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Coordinator's Corner

Eileen Lin

This summer was filled with major events, such as Congressional hearings on Taiwan and Dr. Tsai Ing-wen's U.S. visit. Most importantly, YPG held its biggest event of the year, National Advocacy Conference, on the last weekend of August in Washington DC.

The National Advocacy Conference gathered as many as 60 participants this year despite the Hurricane Irene's surprise visit. The participants acquired helpful information from 2 young U.S. scholars on US-Taiwan-China relationships and exchanged interesting ideas to contribute to the Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) project for Taiwan's 2012 Presidential Election. The members made over 45 appointments with Congressional offices. Furthermore, YPG Steering Committee had a chance to meet with FAPA Standing Committee in person to finalize YPG's very first set of by-laws.

Immediately right after Dr. Tsai Ing-wen's visit in East Coast, YPG members from Boston to DC gathered in New York City on Sept. 17 for the "UN for Taiwan" Rally. This is the first time that young Taiwanese Americans take charge of the event in 19 years of the UN movement. YPG NY/NJ Chapter worked rigorously on planning and recruiting young people to join the event. About 600 people assembled in Time Square for the rally and gathered about 700 petition letters for UN Resolution HCR 77. A surprise visit of a violent Chinese lady cursing at us and attempting to tear down our banner riled up our crowd and united us with the spirit of "Keep Taiwan Free." As an MC, I was able to witness this unforgettable moment of blood-boiling Taiwanese Americans united front from the stage - it was amazing! Here is a glimpse of the action: http://tinyurl.com/un4tw

YPGers march at the UN for Taiwan Rally in New York City

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YPG members felt very pumped after the rally and YPG Steering Committee would like to sustain this momentum by creating more projects to engage our members. YPG is currently producing a promotional video, as well as three GOTV videos to encourage Taiwanese youths to vote on January 14, 2012. We hope to contribute to Taiwan's Presidential Election by showing Taiwanese youths how passionate Taiwanese Americans are in terms of advocating for Taiwan's international recognition and hope to empower them with our passion and belief.

Young Professional Group Annual Conference Report

Tim Lee

Let me first introduce myself. My name is Tim Lee, a recent graduate from the University of Washington. I was born and raised in Taipei, Taiwan until I was 16, then I came to the States to pursue a better education. I was brought up in a family of mixed political views, so I tend to empathize with all sides and think in others' shoes.

So I came to the YPG Seattle regional workshop with the preconception that this would probably turn to be one of those politics-infested activities. However, after sitting down with Eileen Lin, Jonathan Lee, and Kevin Wu for dinner the night before, I started to feel how down to earth the YPGers were and how we were all working towards the same goal- to gain support for Taiwan. This impression was reaffirmed on the following day by their well-coordinated workshop that not only introduced the ABC's of grassroot advocacy but also prompted us to think outside the box with guest speaker Lily Hsueh's talk on environmental issues pertaining to Taiwan. I especially liked the Lily's talk since it was not intensely focused on the political issues that most Taiwanese bicker about but rather a more common goal without borders.

Although I did not stick around until the end of the event, I took away much of the experience with FAPAYPG; I in turn took part in the D.C. conference few months later hoping to see the entire scope of this organization and to network with young minds who share the same ideology. Indeed, I am really glad that I made the first step to join the regional workshop as well as the conference in D.C.. I continue to stay in touch closely with the people I met during the workshop and the conference and work with our local Taiwanese community to fight for the same cause.

We Love Democracy, We Keep Taiwan Free: Report on the UN for Taiwan Rally

Alysa Chiu

七百名群眾於紐約時代廣場手護台灣 向世界傳達台灣加入聯合國之理念

於聯合國六十六屆會員大會如火如荼召開之際，由聯合國行動委員會以及大紐約同鄉會所主辦的手護台灣前進聯合國的活動也於今年邁向第十九年。此活動由眾多台美人社團與台灣聯合國協進會(TAIUNA)共同舉辦，本年度首次交棒給新生代全權主導，其中活動內容由台灣人公共事務協會青年團(FAPA-YPG)精心策劃，主辦人賴弘典醫師表示交棒給新生代，讓本次參加活動的青年人數打破紀錄，為往年的三倍之多! 為時三小時的活動由主題演講，精神口號及樂團表演貫穿並穿插小短劇以及最終全場手護台灣自由的活動畫下完美句點。

此次演講幾乎以全英文進行，講者多為年輕一代的新面孔。演講者法學博士陳隆志教授以法律的觀點重申台灣入聯的正當性以及台灣作為一個主權獨立國家的合法性。遠從台灣赴美的宣達團代表也表達身為台灣人渴望國際認可的訴求。曾在聯合國實習生吳承瑾及謝明叡以局內人的觀點倡導入聯的重要性。吳表示工作時看見世界所有國家每天如火如荼地討論許多國際上的重要議題及解決方案，台灣被嚴重排擠在外的處境不僅使台灣無法跟進全球化的腳步並將兩千三百萬台灣人陷入極危險之處境。謝則強調依造國際法及聯合國憲章，台灣符合所有成為正常國家的要件及所有加入聯合國的條件，並且在很多領域上可以貢獻國際社會，無法與世界接軌為國際社會的巨大損失。

全國性台美人公民協會(TACL)的主席廖泰德則以美國911為鑑來強化自由與和平的重要性。並強調台灣為一全然落實民主的國家，此珍貴資產需要美國及全世界持續支持。激昂的嗓音激發了所有參與者及路人的熱情，卻也讓場邊一位中國女士不停地大罵髒話並激動地試圖扯下活動台上的布幕干擾活動進行。此舉激發了民眾更堅定守護台灣自由的意志，全場不間斷地高喊KEEP TAIWAN FREE。廖於台上回應尊重此人言論自由，因為民主正是中國最缺乏的元素。 Gigaherbs樂團則以音樂傳達民主與和平的重要性。為時五分鐘的小短劇主要傳達出因中國利用其他國際議題與他國利益交換來四處打壓台灣，使得台灣國際空間受到嚴重排擠的現實。因此被孤立的台灣需要美國及世界的支持才得以讓聯合國得到普世認同，同時實踐美國對於民主價值的承諾。活動過程引起現場時代廣場大批民眾圍觀支持，來來往往的觀光巴士甚至停留拍照比出大拇指表現支持並同聲高喊KEEP TAIWAN FREE

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此次活動不僅吸引上千名來往民眾圍觀，將進六十名青年團義工更是在三小時內取得七百份美國國會眾議院提案HCR77-支持台灣加入聯合國請願書的簽暑，可望在美國國會持續發揮影響力。活動的尾聲，全場六百人手牽著手包圍時代廣場高呼守護台灣自由。由十位年輕人上台分別告訴群眾十個支持守護台灣自由行動的理由，其中包含民主、人權、正義、和平、民族自決、國防安全、平等代表權、台灣的國家主權、台灣的國際貢獻以及強化台美同盟關係的重要性。此守護台灣自由行動將會一直持續下去，為台灣爭取國際社會的認可，更讓全世界聽到台灣迫切需要國際支持的聲音。

To My Freedom FIghters

Chia Liu

So last week was a very Taiwan-intensive week for me. It was a beautiful thing to see so many passionate people fighting for freedom and democracy together. Now, what's next?
We need to mobilize and inspire others who share our values. This cannot be done without addressing the following, openly and honestly:
What is the OTHER side of the story?
What makes Taiwan Independence the "right thing" to support?
Is there anything beyond Taiwan Independence?

China's Side

To China, Taiwan is a renegade province. It is the last piece of the missing puzzle. Taiwan is the remaining constant reminder of how pathetic China was in the 19th & early 20th century, at which time China suffered tremendous loss of pride and territories from numerous wars. People were raped and killed. Villages were pillaged and burned to the ground. China couldn't hand out land fast enough to save its own life. They have since recovered and prospered within the past few decades. China regained Hong Kong and Macao, yet Taiwan is still hanging out there, like a thorn in China's eye. "Retaking" Taiwan will not only boost China militarily & economically, it is like Viagra to the Chinese Communist Party's limping support. The government and its people believe that the successful annexation of Taiwan is the best way to say, "We have finally arrived, bitches!" Taiwan is not only economically valuable to China, it is also symbolically valuable.

The power of nationalism should never be underestimated. I love my country Taiwan. The Chinese love their country China. Since the Opium War in 1840, China has suffered a pretty humiliating century. Tragedies particularly fuels nationalism (Taiwanese people sure know it). The obnoxious anti-keep-Taiwan-free anti-free-Tibet people are not just brainwashed zombie-haters. They are real people who are protecting something very real to them: Chinese nationalism. They are not receiving the validation they want from Taiwan, because most Taiwanese people reject the idea of unifying with a country that despite its recent rise, is still for the moment economically, politically, and socially eating Taiwan's dust. China cannot reconcile with its painful past without a proper closure. That closure happens to be "reclaiming" all previously lost territories at all cost. People's Republic of China can't deal with occupying a much smaller land mass than Qing Dynasty China (which at its height, encompassed nearly 1/10 of the world's land, and ruled more than 1/3 of the world's population). Chinese nationalism sustained tremendous damage and disappointment through decades of foreign invasion and internal turmoil. We need to understand that China is seeking its own version of justice, just as we are.

Pro-Unification Taiwanese's Side

Most Taiwanese pro-unification or anti-independence (we'll call them pan-blue here) folks believe that

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appeasing China will only advance Taiwan's opportunities to play with the big boys internationally. Since China is the rising dragon guarding a world of treasures, if we can't beat them, we need to join them. If by accepting the label, "Taiwan, Province of China" will enable Taiwan to obtain resources that it's been previously denied, who gives a damn about the naming convention. See, they even let us compete in the Olympic events as Chinese Taipei! Better than not having been able to compete at all.

We need to look at their approach as "pragmatic" and "business-oriented." You may think that they don't love Taiwan as much as you do. Actually, they do. Most of them will live and die there, while you and I will most likely be in America, enjoying our American democracy. They don't see the importance of declaring official independence because they don't believe that China will take away Taiwan's democracy. They believe in the possibility of one country ruled under two systems. If we were to ask people if they would support unification with China if it means that Taiwan will become subjected to the rule of the Chinese Communist Party, that side of the stadium most likely will quickly empty out.

A belief is nothing more than an imagination of how things will go down. The truth is, we don't know what is going to happen if Armageddon i.e. China taking over Taiwan, really takes place. We project, absorb, digest information according to our existing beliefs and each follow our own prophet. I have never met any pan-blue supporters looking forward to totalitarianism. It is very important to keep in mind that nobody hates democracy, and we're not as different as we think we are.

What makes Taiwan Independence the "right thing" to support?

The quick and dirty answer is to protect the existing freedom. People bled and set themselves on fire decades ago for the very democracy Taiwan enjoys right now. If you're too chicken shit to do the same (I am) the least you can do is to protect their legacy.

Many pan-blue supporters argue, "We enjoy democracy right now, why don't you keep your mouth shut before you piss China off. They might just come over here and cut off our freedom."

What kind of freedom is that? We're only free if someone allows us to be free? Here's some monopoly money why don't you go knock yourself out. You can hang on to your pseudo-freedom, I want the real thing.

Others say, "You're pushing against a rock, what's the point?"

Sure we might fail. Sure we might accomplish nothing in the end. The truth of the matter is, we can risk the possibility of wasting time, but we can't afford the possible consequences of having done nothing. We were born to do more than to eat, sleep and poop for 70-80 years. Since it's unlikely that I will contribute to any kind of technological or medical advancement, this is the least I can do. Part of being human is embracing unrealistic and impractical ideas just so our future generations can catch a glimpse of hope for achieving a higher civilization. Every little thing we take for granted in life is the embodiment of people's work before us including but not limited to the right to vote, religion, education, reproductive freedom, etc. Humanity is not always cost-effective or the shortest path between point A and B. It entails doing things that don't necessarily make business-sense. For the very reason we don't abandon wounded soldiers or execute all handicapped people just to save money, we protect what is important to us not because it will generate the maximum amount of income or revenue for us, but because it is the right thing to do.

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Beyond Taiwan Independence

I support Taiwan, I support Taiwan Independence, but I don't support all of the people who support Taiwan Independence. I have a dream, and I can tell you what my dream is, but some people can't really tell you what their dream is, except that Chinese people are a nightmare. The acceptance of Chinese people in Taiwan will only increase, not decrease (inter-marriage, social and business interactions, etc). The number of Chinese people will only increase, not decrease (simple math and out-migration policy changes). Racism is always a losing battle. Xenophobia is not a self-sustainable reason to love or hate anything. Everyone deserves democracy and freedom. Yes, you too, lady-who-tried-to-tear-down-our-banner.

For a movement to have any meaning at all, it needs to constantly streamline its focus. Noise not only distracts, it also detracts. Keep our eyes on the prize. Keep asking ourselves why. Keep Taiwan Free.

YPG Chapter Report: New York/New Jersey

Tony Hong

We started summer on a historical note with Su Beng, a 92 year old revolutionary best known for his lifelong work on behalf of Taiwan. We followed along with admiration as he passionately described the experiences that shaped his life. Afterwards, we gathered at a local bar to continue the discussion amongst friends old and new. A couple weeks later, we hosted our first monthly mixer in Times Square. With our Chapter's increased visibility in the community, the mixer grew significantly during the summer and reached over 80 participants at our latest gathering! The mixers have been a terrific venue for bonding with current members and meeting new ones.

Above left: YPG mixer in Times Square; Above right: Outreach in Union Square- Go Taiwan!

Summertime activities peaked the following month as we prepared for the UN for Taiwan Rally. In collaboration with other Taiwanese American groups as well as DC and Boston YPG, we organized a week long series of events that attracted over 300 participants to Taiwan Week. It started late Saturday night with Chairman and Hsunami at Arlene's Grocery and carried on throughout the week with Taiwan Heritage Night at Citi Field, Movie Night at NYU featuring Night Market Hero and Tsai Ing-wen's Fundraising Dinner. Taiwan Week culminated in the

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Rally which saw one of the strongest YPG turnouts in recent years. We look forward to working with everyone again next year - let's make the 20th anniversary of the Rally a memorable one!

As we move towards fall, we remain excited and motivated and hope to continue building on our momentum. To follow us in real-time, join our Facebook page at: http://www.facebook.com/groups/nynjypg/.

YPG Chapter Report: Washington D.C.

Janice Chen

The DC chapter continued growing its presence through the summer and early fall. In July the chapter hosted a speaking event with legendary Taiwanese Independence activist and author if the landmark 1962 title, Taiwan's 400 Year History, Su Beng, on his first trip to the U.S. in many years. A small crowd of 19 people listened as Su Beng related his experience of going from an anti-Japanese sentiment, working undercover for the communists during the Chinese Civil War, to fighting against the KMT in Taiwan. Members of the audience asked diverse questions relating to the current state of Taiwan's democracy and political development, his thoughts on Taiwan's geopolitical importance, and what price Taiwan should be willing to pay to preserve its independence. At the conclusion of the talk, participants watched Su Beng's video, played piano and sang together, and asked him to autograph books, CDs, and flags. The overall consensus seemed to be that even though we might not agree for the full 100% with his ideals and works, we very much admire his dedication to Taiwan's independence.

Above: YPG-ers listen intently as Su Beng talks about Taiwan in his time.

In the last weekend of August, several local members were also in attendance as we welcomed YPG members from around the country to DC for the annual National Conference. DC members gave presentations and joined in many of the congressional visits that took place the Monday following the weekend conference. We especially appreciated having the opportunity to share interact face-to-face with representatives of other chapters to share our experiences about the challenges of recruiting and maintaining chapter membership, and to exchanged idea about potential activities for the future. Then in mid-September, as the United Nations General Assembly opened its session for the year, we again road-tripped to New York City to for the annual UN for Taiwan rally, which this year was coordinated and executed by the New York/New Jersey chapter. DC members played prominent supporting roles both onstage, as co-MCs and skit actors, and down in the crowd, gathering petition signatures in support of H. Con. Res. 77 for Taiwan's membership in to the United Nations. Participants agreed that this event helped to energize the YPG membership all along the eastern seaboard and will surely inspire us to work together to complete several other big projects we have in mind for the rest of the year.

YPG Chapter Report: Boston

Chia-Chun Chung

On June 26, YPG and FAPA members spent a weekend in New Hampshire for our second annual Freedom Climb up Mt. Washington. It was a fun two days, with many great conversations among the group. Although the weather was less than ideal, we pressed on and took pictures with Taiwan and Tibet flags at the summit. The scenery along the hike was out-of-the-world. Come join us next summer!

Above: Boston YPG Members on the Freedom Climb to Mt. Washington

On July 17, FAPA-YPG members hosted an event for Su Beng at Harvard University. Approximately 20 young professionals and students attended. Su Beng shared stories of his early life and his advice for the younger generation. He also explained his thoughts on government. After the event, many in the group stayed to have dinner with Su Beng. It was a great cross-generation gathering.

In October, several members took part in the "Keep Taiwan Free" video campaign. Look for the video to see if you recognize any of the Boston landmarks!

YPG Chapter Report: Seattle

Alan Luo

The Seattle FAPA YPG launched their online advocacy website, the American Citizens for Taiwan (ACT), version 1.0, in mid September. The website is http://americancitizensfortaiwan.org/ . The ACT website is to influence American voters to support Taiwan, as well as provide an online portal for them to send letters to their regional representatives. Please help to spread the words about this website, and urge people to sign up. We plan to send out first action alert to subscribers soon in order to support the Taiwan Policy Act recently introduced to the House.

YPG Chapter Report: San Franscisco

Steven Chang

As we head into the start of yet another rainy season here in San Francisco, we reflect on our accomplishments over the past couple of months. Our huge event this fall was a seminar at UC Berkeley titled, "San Francisco Peace Treaty: 60 Years Later, Implications for Taiwan Today." The event marked the 60th anniversary of the SF Peace Treaty, which formally ended World War II. Our panel of terrific speakers, lead by FAPA's own Gerrit van der Wees, included John Tkacik Jr., Akira Chiba and Gordon Chang.

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The seminar examined the historical and political implications of the treaty on Taiwan's past, present and future. Gordon Chang gave a particularly rousing speech to conclude the event, which can be viewed in its entirety on YouTube! Just search for the term "FAPAYPGSF". Fall is also the time for San Francisco Film Society's "Taiwan Film Days," an event featuring screenings of the best of contemporary Taiwanese Cinema. This year we teamed up with our local TAP-SF chapter for a movie outing and mixer event. There were many in attendance and a great time was had by all!

YPG Chapter Reports: Los Angeles/Orange County

Daniel Lin

Just like the previous years, YPG LA/OC Chapters were heavily involved in our local Taiwanese community and hosted or participated in many Taiwan action related events. Our boardmembers consist of 8 people, Tony Lee, Patrick yang, Arthur Chang, Carrie Han, Emily Hu, Jack Lin and myself. Our 2nd annual Christmas Boat Parade Party was held at Newport Beach again with sponsorship from Friends of Taiwan.

One of the biggest highlight of the year for YPG members was joining the 1st ever Taiwan Dragon Boat team, at least in the State of California that is. Although Taiwan Dragon Boat team was not an official YPG sponsored team, but many YPGer participated in this and the chief organizer of the team is none other than one of our own YPG boardmember, Carrie Han. Our team practiced for 4 months straight, from April to July, competed in 2 tournaments, the Long Beach Dragon Boat Tournament & Las Vegas Rose Regatta Dragon Boat Tournament

Above: YPG members at the Christmas Boat Party

(Found Raising for Breast Cancer Patients.) This is the 1st time ever, an official Dragon Boat team competed in the state of California (I'm not sure about Vegas though) that carried the name of "Taiwan". Here is the official site for the team with our promo video that I put together. http://www.teamtaiwan.org/

Both Su Beng Town Hall Meeting & Dr. Tsai's Presidential Rally were one of a kind. Su Beng Town Hall meeting was hosted by YPG, YPGers gotten a chance to get to know and have an up-close discussion with this legendary figure, we had about 30-35 people in attendance at Taiwan Center, it was a group effort by all boardmembers to put this together. As for Dr. Tsai's event, I am sure it really needs no introduction, many YPGers participated in attendance or volunteered as security forces. It was a pleasure to many us to meet Dr. Tsai in person, some of us volunteers were lucky enough to have group pictures taken with her at the end of the day.

Left: YPG-ers with Su Beng;
Right: Proud volunteers pose with Dr. Tsai

All in all, this is another eventful year for YPG LA/OC Chapter, we will keep up the hard work and continue to represent Taiwan proudly.