



中華民國總統 馬英九
President Ma Ying-jeou

Congratulatory Message

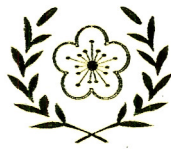
May 20, 2011

Dr. Bush, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to learn that the conference titled “Dawn of Modern China: The 100th Anniversary of China’s 1911 Revolution and the Significance of the Republic of China” is taking place in Washington, DC today. First of all, I would like to thank the Brookings Institution and Dr. Bush for providing me with this opportunity to share some thoughts with you. As the Republic of China celebrates its centennial anniversary this year, it is both timely and laudable for a renowned think tank such as the Brookings Institution to host a conference revisiting the significance of China’s 1911 revolution, reviewing the achievements made by the Republic of China, and shedding light on the prospects of the ROC in the coming century.

The evolution of modern China has been a journey in pursuit of wealth (富) and power (強). However, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the founding father of the Republic of China, fully understood that without the pillars of democracy and liberty, China would never be modernized. Wealth and power gained without the support of these pillars would be unsustainable. Therefore, he incorporated President Abraham Lincoln’s ideal of a “government of the people, by the people, for the people” in his “Three Principles of the People (三民主義).” This demonstrates that, from its inception, the ROC – the first republic in Asia – has had a deep bond with the United States based on shared values.

Following the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, two world wars and the rising tide of communism prevented the Chinese people from realizing our founding father’s promise of a free and democratic country. However, despite all the problems the country and the people had encountered, the ROC Constitution, adopted in 1947 on the basis of Dr. Sun’s ideals, has provided a comprehensive plan for political and economic development in Taiwan.



After the ROC government relocated its seat to Taiwan in 1949, it began a long journey toward democratization under a relatively stable environment, thanks in no small part to U.S. security assurances. Over time, elections expanded from counties and cities to provincial governments and, finally, to the national level. With its first direct presidential election in 1996 and the consolidation of democracy through peaceful transitions of power in 2000 and 2008, Taiwan became not only a full-fledged democracy – the first in five thousand years of Chinese history – but also a beacon of democracy for Asia and the world.

Meanwhile, mainland China headed in a totally different direction. In 1979, following three decades of tragedy and failure, it commenced a single-minded pursuit of wealth and power. Thirty years later, it is now painfully clear that, without democracy and liberty, rising military and economic power also breeds fear and distrust among the mainland's neighbors.

Without comprehensive political reform – as I have urged repeatedly on the anniversaries of the event in Tiananmen Square, and in my call for the release of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Liu Xiaobo – mainland China cannot sustain the wealth and power it has amassed or win the world's respect and trust. Their leaders know this, and hopefully they will act accordingly.

In the past three years, Taiwan has reduced tension in the Taiwan Strait and improved economic and social relations with mainland China. Today, with 1.5 million Taiwanese people living and doing business in mainland China and a roughly equal number of mainland tourists visiting Taiwan each year, I firmly believe that Taiwan is playing a historic role by providing mainland China, via people-to-people exchanges, with a free and democratic framework of reference.

Over the course of the past century, the Republic of China has forged a close alliance and partnership with the United States in combating the scourges of aggression, communism, and terrorism. We have also worked together to promote liberty, democracy, and free enterprise. With strong support from the United States, Taiwan has become a resilient economy, a vibrant democracy, and a generous contributor to the international community.



As the ROC enters a new century, I pledge to my fellow citizens to continue Taiwan's course on the cutting edge of technological and industrial advancement. Our culture and society will be an exemplar for the Chinese world and beyond. We will fully uphold our responsibilities to our land by respecting the environment, to our country by following the constitution that is the foundation of our government, and to our people by providing necessary services and fundamental liberties. Last but not least, we will promote peace, stability, and security by exercising our right to self-defense.

Together with the United States, the Republic of China has achieved much in its first century, and we will accomplish even more as we embark on our next hundred-year journey.

In closing, let me extend my best wishes for the great success of this event and good health and happiness of all in attendance.

馬英九
Ma Ying-jeou