年只剩下15.4%。也就是說，5年來的新南向政策可以說是完全看不到任何成效。

去年初疫情爆發，全球貿易量萎縮，導致台灣傳產出口下跌8.4%；而受惠於宅經濟的發達，台灣電子相關產業一枝獨秀，出口成長率高達17.9%。在後者的強力拉抬之下，出口仍能維持在4.9%的成長，也使得去年我國經濟成長率維持在3.11%。但是，在電子相關產業大幅成長的情況下，去年其出口已經占總出口的56.7%！而因為兩岸電子產業有高度產業鏈的關聯，再加上大陸對半導體進口需求，帶動台灣對大陸出口大幅成長14.6%，導致大陸占台灣出口比重由前一年的40.1%上升至43.8%。也就是說，雖然這兩年台灣出口順暢，帶動台灣經濟成長，但是也造成台灣的出口產業更集中在電子相關產業，出口地區則更為集中在中國大陸，形成台灣出口系統性風險的增加。

總體上來看，過去幾年台灣的經濟表現還算不差，但是經濟體質與結構上的問題仍然是相當嚴重，不論是國內部門或是國外部門都有很多的問題，政府相關部門應該更努力的去解決才是。

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