



Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

Two-Day Webinar Handbook

*The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the
Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia*

Date: 20:00 p.m. (GMT+8:00) on 7 & 8 December 2021

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Co-Conveners: Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson (WCRC) and Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum (CWM)

ASIA PACIFIC KAIROS: A prophetic call to journey together with the PCT in pursuit of justice and peace for the people of Taiwan and the Asia-Pacific

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God” Micah 6:8

November 4, 2021

Dear Ecumenical Partners,

Warm greetings to you from Taiwan, the PCT and the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF) for Justice and Peace. Trust you have been keeping well during these extraordinary pandemic days.

The TEF will be holding a two-day webinar under the theme: “The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia.” Please refer to the attached concept note. You are cordially invited to participate in this webinar whose keynote presentation will be by a Taiwanese scholar, Dr. Lai I-Chung.

The webinar will take place on December 7 and 8, each a two-hour session. Due to the worldwide location of various speakers, panelists and convenors, each session will begin at 8 PM Taiwan time.

Please refer to the attached program for the webinar.

On the second day a panel of 5 from Korea, Japan, HK, Philippines, and Aotearoa/New Zealand, the panelists will speak from their national perspectives.

As you undoubtedly are aware, the regional tension is getting serious in East Asia. TEF is addressing this burning issue to share with the ecumenical family. We would be very honoured if you can accept our invitation to participate in this two-day webinar.

With much appreciation,

Chris Ferguson and Jooseop Keum
TEF Co-convenors



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Concept Paper

Two-day Webinar: A critical theological and missiological conversation on East Asia Geopolitics from a regional perspective.

Theme: “The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia.”

Proposal: To deepen the reflection presented in the last TEF steering group meeting by providing a global and regional perspective and stimulating a conversation on the churches’ role for just and peaceful co-existence in the face of shifting power relations and regional instability focusing on but going beyond the China-US Imperial and hegemonic power struggle noting the roles of Japan and India among others. The webinar will invite reflections from the perspective of people’s movements and life-centered values rooted in nurturing a renewed gospel-based theological prophetic imagination to usher in transformed regional relationships for the “healing of the nations.”

The intention is to contextualize the Taiwan – China conflict in a regional/global perspective focused on forward-looking, justice-seeking missiological imperatives for the church in (N) EA and globally which lead beyond descriptive analyses of Imperial power plays.

The webinar will involve two sessions of two hours each with speakers from Taiwan, Aotearoa/New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan and the Philippines enriched with reactions and dialogue with participants in TEF from a global perspective.



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Two-Day Webinar Agenda

Date: 20:00 p.m. (GMT+8:00) on 7 & 8 December

Theme: The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia

December 7, 2021	
20:00-20:05	Welcome Message: Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of the Council for World Mission
20:05-21:00	Moderator: Professor Victor Hsu, TEF Task Force Convener Keynote Speaker: Dr. Lai, I-Chung, President of the Prospect Foundation in Taiwan
21:00-21:15	Response 1: Rev. Dr. Roderick Hewitt, President of International University of the Caribbean
21:15-21:30	Response 2: Rev. Dr. Nancy C. Pittman, President and Stephen J. England Associate Professor of the Practice of Ministry at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa
21:30-22:00	Q&A
December 8, 2021	
20:00-21:15	Moderator: Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson, Former General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches Five Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New Zealand: Rev. Phil King, Global Mission Director of Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand ➤ Hong Kong: Associate Professor Kung Lap-Yan, Divinity School of Chung Chi College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong ➤ Korea: Professor Yi, Ki-Ho, the Executive Director of Center for Peace and Public Integrity in Hanshin University, South Korea ➤ Japan: Rev. Makoto Kato, Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Ministries of United Church of Christ in Japan ➤ The Philippines: Rt. Rev. Dr. Rex R. B. Reyes, Jr., Coadjutor Bishop of Episcopal Diocese of Central Philippines
21:15-22:00	Moderator: Rev. Dr. Tin, Giong-Un, WCC Central Committee member Q&A

Two-Day Webinar

The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia

Date: 20:00 p.m. (GMT+8:00) on 7 December 2021

Day 1



Rev. Dr Jooseop Keum is the general secretary of Council for World Mission (CWM) based in Singapore. He also teaches as guest professor at Yonsei University in the Republic of Korea and Stellenbosch University in South Africa. He was distinguished professor of world Christianity at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary (PUTS) and served as director of Korea Institute for Future Ecumenism (KIFE), from 2018-2021. Professor Keum served as director of Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of World Council of Churches based in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2007-2018. During the period, he also served as the editor of *International Review of Mission* (IRM), which is the oldest international missiological journal incepted by the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910. He is the main editor of the new WCC mission statement, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* and director of the World Mission Conference in 2018, Arusha Tanzania. Before WCC, Dr Keum served CWM as the executive secretary of Mission Programme from 2003-2007. He received BA, MDiv at PUTS, MTh cum laude and PhD at the Centre for the Study of World Christianity, University of Edinburgh. Dr Keum was awarded Honorary Doctor of Reformed Theology at the Reformed University of Debrecen in Hungary and Honorary Doctor of Orthodox Theology at the University of Sibiu in Romania. Dr Keum's main focus of research is ecumenical understanding and practice of mission in the context of world Christianity. He is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK).

Welcome Message

Dear friends,

Greetings of Advent to you all in the name of Christ the Saviour!

As we begin the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum (TEF) webinar on “The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia.”, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all on behalf of TEF.

The advent season that we are celebrating now reminds us that Christ came to bring peace and justice to the oppressed. Indeed, Justice and Peace are what we need in the midst of the growing tensions in the Northeast Asian region and especially in Taiwan.

Although the Covid-19 global pandemic brought many parts of the globe to a standstill, the geopolitical rivalries in Northeast Asia have been further intensified during this pandemic.

The unprecedented interference of Chinese military aircrafts and naval vessels over Taiwanese skies and waters, the deadliest clashes between Chinese and Indian soldiers along the China-Indian disputed border, North Korea’s continued pursue of Nuclear and missile development, the rise of ultra-right wing militarism in Japan, the recent protests in Hong Kong are some of the examples of growing tensions and peacelessness in Northeast Asia, and it’s neighbouring regions.

Taiwan, particularly, has been on the hot seat of the geopolitical game between the US and China due to the deteriorating relations in the context of the Pandemic. The pandemic also fuelled the wrong ideologies that the authoritarian government models are better equipped to deal with the challenges of the 21st century than the democratic governments. Taiwan being vibrantly democratic and liberal, and at the same time, sharing cultural civilization from China and Asia stands at the centre of ideological conflicts between liberal democracy and authoritarianism. Just like Korea, Taiwan also became a battleground of the war of ideological dominance between two empires, the US and China.

All these tensions together have been evolving into a “Probable but not just possible cold war” in this region, as said by Kevin Rudd, the former Australian prime minister, and long-time China expert. Many others believe that the Neo-Cold war has already started to emerge out of all these conflicts.

It is in this context we meet together in this two-day webinar to discern a way forward in our ecumenical search for peace and justice in this region. We cannot be silent to the ongoing injustices that our regions are suffering. We need to mobilise and revitalise our ecumenical solidarity. We need to join together to reflect upon our prophetic action to pursue a just and peaceful society raising against the hegemonic powers.

Therefore, I would like to welcome you all to this webinar and thank you for the solidarity and action that you have expressed by joining. I especially thank the PCT for organizing this webinar.

May these two days of sessions be enriching and challenging to us as we discern a collective prophetic action against oppressive ideologies.

Thank you.

Jooseop Keum

Co-convener, TEF

Moderator:



Prof. Victor Hsu was born in Taiwan and grew up in Mauritius. He received his graduate school training at Yale University and Union Theological Seminary. His ecumenical career began with the World Council of Churches (1976-1987) responsible for UN and NGO relations. From 1987 to 2005 he was Director of the Asia / Pacific Office and Senior Advisor to the NCCCUSA. He was national director for North Korea for World Vision International from 2005-2010. Prior to returning to Taiwan in 2013 as Associate General Secretary for the PCT, he was Professor for International Development and Assistance of the Korea Development Institute. He now serves as Advisor to the PCT General Secretary.

Keynote Speaker:



Dr. Lai, I-Chung

Ph.D. from Virginia Tech-Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

- ◆ Visiting Researcher, Cornell University
- ◆ Executive Director, Mission in the United States, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
- ◆ Special Assistant, Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in Tokyo
- ◆ Director General, Department of China Affairs, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
- ◆ Director General, Department of International Affairs, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
- ◆ Vice President, Taiwan Thinktank

Current: President, Prospect Foundation

Asia's new “Cold War” and the possible upcoming of Cross-Strait War

Dr. Lai, I-Chung, President of the Prospect Foundation in Taiwan

China’s military threat to Taiwan is increasing

The possibility of the Cross-Strait conflict has been increasing during the recent years. Since Tsai Ing-wen, who is generally regarded as representative of the camp of pro-Taiwan’s sovereign autonomy, was elected as Taiwan’s President in 2016, she has reversed Former President Ma Ying-jeou’s long-time pro-China policy. In response to this, China took more oppressive measure to force Taiwan to conform to its political will. Since September in 2016, China has posed military threat to Taiwan by increasing the frequency of sending military aircraft to fly into Taiwan’s airspace. Even the world was shrouded in shadow of Covid-19 pandemic, instead of suspending its military threat to Taiwan, China had taken the chance of the United States being trapped in pandemic-caused domestic political chaos and the vacuum of US’ Indo-Pacific military deployment to strengthen its political pressure on Taiwan. The number of warplanes China sent to flex its military muscles to Taiwan is over 380 in 2020. In 2021, the number is nearly 1000, which is close to three times than the number in the previous year.

Not only deploying military force to pose a threat to Taiwan, China furtherly imposed pressure on other countries to cease any form of interaction with Taiwan. The intention of China is to eliminate the activity space of Taiwan in the world. Taiwan has been losing its diplomatic ties with eight countries while keeping only fourteen officially during the recent years just because China had resorted to carrot and stick interchangeably in the global stage. Besides, the measure China took to pressure Taiwan includes requiring multinational corporations to change Taiwan’s status in these enterprises’ global map. Since May 2018, the Government of China has begun to demand multinational enterprises to label Taiwan as a part of China. The direct consequence of this was that some companies applied their regulations in China to those in Taiwan. For instance, some logistics companies whose business relates to international publication called out importing to Taiwan foreign-language books which are prohibited in China. They totally ignored the fact that Taiwan and China are two different countries and that Taiwan is a democratic society where people have the complete freedom of expression.

China’s President Xi Jinping reclaimed that China had sought to annex Taiwan in the way of “one country, two systems” and had commenced related work of “two systems” solution to the Taiwan question. China had passed the “Anti-Secession Law” in 2005, claiming to adopt “non-peaceful means” to solve “Taiwan question.” Now on March 2022, members of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference proposed that it’s necessary to formulate a “National Reunification Law” because the existing “Anti-Secession Law” is not enough to achieve the goal of “reunification” with

Taiwan. Before this, a former China's official also proposed considering a "compulsory reunification" plan which allows the Government of China to use relatively limited but essentially compulsory military force to coerce Taiwanese people to accept the destiny of "eventual reunification" with China.

On January 2021, Xi Jinping declared again to make "reunification with Taiwan" in the way of "one country, two systems." Several months later, the Government of China practiced so-called "one country, two systems" by violently repressing Hong Kong people who protested over Hong Kong extradition bill. One year later, China's central government passed the Hong Kong national security law which deprived Hong Kong of its limited autonomy. The passing of the law is directly responsible for the perishing of Hong Kong's one country, two systems.

Though Xi Jinping promised to seek reunification with Taiwan in "one country, two systems," the action he took had been to completely destroy Hong Kong's one country, two systems. In the light of China's increasing frequency of military threat, the prevailing voices inside Chinese society to achieve reunification with Taiwan by means of military forces, and China's sealing Taiwan's representation and status in the world stage, experts in international security worry that China might directly resort to military force to take Taiwan. Before Russia invaded Ukraine, Taiwan Strait had been regarded by international media including Economist as conflict zone with high risks. After Russia invaded Ukraine, the worry that China might take similar action to invade Taiwan had been also rising. Diplomatic analysts worry for good reason that Russia's invasion of Ukraine today might encourage China to launch an assault on Taiwan tomorrow.

China's military threat is not only to Taiwan, but also to China's neighboring countries in Asia

China's military threat not only influences Taiwan, but also other countries including Japan Philippines, Vietnam, and India neighboring China. In response to Senkaku Islands dispute and the territorial disputes in the South China Sea, China has been deploying naval ships and official ships continuously to enter these disputed waters since 2012. Also, Sino-Indian border dispute reached a peak because China's army launched an assault on India's army, causing the death of 20 India's soldiers. As Taiwan has learned from the experience of decades-long interaction with China, these countries neighboring China had found that Beijing's attitude toward territorial dispute with its neighbors is not seeking to solve disputes by means of peaceful measure, but carrying out its assertion by taking military measure unilaterally, even at cost of blood.

With complicated historical background, Asia is a region including various ethnic groups, languages, cultures, and religious beliefs. Western colonial legacy since 16th century and the shadow of 20th-century Cold War filled this area with political strife. However, what is special today is that the main

disputes in Asia, including the possible Cross-Strait War, the conflicts in the South China Sea, disputes in the East China Sea, the Sino-Indian border disputes, and the North Korean Nuclear Crisis, are directly or indirectly related to China. China is either a party in charge or a participant who plays a catalyst to deteriorate the disputes. To Indo-Pakistani conflicts, though China is not a party in charge, it takes advantage of Pakistan as leverage of geopolitical strategy to confront India. By pouring resources into Pakistan, Beijing indirectly urges these two countries to upgrade traditional weapons to nuclear ones. The current has become significant for the past decade.

Dictatorship is the major cause of military expansion

The major cause that China brings about many problems for Asia and other regions is not the aggressive nature of Chinese civilization but China's dictatorship.

The regime of China today is authoritarianism. However, international observers found that after Xi Jinping became China's leader in 2013, China had become much more belligerent than ever. After the year, the Government of China began to tear down Christian churches, to detain Uyghurs in internment camps in large scale, and to trap Hong Kong people into deeper unfree situation by taking repressive measure to deal with their protests.

After Xi Jinping took power, he had initiated aggressive military actions in the East China Sea, the South China Sea, and Taiwan Strait in the name of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." China has never changed its sovereign claim over these disputed territories because of the succession of leaders. However, it was Xi Jinping who started to aggressively compel the neighboring countries to either accept China's sovereign claim of territories or to face military response.

Although these aggressive actions might be related to Xi Jinping's personal political belief, Xi's gradual centralizing of CCP's ruling power plays an essential role in forming China's international expansionism. Since Xi Jinping came to power in the beginning, he had been regarded as a relatively weak political leader. However, several attempts to assassinate Xi compelled him not only to consolidate his bodyguard system but also to actively seize the military power as much as possible. Rumors said that there had been at least six times of attempts to assassinate President Xi. With Xi's active seizure of military power, he marked "Chinese Dream" as a political symbol and asserted to build a Chinese army which "can fight, dare to fight, and not fear to fight." Xi also purged the military officers disloyal to him in the People's Liberation Army at opportunity of military reform. Though Xi took the chance to eliminate the dissents in the army, People's Liberation Army had been transformed into a bellicose and fierce army and a team of bodyguards which is absolutely loyal to "the core leader Xi."

The special phenomenon which highlights the party-state system's personal loyalty to Xi and its unity under "the core leader Xi" appeared obviously during Xi's second term (2017-2022). It might be due to Xi's requiring units at all levels to pledge an allegiance to him in the difficult situation of his power not being consolidated completely. Xi's leadership style is very similar to the Red Guards' showing cult of personality to Mao Zedong. There is difference of China's situation between Xi's era and Mao's era. Relatively underdeveloped economy, limited military capability, and extremely closed-minded to foreign affairs constitutes the situation of Mao's era. In contrast, the world's second largest economy, the third ranking in the world and the first ranking in Asia in the military strength marked the China's situation under Xi ruling. Nowadays, China's predominance in digital capability empowers the highly centralized and enthusiastically personality-cult country with its domination over foreign countries and repression of human rights. China's power nowadays is over ten times more than that in Mao Zedong's era.

The decision-making structure in Russia is similar to that in China

Recently, people around the world were astonished by Vladimir Putin's risky action to launch Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Falling short of Putin's expectations, Russia's failure in military operation in Ukraine demonstrates that Putin's decisions to take invading action might be due to his miscalculations of Ukrainian people's sentiment, Ukraine's ability of resistance, and Russia's own military capability. Analysts find that the reason why Putin misjudges the state of affairs is that the regime of Russia had been retreating from the flawed but regularly elective democracy into oligarchical dictatorship since Putin took power in 1999.

Russia's regime resulted not only in the arbitrary decision-making process without consulting the opinions of civil society but in causing the chilling effect on the Putin's staff who had become more and more obedient to Putin in fear of the possibility of being marginalized politically and put in prison in the under the circumstances of proposing dissenting opinions. The atmosphere of selective listening in the Russian ruling elites was responsible for the malfunction of the self-repairing system when people had found the obvious faults of the decisions. Putin's obsession with his own rigid ideology might cause the paranoid of decision-making and the catastrophic consequences to the country, society, and then neighboring country.

China's political regime under Xi Jinping's rule is very similar to Russia's under Putin's rule. While there are no free and fair elections in Russia's democracy, the concept of "people's democratic dictatorship" is written into the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, making China a one-party dictatorship of Chinese Communist Party. There are no true institutions through which political officers and public representatives could be chosen by electoral process. China's supreme legislative body, National People's Congress, is not composed of members elected by the people but designated

by Chinese Communist Party. Similarly, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is constituted in the same way. The power succession of Chinese Communist Party's supreme leaders is not through elections. All generations of supreme leaders have been decided by the secret negotiations initiated by the few most powerful people in the Politburo Standing Committee of the Chinese Communist Party for more than the past three decades. The leaders before including Mao Zedong and Den Xiaoping were designated in person by the former leader. Therefore, China's political system is more untransparent, more concentrated, and more uncertain than Russia's. It means that the problem China's system might bring about is more serious than Russia's regime did.

In response to China's international expansionism and domestic repression of human rights and freedom, some liberal democracies are gathering to take actions such as forming QUAD, a multilateral dialogue forum composed of the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. The U.S.-Japan Alliance has prepared dealing with these crises for the past two decades. AUKUS, which includes the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, was constructed last year to cooperate strategically. To respond to China's military provocation, the United States started to internationalize the security issues of Taiwan-Strait, publicly reiterating its position on maintaining the peace and stability of Taiwan-Strait and opposing to altering the status quo by using military force in the summits of US-Japan, US-South Korea, US-Australia, Japan-Australia, and European Union. Though these actions triggered China's strong objection, it had been still very helpful to maintain the peace of Taiwan-Strait, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea.

However, these kind of military actions with high-politics characteristics could only deal with the problems in appearance, but it can't fundamentally solve the problems which might cause a war. The crux of eliminating the potential causes of a war, especially relating to China, does not exist in finding solutions in history and society or in dealing with a nation's historical resentment. On the contrary, it would be better for the ruling group to abandon its attempt to solve problems by means of military measure, economic pressure, and political threat, to encourage settling disputes through dialogue, to respect democratic process which allows the grassroots people to voice their dissenting opinions within the political system and which reduces the effect of the political and economic elites' "complete monopoly" of the mainstream voices.

A contemporary dilemma which religious believers have to face

Asia is full of various cultures. Before Western colonial powers came here, there had been conflicts among different nations in the region. Colonialism lately added more complicated elements to Asian society, making the issues of historical justice and transitional justice more insoluble.

What I want to emphasize is that the phenomena today cannot only be attributed to colonialism or

deteriorating urban-rural gap and North-South divide. We have to resolve these complicated and multilevel problems gradually.

However, I have to point out that besides the legacy of Western political colonialism and the problems caused by globalization, tensions in East Asia might be ascribed to China's dictatorship. This dictatorial regime is wrapped up in Marxist-Leninist clothes but essentially Chinese or oriental patriarchalism which is empowered by the governing capacity of high-technology digital dictatorship. Facing the Asian problems means we have to face our own problems. Religious believers bear indispensable obligations to care about the possibility of Taiwan-Strait conflicts and to find the best solution in a just way.

Translator: Augustine Bin-Jou Liao

Response 1:



Prof Roderick R. Hewitt is a graduate of the United Theological College and The University of the West Indies (BA (Hons), Kings College University of London (MPhil & PhD). He currently serves as President of the International University of the Caribbean in Kingston, Jamaica. He has also served as the Academic Leader for Theology and Ethics and also for Research and Higher Degrees in the School of Religion Philosophy and Classics, University of Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa and was a visiting Fellow at New College, University of Edinburgh (2018/2019). He is Professor in Systematic Theology and lectures in African Theologies in the Diaspora, Ecumenical Theology and Missiology.

In addition to his many peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters, he wrote in 2012 his seminal text, *Church and Culture: An Anglo-Caribbean Experience of Hybridity and Contradiction*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. In addition he has co-authored the following publications: 2012, *Postcolonial Mission, Power and Partnership in World Christianity*, Edited by Desmond van der Water, Isabel Phiri, Namsoon Kang, Roderick Hewitt and Sarojini Nadar; The acclaimed 2016 *Ecumenical Missiology, Changing Landscapes and new Conception of Mission*, Edited by Kenneth R. Ross, Jooseop Keum, Kyriaki Avtzi and Roderick Hewitt, Regnum Book; In 2018, Hewitt, R.R., Kaunda J. C., (Eds). *Who is an African? Engagement with Issues of Race, Afro-Ancestry, Identity and Destiny Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Lexington Books/ Fortress Academic; 2018, Roderick Hewitt & Lilian Siwila (Eds). *Liturgy and Identity (African Religio-Cultural and Ecumenical Perspectives)*, Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg; and 2019. Hewitt, Roderick with Kaunda J. C., *Missional Preaching in Context*, Cluster Publications: Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. Email: roderick.hewitt@iuc.edu.jm

Global South perspectives on the Neo-Cold War in North East Asia

Roderick R Hewitt (PhD)

International University of the Caribbean

Introduction

The North East Asian neo-cold war to a great extent is an ongoing legacy of the USA/USSR cold war rooted in the USA religio/political phobia with communism that it deemed to be a hostile threat to its American-style capitalism and its global agenda world domination. Although the economic ideology of capitalism has conquered even the economies of the most powerful communist nation, China, the communist party has found a way of transforming it into a state controlled and sponsored capitalism that has become the second most powerful economy after the USA. In other nations autocratic governments employed capitalism as an instrument to maintain their corrupt political system that deny the people genuine freedom. Indeed, the autocratic mode of governance is increasingly becoming attractive to developing nations with weak democratic forms of governance.

The anti-communism ideological mandate of the USA

The close alliance of the USA with Japan South Korea and Taiwan was rooted in its strategic interest of countering the influences of the triune autocratic states of Russia, China and North Korea. The selective policy of the USA to support some peoples and nations in their struggle for freedom and democracy against tyrannical autocratic governments must also be factored into the contemporary tensions within East Asia. It is interesting that the USA being an imperial superpower nation with unparalleled military and economic might, did not view its support for countries struggling for democracy and freedom as an anti-colonial solidarity. Rather, the rationale for its support was fixated on defeating communism.

The Neo Cold-War is not a struggle or choice between good and evil.

The current Neo-Cold War in North East Asia as viewed from the global South and especially from the context of the Caribbean, presents a different perspective on the USA/China new cold war. Our experience of colonialism, slavery with European powers and the contemporary global tensions resulting from the ongoing rivalry between USA, China and Russia have led us to view the participants in cold war politics, not as a struggle between good and evil, or between, right and wrong. Rather, their involvement in the affairs of our Latin American and Caribbean nations was never done out of altruistic motivations. As for the USA, it was pure and unadulterated self-interest to prevent the spread of Cuban style socialism/communism and to ensure that the region remains under its sphere of influence.

We are always caught between bad choices and not too bad choices.

Our experiences of Cold War in the Caribbean between the then USSR and the USA was acted out in Cuba that almost resulted in nuclear war in 1961/2. The Cuba's struggle for sovereignty and independence, offer some pertinent insights that may serve as signposts for the current cold war

tensions within East Asia. We in the Caribbean are small Island states that are vulnerable to external political and economic shocks. Our service driven economies that depend on tourism especially from the USA and the West can only exercise very limited sovereignty because external forces control our economies. We are always caught between bad choices and not too bad choices. To act in our best interest is a luxury that we can't afford. For the commanding height of our political and economic wellbeing we always must seek external permission from the power, east and west. Islanders live with vulnerabilities... from nature such as with the experiences of hurricanes, earthquakes and floods. Vulnerabilities also come from competing imperial forces within the region. Life is lived with perennial threats caught between a rock and a hard place.

Which side are you on?

Like the North East Asian region but to a far lesser threat, the competing interests of USA and China within the region also results in political instabilities of the small nations who are caught between their competing economic interest. They both exert intense economic and political pressure for the islands to take sides and pledge loyalty to them. Little room is left for neutrality. Any way the Islands turn they lose. The nations that tried to maintain diplomatic relationship with Taiwan are locked out from any economic investments from China. This comes at a time when the USA and Europe are not willing to compete with China in investing in the infrastructure development priority of Caribbean nations. It could be argued that the China model of economic investment is producing a new form of economic colonialism because are entering into unsustainable contracts and pledging prime assets of their nations such as ports and prime lands as collateral for investment from China. It could be said that we have jumped out of the frying pan into the fire!

The Example of the Solomon Islands

The national crisis within the Pacific Island of the Solomon Islands demonstrates the dilemma facing vulnerable small island states. The government decided recently to switch its diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China and has resulted in civil unrest that necessitated the intervention of Australia sending troops to restore peace.

The High price of Sovereignty

Within the Caribbean region Cuba exemplifies this cold war dilemma and is paying a high price for its sovereignty. When Cuba under Castro's rule sought to assert its national identity as a sovereign state in the 1959, the USA would not allow it and when it sought help from USSR to protect its decolonial national identity, it was invaded and since that time of defeating the imperial forces, it has been under economic and political blockade from the USA all because of its identity as a communist nation.

The price of independence, being non-aligned is very costly.

During the cold war between the USA and the USSR, countries of the global south, referred to as the Third World nations, form the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961 to function as an

independent path in world politics that would not result in the member Nations becoming pawns in the struggles between the major power of the USA and the USSR. This grouping of nations was able to walk carefully between the competing interests of the superpowers. China was then an observer member at the movement. What a paradox now after nearly 50 years China has evolved into being a super power, the second most powerful world economy with growing global military might.

We refused to be what you want us to be...We are who we are

I would argue that a new NAM is needed in the contemporary era to navigate the evolving new cold war politics. In this era of growing rightwing autocratic governments, the world is being divided up into different spheres of influence. The threat posed to Taiwan is consistent with the current threat faced by Ukraine against Russian aggression. Unfortunately, I do not buy into the assessment that within the current neo Cold war that one side is deemed to be major wrong and the other being right. What history teaches is that powerful nations act always to support their national self-interest. To counter such powerful global forces, we need solidarity among the non-aligned nation.

Independence, sovereignty and freedom cannot be secured through allegiance to any empire on the right or left. I close with the poignant words of Bob Marley, the Jamaica Prophet in his 1979 Album Survival. In his song "Babylon System" he penned these words:

"We refuse to be

What you wanted us to be

We are what we are

That's the way it's going to be, if you don't know".

The too should be the rallying cry of Taiwan and all other nations in our struggle against all oppressive imperial Babylon forces.

Response 2:



Rev. Dr. Nancy Claire Pittman was born in Lubbock, Texas, grew up further north in Amarillo, and graduated from Putnam City High School in Oklahoma City. She earned a B. A. degree in Religion and Psychology at Texas Christian University and a M.Div. degree from Brite Divinity School. She also holds a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies from Southern Methodist University.

Dr. Pittman was ordained into the ministry by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Southwest in 1984. She has served as a minister in several churches across Texas or Oklahoma and preached or lectured as a guest speaker in numerous congregations and regional and national events. Twenty-one years ago, she and her husband, the late Dr. Don A. Pittman, returned from Taiwan where they served for six and a half years as missionaries on the faculty of Tainan Theological College and Seminary, a school related to the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan.

Dr. Pittman continues to engage in teaching and research in the Book of Revelation, the Gospel of John, and 1, 2, and 3 John. She is particularly interested in the way these books and letters portray faithful and faithless Christian communities as they relate to our 21st century understandings and misunderstandings.

Currently, Dr. Pittman is President and Stephen J. England Associate Professor of the Practice of Ministry at Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, an ecumenical seminary affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). She has served on the faculty of Phillips since 2005.

Response to “The Neo-Cold War in Asia and the Soon to be Hot War in Taiwan Strait” by Lai I-Chung for the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum on December 7, 2021

I want to thank Dr. Lai I-Chung for his fine analysis of the situation in the Taiwan Strait as it exists today—with considerable threat and tension. While I am not academically competent to speak directly to the geopolitical realities he describes so persuasively, I am particularly struck by his profound reminder that at the heart of the tension is a basic conflict in values between two systems.

The current Communist regime has increasingly insisted that it is not bound by human rights values, which it claims are primarily drawn from western democracy. Rather it is the national sovereignty of China and its own interests that takes priority over any other norm external to its own definitions. Further, it understands that sovereignty to exist beyond the borders that other nations recognize as China proper, including, of course, Taiwan. Recent politicians in the United States have made similar proposals, most visibly illustrated by the Trump Administration in which “America First,” and “Make America Great Again,” were asserted as the primary bases for any action.

As Christians, we cannot let such assertions stand as the ultimate values by which nations make decisions about other nations and peoples, not to mention their own. In this time when two empires, China and the United States, make decisions every day that affect almost all the peoples of the world, we must regularly remind ourselves that their values are not God’s values. And while I appreciate Dr. Lai’s refusal to grant equivalent moral value between these two empires, I caution us not to let the U.S. get away with its own human rights violations and abrogation of other nations’ sovereignty. We must regularly answer to the set of values that Jesus taught and work toward the shalom, the empire that God establishes. When these values correspond with national values, that is all well and good; but when they don’t, we must speak a word for justice for all.

As a citizen of the empire that balances China’s power, I think it behooves me to listen ever more carefully to the people who live under the imminent threat it poses. That is to say, it is not my place to speak too loudly to those who know far better than I the difficulties of living in China’s shadow. Conferences like this give me an opportunity to attend deeply to the concerns of those who are more imminently threatened by China’s claims, especially to the people of Taiwan who are as Dr. Lai says, “at the epicenter of the competition” between China and the U.S.

At the same time, it behooves me to speak up for Taiwan self-determination to my fellow citizens, to remind them of our democratic and human rights values and of our own struggle to make ourselves a nation when our parent country did not respect our rights. My voice is far more useful in my own native land just as my ears are more useful to the people of Asia who must, every day, live with the consequences of this imperial wrangling.

In 1996, when Taiwan held the first free presidential election within the Chinese cultural sphere, my husband and I were living in Tainan and working with Tainan Theological College and Seminary and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. For months leading up to the election China was testing missiles over the island and President Bill Clinton sent battleships and aircraft carrier groups into the Taiwan

Strait. My family back home were quite worried. But the day of the election was filled with celebration and excitement on the streets and at the polls. Voter turnout, as I recall, was around 85-90%. It was such a beautiful day for democracy. The Taiwanese people were not deterred from their right to vote and their responsibility as citizens of a nation that too many had refused to recognize.

Who could know that the current season is even more dangerous for Taiwan than that one nearly 30 years ago? May we join together with the same courage and the same allegiance to the family of God that the Taiwanese continue to display as we listen and speak to the world on their behalf.

Nancy Claire Pittman

President and Stephen J. England Associate Professor of the Practice of Ministry

Phillips Theological Seminary

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Taiwan Ecumenical Forum for Justice and Peace (TEF)

Two-Day Webinar:

The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia (Day 1)

Date and Time: 7 December 2021 (Tuesday) 20:00-22:00 (8:00-9:00 p.m.) Taiwan

Zoom Host: PCT Information Centre

Notes of the Q&A Session, moderated by Professor Victor Hsu, TEF Task Force Convener

December 7, 2021 The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia Q&A Session:

Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang En – central committee member of the PCT and professor at Taiwan

Theological Seminary (in Taipei): He thanked Dr. Lai, Dr. Hewitt, and Dr. Pittman for their interesting and intriguing remarks, and to initiate dialogue, he asked Dr. Lai what his response to Dr. Hewitt's comments would be.

Dr. Lai: Dr. Lai responded by saying that what Dr. Hewitt said is the kind of dilemma we always face due to political competitions or the geopolitical realism that is at play. From Taiwan's experience, what we observe of China today is also partly the US's making. The US is not completely immune in creating this problem that we are facing from China today. Dr. Lai mentioned that he appreciated Dr. Pittman's comment about how in the past Taiwan faced the threat, and Dr. Hewitt's comment that the West wasn't very forthcoming in facing the threat from China, which contributed to the international isolation of Taiwan especially after its democratization process. Taiwan has continued to be cornered, until the West found that China was too strong and not to be ignored and Taiwan became the big prize for them and they had to respond. The issue is not about which one is more right but about major wrongs we have to confront. In confronting, we have to choose, and along with that, the values embedded in the choice. We can't be totally neutral when we decide to do something. Concerning the geopolitics, it is very easy to characterize the power competition situation as resource grabbing by those powers. However, in the case of China, in his view particularly in the current leadership, it's more than just becoming a global power; they are challenging the value system. Their crimes against the *Uighurs and the problems they face with others and also their military incursions into Taiwan*; these all must be confronted.

Rev. Najla Kassab – President of the World Communion of Reformed Churches: She posed a question for Dr. Lai -- what would the most impactful move for churches at this time concerning the situation?

Dr. Lai: Dr. Lai responded by stating that the church can inform governments about what China is

doing. It is also important for the church to be in solidarity with the people impacted, and to care for the Chinese people and remember their suffering especially in regard to the government's suppression of their religious freedom. All these would help.

Rev. Chris Ferguson – TEF Co-Convener, Former General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC): Rev. Ferguson asked Dr. Lai to respond to the perspective raised by Dr. Hewitt that we are not actually bound ethically, theologically, or geopolitically to a choice among or between two hegemonies but rather to overcome hegemony. Rev. Ferguson noted that in Dr. Lai's response to Dr. Cheng, he gracefully took on the question but also reframed his position as a choice between this and that, characterizing one as major and the other as less. Rev. Ferguson noted that he thinks that what we're struggling with is that analysis. Rev. Ferguson also commented on Dr. Hewitt's mentioning the wisdom of the prophet in Hosea where Israel or Ephraim is called not to go to Assyria, not to seek help in Egypt, but to transcend the logic of militarism and seek peace. Rev. Ferguson also posed the question of how to best engage the two logics of the presentations; regarding China there is certainly a need to be alert and aware of the danger, but does the logic necessarily need to be a forced choice between two systems rather than joining with others to overcome hegemonies and militarized domination?

Dr. Lai: Dr. Lai responded that his intention is not to force a choice between the US and China. The choice is that we need to confront China. In confronting China, we do not necessarily align ourselves with the US. Dr. Lai says in his opinion, China is more evil than the US. We need to confront it not just for the sake of Taiwan but for all the geopolitical developments in Asia and beyond. In confronting China we need to think about how to work with the current geopolitical players. In Taiwan's case, the Taiwan government, out of necessity, is already working with the US to maintain geopolitical balance to repel the possibility of a Chinese attack against Taiwan. However, theologically, our thinking needs to transcend geopolitics. How to stand up to China? First, we need to consider the timing sequence for confronting China, and confronting China would be easier with US support. There are elements within the US and also within Western democracy that have propelled China to become what it is today, including capitalism and the embedded distribution systems, that enabled China to raise national sovereignty as part of its national identity. However, whenever China talks about national sovereignty it is really talking about CCP sovereignty over the Chinese people.

Lalrin Kima – Presbyterian Church of India: He asked Dr. Lai what would be the best or most effective way to confront Chinese aggression?

Dr. Lai: Dr. Lai responded by saying that beyond geopolitical and national, political management, China can be confronted through civil society. He urged countries to confront Chinese influence in their own backyards because there is a lot of Chinese influence in democracies around the world. Dr. Lai stated that right now China is selling a narrative that an authoritarian system can effectively manage a crisis, in particular the pandemic, and urged us to reject this narrative. Second, Dr. Lai noted that we should challenge China's disinformation about how individual rights are a Western

invention. China should be challenged on these issues both at home and in the international realm, and China should also be confronted on issues such as their repression of the *Uighurs and the people of Hong Kong*. Civil society and churches need to speak directly to these issues. Governments are too deferent to China. The CCP needs to be confronted and they need to understand that their ways cannot continue without being challenged in the international realm.

Rev. Rowland Van Es – Former RCA missionary to Taiwan: He and his wife, Judy, were missionaries in Taiwan. He worked at Tainan Theological Seminary as Old Testament professor, and their time in Taiwan overlapped with Don and Nancy Pittman's last 3 years in Taiwan. Since Dr. Pittman was New Testament professor and he was Old Testament professor at Tainan Seminary, they often talked about Taiwan's position. They were very narrow in their focus at that time, and they decided that the PCT was doing a wonderful job navigating a geopolitical situation that required constant attention. Regarding the webinar, he noted that he is thrilled by the Old Testament examples and the Biblical studies terms being used in the dialogue. He noted that we should continue this conversation with all we've learned from Biblical studies because that is our uniqueness and our contribution, and he is encouraged by and wants to commend the continuing work of the PCT. Rev. Van Es also mentioned that in our individual countries, we must emphasize the notes that keep us related to one another and united by our common Christian faith. He thanked everyone for the encouragement and encouraged all the churches to continue the model of engagement followed by the PCT. He feels very privileged to have spent 17 years in Taiwan.

Amy Padilla – Promotion of Church People's Response based in the Philippines: She posed both a comment and a question. She commented in response to Dr. Lai's input that Chinese aggression in the West Philippine Sea is a big issue currently. At the same time, the Philippine economy and society is tied to the US. She also addressed a question to Dr. Hewitt. She was inspired by Dr. Hewitt's talking about forging solidarities with the South and this is something Taiwan needs as a way forward. She asked him to speak more about forging solidarities.

Dr. Hewitt: Dr. Hewitt responded that when faced with awesome military and economic power, there are other forms of power that need to be utilized to bring about, not necessarily neutralization of the dominant power, but disruption. He noted that in his experience in the global South, they have learned to employ models of resistance that the powers don't want to recognize, by using, for example, songs (naming the evil through song; these songs can taunt the powers and disarm in ways they don't even realize) and poetry, and the work of artisans and comedians. These are the Caribbean weapons of resistance. Dr. Hewitt made the point that there are other weapons of resistance besides military and economic might. In the digital age, it is possible to connect with people all over and with a wide cross-section of partners, and in doing so partners may realize that they share a lot of common perspectives. Taiwan has a lot of solidarity in the global South. The perspective of the Philippines is also part of that wider resistance against the geopolitical influences and the people of the Philippines are able to stand in their own interest of what is it God has called them to be and to do.

Nancy Lin – Program Secretary for the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan: Secretary Lin reminded Dr. Hewitt that this webinar is the first time on an ecumenical platform that there has been a consultation that focused exclusively on the Taiwan issue. She also noted that she is happy to know that Dr. Hewitt thinks this is the right to do and that this is aligned with his idea that small countries, small powers can get together for dialogue and thereby not choose one of the empires. She added that she admires the alternative methods of resistance Dr. Hewitt mentioned and she is glad that those work in his context, but for Taiwan’s case, facing military aggression on a daily basis, it is very difficult to think about alternative models of resistance.

Note Taker: Dr. Emily M. Seitz

Two-Day Webinar

The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia

Date: 20:00 p.m. (GMT+8:00) on 8 December, 2021

Day 2

Moderator:



Rev. Dr. Chris Ferguson is a pastor, theologian and social justice advocate from the United Church of Canada. He was elected to the post of general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in May 2014, entering office in August 2014, for a seven-year term. Previously Ferguson served as the international ecumenical advisor for the Programme for Ecumenical Accompaniment in Colombia (2011-2014), the World Council of Churches representative to the United Nations (2006-2010), the World Council of Churches' representative to Jerusalem (2004-2006) and the executive minister of the United Church of Canada's Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit and ecumenical officer (2002-2004), among many other missional and ministerial roles.

Panelist 1:



Rev. Phil King has been Global Mission Director for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand since 2012. In this role he leads the PCANZ in supporting partner churches in mission, with a particular focus in Vanuatu and Myanmar. He values the partnership the PCANZ shares with the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. Prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, ecumenical youth exchange programmes were taking place with the PCT and he hopes these can be re-established when borders reopen. The PCANZ is a member of the Council for World Mission and Rev. King has recently been appointed one of CWM's Independent Trustees.

Taiwan Ecumenical Forum for Justice and Peace Webinar December 7 and 8 2021
The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia.
Perspective/Voice from New Zealand

Presentation from Rev. Phil King, Global Mission Director,
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Greetings from Aotearoa New Zealand, and thank you for the invitation to address the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum. I would like to begin by thanking Dr. Lai for yesterday's presentation and Rod Hewitt and Nancy Pitman for their responses. Rod's observation about the Caribbean will resurface today as I speak about the Pacific region; and I echo Nancy's comments in making the point that I'm not an expert in geopolitics but I speak as one with an interest in and deep concern for developments in the Asia Pacific.

I was asked to speak from the national perspective of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I will begin my presentation with an overview of New Zealand's approach to foreign policy, then consider the various factors that impact on this. These include the economic importance of trade with China, rising geopolitics in the Pacific and the increasing tension between China and Taiwan. A brief summary will conclude that New Zealand's foreign policy is principled but constrained by economic interests.

New Zealand's Foreign Policy Values

In her speech to New Zealand's diplomatic corps on Waitangi Day this year, Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta outlined New Zealand's foreign policy values. These are:

- *Manaaki* – goodness or the reciprocity of goodwill
- *Whanaunga* – our connectedness, or shared sense of humanity
- *Mahi tahi* or *kotahitanga* – collective benefits and shared aspiration
- *Kaitiaki* – protectorship and stewardship of our intergenerational wellbeing

Of New Zealand's approach to foreign policy, she went on to say,

“New Zealand will be a predictable and reliable partner. You will see New Zealand applying the values that reflect who we are as a nation.

These include the way we consider international development assistance as a means to be a responsible neighbour, offer help when needed and act as a strategic partner to co-invest and build long term resilience in partner countries.

It also means that, as we champion human rights, we also seek to extend our advocacy towards sustainable and inclusive outcomes in trade, inclusive and transparent democracy, ethical investment and social inclusion.

With our values as a compass, we will work through international organisations towards goals that we have long championed.

These include a commitment to human rights, democracy, the international rule of law, and nuclear disarmament; and to tackle inequality and injustice through our development programme and our advocacy.”

These are values that, as a New Zealand citizen and one who is influenced by the Judeo-Christian

ethic, I am proud of, but they are complicated. The challenge for New Zealand is how well we can give full expression to these values in the complex world of geo-politics.

The Economic Importance of Trade with China

Earlier this year, New Zealand and China signed an upgrade to their bilateral free trade agreement with two-way trade now worth \$32 billion. As its largest trading partner, New Zealand is heavily reliant on China economically and has limited bargaining power in the relationship. The New Zealand Government is, therefore, extremely cautious when speaking out on any issues that might upset this economic arrangement.

A good example of this is seen in a speech our Prime Minister Jacinda Arden made in July on New Zealand's role in the Indo-Pacific region. New Zealand has been a late adopter of the term "Indo-Pacific," and, in using the term, Ms. Arden was clearly aligning New Zealand with its traditional western allies; however, she also made a point of saying that the term Indo-Pacific was often used to exclude some nations from dialogue – meaning China – and that she would not use that phrase as a subtext for exclusion.

This is a good example of the delicate dance. New Zealand needs to stay onside with its allies without upsetting China to the point that it affects the trade relationship.

Increasing Tensions Putting Pressure on Multilateral Relationships

Former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark recently observed that increasing tensions are making it difficult for New Zealand not to choose a side in the geopolitical arena, where the United States is our main military ally and China our main trading partner.

She said that New Zealand's distinctive values: Human Rights, Freedom of Expression, Democracy, and the Rule of Law. Despite, holding these values, it is not possible, however, to only engage and trade with those who share our values. She said the question is, "How do we develop a relationship with China that is respectful enough both ways and where hard messages can still be delivered?" She said it is more complicated now because we are dealing with a much more assertive China than 20 years ago when she was Prime Minister. She made particular mention of the "Wolf-warrior diplomats" who are an obvious feature of current Chinese diplomacy. This is an aggressive and often abrasive stance adopted by its diplomats and, according to one of Beijing's most outspoken ambassadors, is simply "justified defence" against attacks by a West determined to contain it. This approach creates fear, and other countries are fearful of China – which is not a good basis on which to build respect. Ms. Clark also said there are new attempts, on the other hand, to reinvigorate western alliances, for example the Five Eyes and AUKUS Agreements.

The Five Eyes agreement has gone from being a behind-the-scenes alliance to a place where positions are shaped, and Helen Clark says that's a huge threat to New Zealand foreign policy. New Zealand has stood out against this and has been criticised as being the weak link in the Anglophone chain; but according to Ms Clark, "Five Eyes is being used in ways that are unhelpful to us." New Zealand stands for a peaceful, inclusive, sustainably developing Pacific, and actions outside of this are a threat to that policy stance.

Rising Geopolitics in the Pacific

In his presentation, Dr. Lai referred to China's mode of operation as "debt-trap diplomacy" where dependent nations are saddled with debt, increasing China's leverage. This is a major problem in the Pacific. At a recent conference on international development with a strong focus on the Pacific, the

Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown addressed this, saying that Covid-19 has escalated the geopolitical interests in the Pacific. New foreign entities seeking to provide support to Pacific Island nations have exacerbated fundamental cleavages in the delivery of aid. He warned there is a collision course between the Pacific Islands development needs and the rapidly evolving state of its bilateral relationships. He said donor driven approaches seldom address the needs of the recipient, particularly if the agenda is driven by geopolitics.

Rod Hewitt's comment about the Caribbean Islands dilemma is echoed in the Pacific. These small island nations are vulnerable and threatened. They are subjected to this question, "Whose side are you on? – and no matter which way they turn, they lose. This is well illustrated by the following reflections.

At the same conference New Zealand Foreign Affairs diplomat Mark Ramsden described what he termed the deteriorating geopolitical situation in the Asia-Pacific, especially in Melanesia where it has re-emerged in a new form. For example, the Solomon Islands switched their diplomatic allegiance from Taiwan to China in 2019, following an earlier move by Kiribati. Only four Pacific nations with a combined population of 100,000 now extend full diplomatic ties to Taiwan.

These decisions by the Solomons and Kiribati were for economic reasons as they have no political power; they are part of China's continuing efforts to marginalise Taiwan in the region, and it has caused division within the Solomons. The province of Malaita (population 200,000) is very pro-Taiwan. Malaita's premier has this year sought medical assistance in Taipei, angering the Solomons Government and earning a "please explain" from the Chinese Embassy in Honiara. This has coincided with the growth of Malaita's separatist aspirations. The Malaita premier has flagged an independence vote for Malaita, citing opposition to the China policy. This is contributing to instability within the Solomons.

An example of this occurred in the past two weeks with an outbreak of anti-Government protests in the Solomons capital of Honiara. The protests turned extremely violent and destructive with arson and looting taking place, with some fatalities. The Australian Government reacted quickly, sending in police and diplomats to help restore order. It was reported that some observers argue Australia intervened quickly to avoid Chinese security forces moving in. New Zealand also responded to a request for help from the Solomons Government as this crisis has continued to grow. Observers note that this cannot only be characterised as a disagreement over the Solomons China policy; their internal divisions are more deep-seated and complicated than that – but is an example of what Dr. Lai referred to yesterday as China-related, if not China-initiated, tensions in the Pacific. Where New Zealand seeks to build resilience in Pacific neighbours, this kind of destabilisation plays into China's hands.

Mark Ramsden said that the geopolitical tensions in the Pacific raise fundamental questions for New Zealand about the kind of societies we imagine for the region. New Zealand values democracy. It's what we believe in and want. Liberal economies require liberal politics. But there are competing models of what societies look like and while New Zealand has named some very important values, there has been a "softly softly" approach while China's influence in the Pacific has continued to grow.

The Impact on New Zealand of Increasing Tension Between China and Taiwan

In an article on November 4th, New Zealand political journalist Lucy Cramer drew attention to the increasing tensions in the Taiwan Strait and made the point that "Taiwan might be more than 9,000

kilometres from New Zealand but what happens there matters to us.” Conflict there would have massive implications for New Zealand’s involvement and also massive implications for peace and stability in the region.”

So far our Government has been cautious on China’s increasing aggression, although in October it was part of a large military flotilla that sailed through the South China Sea in a show of force and our foreign minister did mention concerns in a speech a few weeks ago.

New Zealand’s policies in the past 50 years have seen them siding politically with China. In 1971 they supported China rather than Taiwan in having a seat at the United Nations. And in 1972 the New Zealand Labour Party established diplomatic relations with the Communist Government of China. And it acknowledged (but did not officially recognise) that Taiwan was “an inalienable part of China’s territory.”

However, New Zealand has continued to have economic and cultural ties with Taiwan. We have a Trade and Industry office in Taipei and we signed a comprehensive trade treaty in 2013. There is much interaction despite the lack of formal recognition. Annual trade is worth \$2.3 billion, making Taiwan our ninth largest export market.

When New Zealand recognised China, it had to agree not to recognise Taiwan, so it treads a fine line. Any change to that policy would lead to a strong reaction from China.

New Zealand needs to be deeply concerned about conflict with Taiwan; a Chinese takeover would have serious implications for the Pacific. Having control of Taiwan would allow China easier naval and submarine access into the Pacific. They have already supported the development of naval ports in at least one Pacific nation, Vanuatu.

An invasion of Taiwan would result in war on a scale that would touch New Zealand’s interests. There is also the danger of escalation between nuclear powers, which would further destabilise the region.

With New Zealand’s principles-based foreign policy it would be difficult to ignore the invasion of a country with a democratic, peaceful, law-based population of the same size as Australia.

It would increase the spread of authoritarianism. A free democratic Taiwan remains an example to the rest of China that democracy can work in Chinese society. Catherine Churchman, of the Asian Studies department, Victoria University said, “We don’t want the authoritarian regime of the PRC spreading further out of China and remodelling other countries.”

New Zealand’s Foreign Policy is Principled, But Constrained by Economic Interests

In summary, New Zealand’s foreign policy values are principled and clearly articulated. It could be argued that economic realities constrain New Zealand’s full expression of those values.

If we were to make a stand on Taiwan, trade sanctions from China would be crippling.

Similarly, if we were to make a stand over West Papuan human rights in Indonesia, there would be economic consequences.

Therefore, our Government is maintaining a consistent but cautious stance within the delicate world of geo-politics.

During a visit to Indonesia in November, Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta followed up the position

she set out in her Waitangi Day speech when she warned of rising nationalism in the Indo-Pacific. Her speech condemning military rule in Myanmar and China's claim over the South China Sea was directed at ASEAN, whose Secretary General she met during her tour. Ms. Mahuta emphasised again that we need regional architecture that promotes a rules-based approach that protects human rights, emphasises open markets, and safeguards the sovereignty of all states regardless of their size.

Not surprisingly, China responded with a warning shot across the bow. Last weekend, China's representative in New Zealand warned our Government not to get too involved in matters beyond their remit. China's deputy chief of mission and current chargé d'affaires in New Zealand said China is "worried" that New Zealand is increasingly speaking out about China's actions in the South China Sea, attributing the tougher stance to pressure from the US and Australia.

He said, "New Zealand is undergoing some pressure from outside and tried to have more voice on South China Sea. We feel worried about that, and we don't know the reason." He blamed this on New Zealand's need to remain close to the US and Australia and said, "If we, (that is China), have any information on trade policy, or economic policy, the New Zealand government will be very interested, but on the South China Sea issue or Xinjiang issue, we explain a lot to them, but they don't want to listen. Maybe they feel the pressure from outside or basically we have some difference on values." This is surely a thinly-veiled warning to New Zealand to be careful, or there will be consequences that could hurt us.

New Zealand has a clearly articulated and principled position, but, because of our economic reliance, it feels as though the trade relationships are too important to New Zealand's economy for the Government to assert itself too strongly. However, if the geopolitical tensions continue to rise it will put increasing pressure on New Zealand's position.

For all the above reasons, strong voices raised in defence of Taiwan's sovereignty and advocating for their self-determination are not likely to come from our Government, but from an educated public, our academics, journalists and members of our community who are aware of the issues at stake.

Panelist 2:



YI Kiho

Professor at Peace college of Liberal Art
Dean at Graduate School of Social Innovation Business
Executive Director at Center for Peace & Public Integrity
Hanshin University

YI Kiho is a professor and dean at the Graduate School of Social Innovation Business and the executive director of the Center for Peace and Public Integrity in Hanshin University, South Korea. Previously, Yi founded an NGO named ARI (Asia Regional Initiative) working with Nautilus Institute around 2008 and also worked as the secretary general of the Korea Peace Forum from 2003 to 2006, focusing on peace and cooperation issues between North and South Korea in the context of Northeast Asian cooperation. He also served as an advisory member of the Presidential Committee of the Northeast Asia Initiative during the Roh Moo-hyun government (2003~2007). From 1999 to 2002, Yi was a visiting scholar at Waseda University in Japan, looking at the local/transnational civil movement and its links to peace in East Asia. Before 1999, he worked for ten years at the Korea Christian Academy, where he had been in charge of Korean political changes and global peace networks. In 1997, Yi completed his Ph.D. dissertation, titled “Social Movement Networks in the Democratization Process of Korea” at Yonsei University.

- ❖ Articles
- “Exploring the possible Sub-regionalism through Peace City Networks in Northeast Asia” *Tendency and Perspectives* Vol. 96. 2016 Spring.
- ‘The Complex Crisis in East Asia and the Peace City as its response’. *Space and Society*. Vol. 41, 2012.
- ‘Reflections on the Regional Initiatives of East Asia Civil Society’. *Tendency and Perspectives* Vol. 78. 2010 Spring.
- Peter Hayes and Kiho Yi (eds.). *Complexity, Security and Civil Society in East Asia: Foreign Policies and the Korean Peninsula*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2015.

The Neo Cold War: Return of Empires and DemoCrazy

Kiho Yi (Hanshin University, South Korea)

The Neo Cold War era is approaching. States commit to ever-increasing military expenditures without any hesitation, justifying that only a strong defense can maintain national security. Furthermore, many politicians assert only a strong defense force secures peace and believe that such defense necessitates equipping its military with lethal weapons including Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs).

Not only autocratic states but also most advanced countries with outstanding democratic systems like the United States of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK) and South Korea, Japan and many European Union (EU) countries share this firm belief. Also, China, Russia and India are all plunging into strengthening their military power. What makes such irrational actions rational in the 21st century which is so globalized and where nations are so interdependent? It is because democracy does not seem to work properly. Democracy originally premises that people have different thoughts and, thus, need to deliberate while valuing the diversity; and decisions based on such democratic rules should be respected. Unfortunately, democracy seem to be very fragile and losing its democratic virtues. Like a drunken man, democracy became ‘democracy’.

The evils of ‘democracy’ are to divide our mindsets and to designate who is our enemy. Who is “us”? Who is the “enemy”? If democracy works appropriately, everyone in the world is “us”, since we are all citizens of this earth living together. Democracy actually never distinguishes others as the enemy because every human being has his/her own dignity. Thus, a state does not need to develop high-tech weapons and spend huge tax on military expenditures.

Especially nowadays, such malfunction of democracy is detected dramatically in the so-called most advanced countries. For example, a mob of President Donald Trump’s supporters stormed the U.S. Capitol in early 2021. Brexit divided the U.K., which eventually left EU over a couple of years. The declaration of Catalan independence drove politics into a vortex of violence. Also, in some EU member countries, we see the bipolarization between left and right side on many issues, sometimes challenging the integration of EU.

Similar phenomena can be observed in Northeast Asia as well. South Korea shows clear division of mind-set, symbolically with candle-lit demonstrations on the left side and Taegueukgi (national flag) rallies on the right side; and the new dramatically-elected president won with only a 0.73% voting gap in March this year (2022). On the other hand, Japan has kept the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) overwhelmingly dominant in the parliamentary government despite the surprising accomplishment of a great economic power long ago. Such a firm grip on power by the LDP has gradually invalidated the basic peace disciplines based on Article 9 of the Constitution. As a Great Power, China manifested itself as an accountable state through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) almost 10 years ago; however, China also trampled on Hong Kong’s democracy and several local autonomies.

Most land and sea borders in Northeast Asia continue to be unstable and conflicting zones, unlike Europe. In other words, the shadows of wars and colonization during the first half of the 20th century still remain dense. The memories and emotions are still alive. Such historical backgrounds left the countries in NEA very competitive and sometimes hostile towards each other. All countries have desires to transform the post-war order –which is based on the San Francisco Treaty of 1951

and has no common agreement among neighboring countries- toward a new world order, but still have no common consultation, moving only in the direction of each country's advantage.

The common phenomena in North America, Europe and Northeast Asia as a result and purpose, is that states return as judicial and absolute actors despite their increasing failure with misled patriotism. One of such symptoms is found in US politics. Trump got his popularity with his campaign 'Make America Great Again (MAGA)' emphasizing 'America First', however, his administration divided America based on interest and antagonisms. Unlike Trump, President Joe Biden highlights value of alliances from 'America First' and emphasizes democratic values. Not surprisingly, however, Biden's policy does not seem to be critically different from Trump's. Instead of MAGA, Biden announced a framework to Build a Better America (BABA). His efforts seem to accelerate armaments and draw potential conflicts closer, rather than strengthen the value of alliance.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine or China's growing menace towards Taiwan absolutely deserve to be condemned, but if we investigate more closely, the value of alliance was originally to keep democracy. In fact, only the values of national security that are based on military might are the most strengthened and not ethics or genuine democracy. Genuine security desperately needs careful and long-term strategy formulated with patience and belief with human dignity, not based on any lethal weapons.

In general, morals are withering while the military is being revived. There are at least three critical risks in an alliance, which creates doubts in the value of alliances. First of all, an alliance usually tends to nominate who is our common enemy, which is apt to easily demonize specific states or groups. Secondly, an alliance always justifies the military industry and drills. Thirdly, an alliance recalls the state as absolute actors and revokes the other positions and roles of civil groups and institutions. Sometimes, 'sanctions' are used among allied countries against so-called enemy countries as a punishment, but usually in vain, instead with antagonism.

There is a strong lure in a state to be an empire in order to assert hegemony. Actually, this is a critical trap in democracy because hegemony in international politics is usually regarded as a hierarchical and dominant position to force others to follow its will though others are not willing to do so. In this context, most countries celebrate when they belong to Great Powers like the G7 or G20. When G2 was mentioned by China almost 10 years ago, an invisible confrontation was already set up between China and the United States. It is significantly important to ask what 'Great's then. What would be the ultimate purpose to be a Great Power?

Technically, there are at least four elements to be an Empire: military power, economic power, cultural power, and knowledge power. Up to now, the US is the only country to be at the top in all four sectors. According to a SIPRI report¹, US military expenditures are larger than the total sum of the other top 10 ranking countries. Moreover, the US is the only country holding its own military bases all over the world. 'According to David Vine, professor of political anthropology at the American University in D.C. the US had about 750 bases in at least 80 countries as of July 2021'². Even at the Knowledge Power level, which is more connected to economic and political powers, there are many measures to check this power like the numbers of PhD including university rankings, patent-possession ranking, and big tech companies like FAANG (Facebook, Apple,

¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). 26th April, 2021. 'World military spending rises to almost \$2 trillion in 2020'. <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2021/world-military-spending-rises-almost-2-trillion-2020>.

² Aljazeera 10th September, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/10/infographic-us-military-presence-around-the-world-interactive>

Amazon, Netflix, and Google) which are all American companies. Such a knowledge-based industry builds new global infrastructure and standards which second or last movers should follow.

In this context, Chinese rapid growth in the economic and knowledge sectors gradually and critically challenges the US position. For instance, though the Chinese yuan (renminbi) is not a key currency, when more than 100 million Chinese tourists abroad spend money with their own credit cards like UnionPay and other digital payments system like Alibaba and WeChat pay, such numbers will probably make new Chinese payment systems on global scale work almost like a key currency. China's ambitious grand design of 'one road and one belt' will additionally help establish a global influence on economic hegemony. For a couple of decades, Chinese military power has been behind the US, but, in return, China now, concentrates on cultural power. For instance, there presently more than 500 Confucius Institutes across every continent.

The State is back. Empire is reviving. Democracy is withering. What then is to be done? There is no way but by strengthening civil society beyond borders with revitalizing democracy. Furthermore, it is important to propose fundamental questions again. Is it good enough if only the state has sovereignty? What does it mean local self-determination mean? Does military force really protect our life and prosperity? Does national security really help people's security and happiness? Civil society itself is not always good and right, rather it is like an arena where different opinions can be discussed at any time. The only rule of civil society is that citizens shall never give up dialogue and never use any violence when arguments or conflicts come up. The best security is that all people make friends with each other, so that we do not need any alliances or enemies.

In NEA, unfortunately, we have been divided by wars, colonialization and ideologies which were regarded already. Actually, a more antagonistic memory is still reproduced by nationalism or patriotism. Of course, such crimes done should be remembered and not happen again. However, we need to remember a common future as well. This needs time and imagination to build a common future through interactions among people cross borders.

We need to dismantle the fixed concepts tamed by such divisive systems based on national security. Not only cross borders in land and sea but also beyond our mindsets subjugated by the nation state we should try to liberate our everyday life from grand discourse of national security. We need to build genuine security through solidarity among people. If the 20th century was the period when we made efforts to build strong state, the 21st century should be the era of transforming the nation state into a flexible state which is inclusive and able to respect every human with diversity and dignity.

Panelist 3:



After studying law at the university, **Rev. Kato Makoto** graduated from Tokyo Bible Seminary in 1984. Rev. Kato ministers a local church, Siloam Church in Tokyo, with his wife who is a pastor too. They are parents to two sons and one daughter. He has been serving United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) as the Executive Secretary for ecumenical ministries.

**“The Neo-cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in East Asia.”
“From a Japanese perspective.”**

Makoto Kato

**Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Ministries
The United Church of Christ in Japan**

Makoto Kato provided an overview of historical and church relationships between Japan and Taiwan and what social implications this has on peacebuilding.

➤ History among Taiwan, China and Japan.

- 1895 Taiwan was given to Japan from Qing China.
- 1945 The end of Japanese occupation.
- 1951 Treaty of Peace with Japan
Japan waived all rights and claims relating to Taiwan.
- 1972 Japan-China joint Statement

➤ Church history between Taiwan and Japan

- 1941 The United Church of Christ in Japan was established.
- 1944 The United Church of Christ in Taiwan was established.
- 1963 Mission Agreement between The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and The United Church of Christ in Japan was signed.
- 1975 Tokyo Taiwan Church (in 1928 church founding) became a member church of the UCCJ.

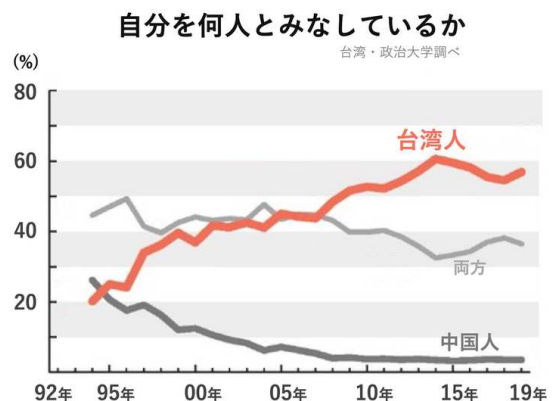
➤ What do the Japanese think about Taiwan?

How NHK announcer introduced Taiwanese team at the opening ceremony of Tokyo 2020 instead of Chinese Taipei?

The Japan times: Nov 15, 2021

“we are a country”: Taiwanese embrace distinct identity

➤ Video message for Taiwanese athletes.



➤ Voice from a Christian Woman

Japan holds one of the world's leading peace constitutions banning aggression and armament. What Japan should do is to urge China, Taiwan, and the United States to never solve problems in a military manner and to solve them peacefully.



Panelist 4:



The Rt. Rev. Rex Resurreccion B. Reyes, Jr. is now Bishop of the Episcopal (Anglican) Diocese of Central Philippines. He is a current member of the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches and is involved in several ecumenical formations in the Philippines. He is the first indigenous person to be General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines {2008-2018}. From 2010 to 2015 he was a member of the Presidium of the Christian Conference of Asia and a member of the Partnership Council of the United Church of Canada. The Union Theological College in Montreal, Canada conferred on him a doctorate in divinity, honoris causa in May 2018.

The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empire in Northeast Asia: A Perspective from the Philippines

The People's Movement is Alive in the Philippines

Thank you to the organizers for the space to engage in this conversation.

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army bombed Camp John Hay in Baguio City, north of Manila. After the Second World War, Camp John Hay would remain as the main station of the Voice of America, a radio station used intensively by the United States to reach out to many parts of Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. It took me years to connect the far-reaching implication of US presence in my country, symbolized by Camp John Hay in Baguio, the Subic Naval base in Subic, Zambales and the Clark Airfield in Pampanga. US influence in Philippine affairs was a controversial geopolitical issue in the Southeast Asian region that raged on for many years. It was an intricate part of the Cold-War, part one. To this day the US gives regular military aid to the Philippines.

In June 1991 amidst the debates in the Philippine Senate to review the US-Philippine Military Bases Agreement, Pinatubo Volcano in Zambales erupted. The eruption wreaked havoc on the facilities in Subic Naval Base and Clark Air base. The Senate action to terminate the military-bases agreement was also abetted by the eruption of the volcano. Political and natural events ended the military bases agreement. In place of this would be the regular "war games" conducted in the Philippines by both countries.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and other realities like the re-unification of Germany there was a lull in the region. It would be a lull before a storm. It would provide a space to Korean churches to focus their attention at re-unification efforts, for instance. But it would provide a head start for Chinese hegemony. Drove of Chinese would travel all over my country and elsewhere. Who knew who else from China would come to my country?

Meanwhile, "globalization" would become the order of the day. Globalization is many things to many people with its features of import liberalization, privatization and de-regulation. Weaker economies especially in the global south could hardly compete. On one hand, economists would paint bright prospects citing indicators to support their claims. On the other hand, a majority would point out to growing social and economic inequality and the inability of local economy to compete. What were the practical effects in my country?

Let me use joblessness as a benchmark. By 2010 when Benigno Aquino government took over our country was in a strange situation, according to IBON Databank, a foremost NGO research network

in the Philippines. While the Arroyo government (2001-2009) registered the fastest economic growth which averaged 4.5% higher than any of the three previous governments and registered a 7.3% growth in GDP. It left behind the highest record of joblessness of 11.2% annually. By the time Aquino took over, our National Statistics Office reported 4 million jobless Filipinos and "28.5 million in insecure, unprotected and poorly earning or even non-earning work". Wealth was concentrated on the few and failed to benefit the greater majority. How did this distortion or the failure to enhance development of the Filipinos happen?

IBON went on to say the government created jobs prompted by export orientation and dominated by foreign capital. These were not integrated well into the local economy. The footwear and textile industries for example, undeveloped as they were spiraled down further. Our government failed to pay attention to domestically-grounded industries. IBON went on to urge the incoming government at that time to ensure socio-economic reforms and be concerned of developing a stronger domestic industry and agriculture. Sadly, unemployment continues to be a major concern to this day. Made more so by the pandemic.

This also explains why one can find Filipinos in many parts of the world on land and sea. In 2018, Migrante a watchdog on Filipino overseas workers said that an astounding 6,298 Filipinos left the country each day. In airports alone, the flight departure areas for Philippine tell a lot in terms of the significant number of migrant workers. The so-called labor industry is a major source of government income and trumpeted as a major fuel for growth. It is not a sustainable way. The trials and tribulations of migrant workers, from illegal recruiters to abusive employers and impact on the Filipino families is also of significant concern, even if government hail them as heroes. Most of us would call them modern day slaves, to distinguish them from others who have migrated with their families.

In the last two decades, especially under the present Duterte government China has had profound economic and political influence. The ominous signs are clear: China flexed its muscles to demonstrate control over Hong Kong and lay claim to Taiwan. It flexed its economic might to many countries in the African continent and elsewhere in the south.

China, a major in the empire

At the ASEAN-China Summit held last November 16 President Rodrigo Duterte criticized the Chinese government for blocking and using water cannons at Filipino boats proceeding to the Ayungin Shoal to deliver supplies to Filipino servicemen. This was not the only time the Chinese Army blocked supply boats going to Ayungin Shoal. ***But, this is the first time ever that the Filipino president would speak strongly against China's aggressive stance in the South China Sea.*** Media reports in November 22 said 10 countries (Australia, France, Germany, Japan, the UK, the US, Canada, New Zealand and the European Union) issued separate statements against the Chinese

action. China's foreign ministry defended its action as the boats "trespassed waters" in a statement issued on November 18. The Chinese Premier also declared "China will not be a bully, but it will always be ASEAN's good neighbor, good friend and good partner". What is not being said is the aggressive stance China took since 2013 to control those islands.

The day after the statements from China the former Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines Alberto del Rosario commenting on the action of the Chinese coastguard said President "Duterte's focus on bilateral diplomacy did not benefit the Philippines". He said, "we focused personally on bilateral diplomacy while neglecting the other tools in our toolbox which would have enabled us to move the tribunal's ruling to the next level". The former foreign secretary said Duterte never showed interest in implementing the tribunal's ruling on the islands in the South China Sea. On November 20, the Chinese coastguard warns an aircraft bearing Presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson as he was flying over to turn back and leave immediately as their actions were "unfriendly and dangerous". Upon landing however on Pag-asa island he saw signs "Welcome to China" similar to what was reported in June 2020.

By tribunal, del Rosario was referring to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which ruled in favor of the Philippines' claim to islands in the West China Sea filed during the Presidency Aquino. Ayungin Shoal for instance is 195 kilometers off Palawan or within the 200 nautical miles of the exclusive economic zone. Duterte neglected this ruling many times, despite his campaign promises that he "would jetski to those islands and put up the Philippine flag" there. In the Ayungin Shoal, *BRP Sierra Madre* a Philippine ship remains grounded and serves as a guard-post for Filipino coastguards. Faced with superior Chinese coastguard, Rear Admiral Rommel Jude Ong (Re.) former Vice Commander of the Philippine Navy wondered aloud if the grounded ship is symbolic of the last stand of the Philippines over the islands.

The islands in the West Philippine Sea are also claimed by several other countries, namely Taiwan and four other ASEAN countries - Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam.

Duterte warming up to China has serious implications to democracy in my country. By the end of his first year, President showed signs of an authoritarian government.

First, he engaged in what he called the war against drugs and went on to publicly declare that the police can kill drug addicts and he will be support them. These has taken a toll on young people in urban poor areas, while suspected drug Lords had their day in court or simply remained untouched.

Then he went on to promote red-tagging or terrorist-listing with the same tone, communists are to be eliminated. The Anti-Terror Bill was passed by Congress that gave state security forces power to determine who is communist and terrorist and who is not. The impunity that followed was

astounding - the victims cut across society - professionals, church people, students, indigenous people, farmers, workers and human rights defenders. Under the Anti-Terror Bill is the Taskforce to end Local Communist Armed Conflicts (TF-ELCAC). It is the main implementing agency. This body co-opted the police. They are the accuser, judge and executioner. To be red tagged was ultimately a death sentence on and a license to kill perceived communists and/or terrorists.

Third the peace talks between the Philippine Government and the National Democratic Front, which was initiated by President Fidel Ramos, himself an army man, in 1991 was demonized by the TF-ELCAC as a communist/terrorist agenda following the unilateral action of Duterte to terminate the process. Several of the consultants of the NDF were killed during Duterte's watch. The peace process was agreed by both protagonists to a) end the military conflict, and b) to resolve what we call here the roots of the conflict (which are social and economic injustices.)

Fourth, the pandemic response featured the longest lock-down; a corruption-riddled bidding process for medicines and equipment; and poor support to medical frontliners.

Meanwhile, his economic policies mirror the slogan of China: Build! Build! Build!

How are we then to deal with the global empire now led by two contending powers, namely the United States and China? The US has tightened US-Taiwan relations and insisted open access to sea lanes in the South China Sea. A Filipino observer once remarked that the US was "raring for war".

The churches in the Philippines, under the leadership of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines understand church ministry within the theology of incarnation, of God coming to be with us.

1. This means the church must learn the worldly issues that prevent others from enjoying the fullness of life and helping out. It also gives the church the opportunity to engage in prophetic witness; So, the church does not stop issuing statements of concern addressed to government or its agencies.
2. This means the church understands herself as part of the people's movement to bring about change that is just and peaceful. The opposite of this is one that lives for itself, or what others call the "maintenance church". On several occasions, it is important for the church to choose between being part of the people's movement or being a monument.
3. It means deepening ecumenical solidarity. There are other boats, Jesus told his disciples as they had difficult time hauling fish. The work of the Korean churches to shout out their prayers and campaign for the re-unification of Korea raised historical and geopolitical awareness in my country. The churches together become the platform upon which the voices of those suffering injustice and

marginalization. Churches forging bilateral and multilateral cooperation for vigilance, service and witness. This includes reaching out to organizations in China who strive for peace and justice.

4. Churches giving space to young people and indigenous people to share their stories and encourage hope. Young people in many parts of the world are showing us the ways towards a just and peaceful world. Indigenous peoples have largely been unheard in the work for just and inclusive communities. When indigenous people talk about self-determination, they are talking about a way towards a sustainable world.

5. Churches together demand that country-signatories to international mechanisms like those in the United Nations should abide by their commitments.

It is not easy but the struggle for peace and justice has always been costly.

*“He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.” Isa. 2.4*

Taiwan Ecumenical Forum for Justice and Peace (TEF)

Two-Day Webinar:

The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia (Day 2)

Date and Time: 8 December 2021 (Wednesday) 20:00-22:00 (8:00-9:00 p.m.) Taiwan

Zoom Host: PCT Information Centre

Notes of the Q&A Session, moderated by Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang–En (Tin Giong-Un)

1. Introductory Remarks by Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson and Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang–En

Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson thanked the panelists Rev. Phil King (New Zealand), Associate Professor Kung Lap-Yan (Hong Kong), Professor Yi, Ki-Ho (South Korea), Rev. Makoto Kato (Japan), and Rt. Rev. Dr. Rex R.B. Reyes, Jr. (Philippines) for deepening and strengthening the basic analysis that was laid out during the first day of the webinar. The threat by the empires “is real, deep, and must be dealt with.” It seems that for the first time, Taiwan’s specific challenges were seen as a need for global solidarity in the ecumenical space, Christopher Ferguson observed. Rev. Dr. Cheng Yang–En, the moderator of the Q&A session, highlighted the rich parts of sharing, noting that there is “much to digest” following these presentations from diverse contexts.

2. Webinar Participant’s Responses to the Panel Presentations

In response to the panel presentations, Rev. Renske Karsen stressed the “wonderful example” that Taiwan is of a free Chinese society and that the PCT is in its struggle against the Kuomintang Party in the past. He noted that “we are against forces who are against freedom” and expressed his concern about the suppression of churches in China. Rev. Seungmin Shin observed that, amid hegemony competition and the threat of war in North East Asia and the Pacific, the role of the churches for peace making seems to have weakened. This raises the question about the reasons for this development. Further, Seungmin Shin asked about ways to revitalize the North East Asian Churches peace network with all ecumenical bodies, and suggested that the TEF, the Ecumenical Forum for Korea (EFK), and the Japan-Korea Platform meet to enable a deeper regional vision from the ecumenical perspective. Professor Victor W. C. Hsu mentioned the Covid-19 Pandemic as one reason why the network has weakened and noted that “[i]t is really up to us to carry on and do whatever is necessary in terms of advocacy.” Several participants supported Seungmin Shin’s

suggestion to strengthen collaboration; moderator Cheng Yang–En mentioned the idea of another webinar as a way of building this network.

On the topic of follow-up meetings, a representative of the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) noted that students often pioneer people’s movements and called to bring in voices from the youth in future gatherings. Agreeing with the notion that youth should be more represented, Christopher Ferguson explained that a meeting in the Philippines had already been scheduled where voices from the youth, women, and indigenous communities were included. However, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic the meeting had to be cancelled.

Finally, CWM General Secretary Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum raised three issues regarding the future work of the ecumenical forum. The first issue concerns the current restrictions the global ecumenical institutions have that keep them from taking a more prophetic stance against empire. This poses the critical question to the ecumenical forum of how these major institutions could be liberated. Second, in response to comments on the first day of the webinar, Jooseop Keum said he was skeptical about the idea of revitalizing the Bandung framework and about how it could have meaningful implications for today’s challenges. This is because countries like India and China, who played a vital role in the emergence of Bandung, have since failed and forgotten about the framework. Third, Jooseop Keum expressed his concern about Chinese Churches from a wide range of backgrounds that today uncritically embrace patriotism, nationalism, and the idea of a Great China. This development raises the question whether it is time for the ecumenical forum to share constructive criticism with Chinese Christians that have long been supported (the CCC and underground churches). Moderator Cheng Yang–En emphasized the importance of these three issues and suggested to include them in further deliberations of the TEF. It is the hope that this two-day event built the foundation for future webinars and discussions.

Note Taker: Rev. Thomas Frenz (Germany)

Note:

Relative News:





Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

TEF Youth Webinar Handbook

***The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the
Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia***

Date: 20:00 p.m. (GMT+8:00) on 26 April, 2022

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activist from the Sapporo Centre for Gender Equality in Japan

8 Korea: A-Young MOON,

peace activist from PEACEMOMO from South Korea

12 Taiwan: Bin-Jou Liao,

PhD candidate in Political Science at National Taiwan University

21 Thailand: Sippachai “Zoom” Kunnuwong,

Communications Specialist at Fortify Rights in Thailand

25 Q&A



Taiwan
Ecumenical
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台灣普世論壇

Co-Conveners: Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson (WCRC) and Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum (CWM)

**ASIA PACIFIC KAIROS: A prophetic call to journey together with the PCT
in pursuit of justice and peace for the people of Taiwan and the Asia-Pacific**

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God” Micah 6:8

Invitation for TEF Youth Webinar

March 30, 2022

Dear Ecumenical Partners,

Peace greetings to you from Taiwan, the PCT and the Taiwan Ecumenical Forum for Justice and Peace (TEF). We hope you are keeping well in the midst of pandemic days moreover the horrified invasion in Ukraine.

The TEF would like to warmly invite you to an opportunity for learning, contribution and most of all fellowship online. TEF will be holding a two-hour youth webinar under the same theme of the webinar held in December 2021: “The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia.” This is a follow up webinar meant for young people’s voice. The four young panellists from Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand will be speaking from their young perspective on this theme.

As you undoubtedly are aware, the regional tension is getting serious in East Asia. Along with worldwide broadcasting on Ukraine crisis, tension in this region is mentioned often. TEF is addressing this burning issue to share with the ecumenical family. We would be very honoured if you can accept our invitation to participate in this webinar of young people’s voice.

The webinar will take place on April 26 (Tuesday) from 8 to 10 PM Taiwan Time (GMT+8). You are cordially invited to participate. Please register online.

Peace,

Jooseop Keum and Chris Ferguson
TEF Co-conveners



Taiwan
Ecumenical
Forum

台灣普世論壇

Co-Conveners: Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson (WCRC) and Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum (CWM)

**ASIA PACIFIC KAIROS: A prophetic call to journey together with the PCT
in pursuit of justice and peace for the people of Taiwan and the Asia-Pacific**

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God” Micah 6:8

Concept Paper

Youth Webinar: A Political and Situational Conversation on East Asia Geopolitics from a Young Peoples’ Perspective.

Theme: “The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia.”

Proposal: To deepen the reflection presented in the last TEF steering group meeting. This webinar will be provided by the young people whose contextual perspectives will seek to stimulate an exciting conversation on the churches’ role for just and peace. The churches around the world are confronted by issues such as shifting power relations and regional instability focusing on, but going beyond, the China-US hegemonic power struggle, as well as the increasing significant roles of Japan and India. The webinar will invite reflections from the perspective of peoples’ movements and life-centered values. Hopefully, the youth webinar will nurture a renewed gospel-based theological prophetic imagination to usher in transformed regional relationships for the “healing of the nations.”

The intention is to contextualize the Taiwan – China conflict in a regional/global perspective focused on forward-looking, justice-seeking and peace-building missiological imperatives for the church globally beyond descriptive analyses of imperial or hegemonic power plays.

The two-hour webinar will involve a panel of four young speakers from Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Thailand speaking from young people’s perspectives followed by a Q&A session.

Youth Webinar Agenda

Date: 20:00 p.m. (GMT+8:00) on 26 April, 2022

Theme: The Neo-Cold War: The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia



Taiwan Ecumenical Forum 台灣普世論壇

Youth Webinar on:

**The Neo-Cold War:
The Resurgence of the Geopolitics of Global Empires in (North) East Asia**

Date: 26 April 2022
Time: 8 PM (GMT+8) Taiwan time

Penalists:



A-Young Moon
PEACEMOMO
Representative and Peace
Education Facilitator



Nonoka Kuze
UCCJ Sapporo
Hokubu Church
Sapporo Centre for
Gender Equality



Bin-Jou Liao
Ph.D. Candidate in
Political Science at
National Taiwan
University



Sippachai Kunnuwong
Communications
Associate at Fortify Rights
Former news
correspondent with AFP
and BBC Thai

26 April, 2022	
20:00-20:05	Welcome Message: Rev. Dr. Jooseop Keum, General Secretary of the Council for World Mission
20:05-21:40	<p>Moderator: Rev. Dr. Christopher Ferguson, Former General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches</p> <p>Four Panelists: (20 mins each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Japan: Nonoka Kuze ➤ Korea: A-Young MOON ➤ Taiwan: Bin-Jou Liao ➤ Thailand: Sippachai “Zoom” Kunnuwong
21:40-22:00	<p>Moderator: Monika Biswas (Bangladesh)</p> <p>Q&A</p>

Japan

Name: Nonoka Kuze

Profile:

Member of the UCCJ Sapporo Hokubu Church.

(UCCJ: United Church of Christ in Japan)

She has worked at the Sapporo Center for Gender Equality since 2018.

In particular, she is interested in the support of the young women.

(Additional Information if you need;)

She participated in Asian Fellowship (ASF) of Mission21 in 2016.

And she has visited Taiwan to participate in the conference of the PCT and the UCCJ as a member of the Church Youth Conference in Sapporo.

Speech Direction:

Many Japanese youth are disappointed in the current state surrounding them. There are young women who are left behind the society because of the violence, poverty and the insufficient social system.

The majority of Japanese youth keep distance from social problems, and they are just trying to keep their narrow world safe.

However, some youth have a high interest about social issue. They feel a sense of crisis and get in new goals and values from movements in the world and East Asia.

TEF Youth Webinar

April 26 2022

Nonoka Kuze

I'm glad to be here today. I am Nonoka Kuze. I'd like to talk about Japanese young people today and a connection between East Asia or the world and them.,

I work at the Sapporo Center for Gender Equality in order to support young women, empower youth and women, organize study sessions on social issues, and so on. I will talk about the state of Japanese youth which I've seen through this work.

It is said that the youth have low self-affirmation and lose hope for their own future, and most of them are disappointed in the current state surrounding them. Young people, including myself, were born after the 1990s with knowing the Japanese economic boom, and they have grown up watching many incidents and disasters, such as the Great East Japan Earthquake and other earthquakes, torrential rains, indiscriminate murder, such the 9/11 attacks and the large-scale acts of terrorism that followed.

They have already been feeling hopeless, and besides the COVID-19 pandemic making their future more uncertain, many youth have too much on their plates.

The majority of youth keep distance from social issues such as poverty, politics and environmental problems. I think that this is not due to their lack of knowledge. Certainly, they do not welcome these topics and have not received much education about them, but more than that, they don't want to get involved in these issues. They feel that they cannot make a difference by themselves.

Last October, the national election was held in Japan, and the policies, mainly in response to the pandemic, became a hot topic in the news every day. In the end, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) remains in power. After the election, I read an online article. It said that many young people voted for the LDP. The reason was not because they approved of the LDP's policies, but because they wanted to keep the status quo. The young people who voted for the LDP think, "Society doesn't change in the election anyway. Our voices will not be heard in politics. If that's the case, we might at least hope this current situation won't change now so that our past effort won't be wasted."

Young people in Japan today have not had any experience with society changing for the better, so they can't imagine a good future. Furthermore, many youth, suffer from the social system created by adults and are unable to think about their own future.

Our Sapporo Center for Gender Equality provides a safe place for women. We also work for young women in their teens who have left their homes because of family difficulties, domestic violence or poverty; we provide them with a room to stay and the support they need. Last year, LiNK, a support project for young women, was started. Then, many girls sent messages to ask for help without previous notice: "Help. I want to leave home now." We listened to them (on the chat) and some of them cooled down. However, in several cases, we decided they had to leave their parents at once, if not, they would be in danger. They needed a safe place to stay. In such cases, we

tried to find them a way to live independently, but there were many barriers.

Under the current Japanese system, public support from the Child Guidance Center is available until the age of 18. At elder ages, they have to work and rent a house on their own. However, until last March, minors under the age of 20 needed parental consent to sign a contract. Though they wanted to live without their parents, they needed their parents' consent. And many companies employ university graduates, and it is hard for these girls who have not finished high school to find work. When I walk with them, I always think why they are still going through so much pain, though they have been running away from the hardships.

From this April, the age of adulthood has been lowered to 18 from 20, and some situations have change better. However, it is pointed out that there are possibilities of being involved in crime. There are lack of law and not enough support. Above all, girls who have been in difficulty from an early age, are unable to recognize that they are in trouble and need to ask for help. Finally, these girls are left behind in our society.

There is such a difficult situation, however, some young people took action. Since the SDGs were adopted, many people in Japan have been working on. In Sapporo, where I live, many youths think about future and act. For examples, a high school student did research on gender equality in companies, a woman in her 20s set up a community to dialogue between youths, and some students started business to solve social problems rather than to make money. These youths are also disappointed with today's society, but instead of giving up, they are thinking about what they can do now to make the future better. They compare Japan with other countries and get new values and goals, and society is beginning to change little by little. For examples, NHK has produced a video on the SDGs and many newspapers have published features on World Women's Day. Also, more and more people are speaking out when violence, sexual crimes and human rights issues occur, rather than remaining silent and letting them pass. Recently, it was discovered that sexual violence had occurred in the Japanese film industry, prominent people, including the original authors and actors, spoke out against sexual violence, and many citizens supported them. And many people are sending out positive messages in the hope of creating a better world. No one had ever imagined that few years before.

In Japan, young people rarely feel their voices are reflected in society. I often feel helpless, wondering why Japan is so far behind other countries, and I doubt whether what I'm doing is in vain, and whether no one notices our actions. At such times, I am sometimes encouraged by the youth movements in other countries, especially in the East Asian countries. Not long ago, when the Sunflower Movement and the Umbrella Movement were reported in the media, I was shocked to see that young people could influence politics, and that it happened in countries so close by.

The Hokkai District of UCCJ, which I belong, is serious about the role of the church in the local community. They are thinking what the church and Christians can do to social issues, and I have learned and thought about such things since I was a teenager. On the other hand, political or religious topics are taboo in schools, workplaces and communities. It is

difficult or takes courage to tell "I am a Christian" to even my close friends. I always wonder if talking about my faith or political matters makes the distance between I and them. But if I stop there, if we keep silent, nothing will change. I think the war is caused by not knowing the other side and by being convinced that "I know what is right". This is how Japan has made a large mistake in the past. In Japan there is still political conflict with South Korea, China and other countries, and sometimes hate speech can be seen on social media. Around the world, one justice and another justice are fighting. In such a situation, as Christians, or as young activists, what we have to do is to speak up.

Meeting other youth at the conference of PCT and UCCJ, or Mission 21 workshops effected a big change to me. Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, Philippines, China, these countries are no longer the ones I hear about in the news, but they are the ones where my friends live. Whenever I hear about these countries, I wonder how my friends are, and what they or the people of the country think about this issue. Then I think of a way to make both sides happy. And I want to extend those changes I experienced to others. Fortunately, in spite of the conflicts between countries, there is a cultural exchange by young people. For better or worse, especially for young people in Japan, politics is disconnected from sport and culture. Social networking sites also allow information to reach a large number of people. I believe that by knowing the other side, its culture and history, people can be in solidarity, not conflict.

Now, I am working with many people on various issues in Japanese society, including gender inequality. When we speak out about gender equality, we sometimes take bashings, and despair at society that remains the same. However, if we don't just look within Japan, but look out to the world, we will find people who are speaking out as well, and who have already got the future we envisioned. Whenever we find such people, we say "It's amazing, I'm sure we also can do it" and encourage each other. And some people pay attention to our hopes and actions. I hope that one day youth activists from all over the world can get together face to face to learn and exchange with each other. First of all, I hope I'll continue to walk together with you all here today.

Korea

Name: A-Young MOON

Curriculum Vitae

A-Young Moon

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Education

2018.08. ~ Doctoral Program in Peace Education, UN Peace University Graduate School (UPEACE), Costa Rica

2011.04 – 2012.10 Master of Peace Education, UN Peace University Graduate School (UPEACE), Costa Rica

2002.03 – 2007.08 Bachelor of German Education/Elementary Education, Korea National University of Education

Career and activity

Current

- Member of Advisory Committee, Ministry of Unification
- Member of National Curriculum Revision Advisory Committee, Ministry of Education
- Member of National Action Plan on UN Res.1325 Advisory Committee, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family
- Member of International Peace Exchange Committee of Gyeonggi Province
- Adjunct professor in the Department of International Cooperation and North Korea, Seoul Cyber University
- Council Member of the International Peace Bureau (IPB)
- Advisory Committee for Democratic Citizenship Education, Seoul Office of Education

Former

- Youth Special Member of the National Education Council under the direct control of the President
- Chairman of Seoul Youth Hub Steering Committee
- Standing Member of the Peace Development Division of the 19th Peaceful Unification Advisory Council
- Standing member of the Youth Division of the 18th Democratic Peace Unification Advisory Council
- Intern Researcher at Berghof Foundation, Germany
- UNESCO Asia Pacific Center for International Understanding Junior Program Specialist
- 2015 World Education Forum Korean Civil Society Delegation (Songdo, Incheon, Korea)
- Asia-Pacific Education Coalitions Consultation Meeting Korean Civil Society Delegation (Cambodia, Siem Reap)
- East West Center North Pacific Cooperation Leadership Program Korean youth delegation (USA, Hawaii)
- Youth Committee of Daecheongmaru, Seoul Metropolitan Government
- Korean delegation to UN Youth, Peace and Security Asia and the Pacific Regional Consultation (Bangkok, Thailand)

Peace as commons, security as commons.

A-Young Moon

Representative, PEACEMOMO

Casually, we say that the cold war is over. My presentation starts with the question: Has the cold war ended? From the perspective of the US and the Soviet Union, the cold war was over. However, it is different from the perspective of the Korean peninsula. The fighting has been put into halt; the Korean War has not come to an end. The Cold War has never ended in the Korean peninsula. The Cold War has ended only from the perspectives of inter-national order. The talks such as "the end of the Cold War" and "the Neo-Cold-War" are all offspring of the faith in supremacy in global order.

What does the end of cold war mean to the separated families in two Koreas? From the perspective of the people of the Korean peninsula there is no big change in their life before and after the cold war. Who defines what, it does matter. This is my argument. Maybe you can disagree with me. So my point is perspective matters from which point of view you are defining something as something from the perspective of like world history or international politics or international relations you might say that the cold war is over. But from my point of view as a resident of the Korean peninsula I don't want to say that the cold war was over. It's your conclusion not mine.

In this sense, we need to think about this question: Who defines security? As the term "the cold war" was dominated by the international order, the term security is a signifier dominated by the state. Security itself means safeness, keeping someone safe. It is not only limited to military security and national security. However, the power of the national security or military security is powerful because the state defines and justifies a problem to be a national security issue by taking fear as a hostage from the public deliberation of the problem. So other discourses about security such as human security, environment security, food security, feminist security have been dominated by the concept national security through military power. The state has dominated the power to define what the threat is, who the enemy is, what the security is.

We are all witnessing ongoing military aggression by Russia on Ukraine. This is a proxy war. This war is very similar what the Korean peninsula experienced 70 years ago. We are also witnessing the world between the West and Russia, but it seems like there are some initiatives that to interpret current power structure as a bloc between the West and the Rest which means Russia, China, and North Korea. The U.S. wants to call Russia as the axis of evil and this tendency is very similar like when the U.S. declared the war on terror and called Iran and North Korea as the axis of evil.

While the states are negotiating on its power, people are dying. Decision makers who make decision about this war, they stay in the safest places. The language of today's international relations falls short of analyzing and making sense of the structural changes implicated in the so-called Neo- Cold War. What we really need today is perhaps a great tum in security interpretations and solution-designing as known as peacebuilding.

Here, I'd like to quote my colleague Francis Daehoon Lee, the director of Trans-Education for Peace Institute, he said, "The word, security, is an 'ambiguous symbol' for which social

agreement or voluntary consensus is impossible and is at best an 'underdeveloped concept' when applied to reality."

The gap between local issues and the global or international issues are quite difficult to connect. I would like to say that as a resident of the Korean peninsula, for me, the cold war is still ongoing. I can accept international order, but my local order or my personal order it is not. It is very difficult to fill the gap between the international issues with the local issues. And we always say that we need to do something local, but sometimes it's really difficult to connect.

So, my concern is how we can make peace as commons and security as commons. 'Peace as commons' is my organization's slogan since 2020. We are focusing on how can we common peace by people and do the same for security as well. Based on the perspective of human security we need to ask the question from the separated families in two Koreas what does cold war mean to them? The end of the cold war really means something to them. Was there any changes to their life? There was no changes.

As the U.S. and the Soviet Union worked to end the Cold War, there were also lots of efforts or attempts and endeavors to make peace between North and South Korea. However, the spotlight always goes to political figures, while the life of the separated families and the victims of the Korean War remain in the shadow, in the shade. For me, from a human-security perspective, I think it really doesn't make any change. This is another of my arguments. The talks such as the end of the cold war and the naval cold war I think it's all offspring of the face in the supremacy in the global order. We are like bringing and using their term as our term. It's not people's term. I believe. It's not grassroots.

To build peace and to promote peace, we need some more opportunities for new imagination. We need to make a crack in the given structure and given order or given terms and concept. We need to keep asking questions who defines what and why. Who defines security? National security defined by the state? How about my security? How about Japanese young women's security? Young women in this whole worlds? What about the refugee kids? What about their security? Discourse of security needs diversity, it needs to be diversified.

How can we bring 'security' back to people's hands? How can people define security in their own language, in their own context, in their own lifestyle as the way they want? By asking questions, we can make a crack to the given structure. So when we discuss about 'Neo-cold war' I think we need to try to build it up from grassroots level, from the life of 'one person.' We can make the discourse of security very local. And we can also bring the local security issues and my personal security issues to the international security issues. We can bring life issues of individuals and their context to fight against this national supremacy discourse.

To bring security to people's hands I think we need to deal with the fear. The state defines threat, and it positions itself as a caretaker of the nationals. The state says that it has a responsibility to protect its people, but we need to ask another question here. Who protects whom? Where is the self-determination?

So for me like we really need to design another perspective which is for a peace building. I think we need to study together. We need to discuss together and bring some other concepts and other understandings and other perspectives to bring up what we really need for our security not for the national security only. So we need to find different interpretation as a solution to make it as a ground for the peace building.

The world is based on very easy ground. I might say it's a dichotomy. Everywhere we can find dichotomy. I think it's the simplest way and easiest way to define self and the other, us and the enemy. It is happening everywhere. Now Russia is the common enemy and the U.S. is not happy with countries not designate their clear stance towards Russia yet.

Dichotomy is a very powerful mean to manipulate our rational understanding and our rational approaches in these issues related peace and security. How can we go beyond this strong dichotomy? The world is not possible to be categorized into two. There are so many different ideas, stances, and so many different identities. If we listen to the mainstream media, the world seems quite simple. But if we focus on the grassroots level and the voice of the people I think there are a lot of diversities.

So how can we bring these diverse voices into our discourse about security and peace? This is my suggestion. First, we need to challenge the state authority. We need to question why do you monopolize the threat interpretation? Second, we can put the pressure to the state for the transparency of the mystified and securitized confidentiality of the state affairs under the name of national security and military security which is based on the traditional concept of security. Civil society organizations are not enough. We need people to jump in this course and make a pressure on the confidentiality of the state's military security affairs.

Security sector also needs to be under the monitoring of the citizens and the people and it should be managed by the representatives of the people. And lastly, we need to diversify the security discourse with right to self-determination of each person and of community. By doing so, we can make the security as a commons and peace as commons.

Taiwan

Name: Bin-Jou Liao 廖斌洲

PROFILE

I am Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science (National Taiwan University).

My research area includes two subfields: Comparative Politics (Politics of Contemporary China & Politics of Post-WWII Taiwan) and Political Theory (18-20th-century Western Political Thought).

Now I also work for Taiwanese Civil Aid to HKers, a Taiwan-based NGO which offers aids to Hongkongers in Taiwan. My primary mission includes two parts: first, to investigate the situations and difficulties of Hongkongers in Taiwan by means of field study; second, to evaluate the Hongkonger-arrangement policy of the Government of Taiwan to offer advice to the government.

CURRENT POSITION:

Ph. D. Candidate, Department of Political Science, National Taiwan University

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RESEARCH AREA:

Comparative Politics (Politics of Contemporary China & Politics of Post-WWII Taiwan)

Political Theory (18-20th-century Western Political Thought)

Hundred-Years Vicissitude & Zeitgeist: Political Change and Theological Reflection in the Past Century

Augustine Bin-Jou Liao

Director, Department of Policy Development and Research, Taiwanese Civil Aid to HKers

Introduction

“Who am I” is the ultimate question everyone should ask himself/herself. There is no ultimate question which can be detached from one’s own age and one’s own social context. One’s freedom comes not from vacuum state but from one’s own self-consciousness which is shaped both by one’s belief system and social-political environment. The dynamics of an age’s advance always originates from conflict between the conservative and the progressive, confrontation between the ruling and the ruled, and the oppressor and the oppressed.

In this short article, I would use a comparative historical approach to investigate social-political change and political-theological problem in Taiwan in the past century. Also, I would offer my own reflections on the role of the church and Christians in Taiwan’s politics.

My analytical framework combines structural-ideological analysis and macro-historical analysis. From structural-ideological perspective, we can investigate historical Taiwan in six dimensions: Zeitgeist (spirit of the age), international environment, state power (in state-society relations), social forces (in state-society relations), religion-state relations, and political theology. From macro-historical perspective, I divide the one-hundred-years Taiwan’s history into five phases: 1920’s, 1950’s~1960’s, 1970’s~1980’s, 1990’s, 2000’s~now. I will discuss six dimensions chronologically.

Taiwan in the 1920s

Taiwan was under Japanese colonial rule between 1895 and 1945. During the period, Japan was the first modernized state in East Asia and attempted to build up Taiwan as a modernized colony to extract Taiwan’s resources.

The dreams people in Taiwan embraced were the “dream of self-governing” and the “dream of a nation.” In the global context, the post-World-War-I order was formed under the mainstream idea of right-wing liberal Wilson’s and left-wing socialist Lenin’s “national self-determination.”

In 1919, in order to transform the Taiwanese into Japanese and Japan Emperor’s subjects, Japan’s colonial government carried out “assimilation (Dōka) policy” in Taiwan. At the same time, under Japan’s Taishō period, Freedom and People’s Rights Movement (自由民權運動, Jiyū Minken Undō) in Japan influenced Taiwan’s intellectual elites. On the one side, Taiwanese Cultural Association (台灣文化協會) which is led by Jiang Wei-Sui, was devoted to enlightening Taiwanese with progressive cultural and political ideas. On the other side, Petition Movement for the Establishment of a Taiwanese Parliament (台灣議會設置請願運動) which was led by Lin Hsien-

Tang demanded that Japan’s parliamentary approve establishing a self-governing colonial parliament in Taiwan. These two movements symbolized Taiwanese’s pursuit of self-governing status and their self-consciousness as a nation.

As to the religion-state relations in 1920s, Taiwan’s Protestant church - established by Scottish and Canadian missionaries - showed its non-resistance attitude toward Japan’s colonial government, although the latter put Japan’s state religion (Shinto) into practice. In political-theological dimension, Western-centric theology originating from Scottish Protestant tradition was predominant during the period. At the same time, the non-church movement, which was founded by a Japanese Christian and pacifist, Uchimura Kanzō, influenced Taiwan’s intellectual elites.

Zeitgeist	International Environment	State Power	Social Forces	Religion-State Relations	Political Theology
1. Dream of Self-Governing 2. Dream of Nation	Post-WWI’s decolonizing movement	1. Assimilation policy (同化 / Dōka) 2. Cultivating Taiwanese as Japanese citizens	1. Taiwanese Cultural Association 2. Petition Movement for the Establishment of a Taiwanese Parliament	1. Obedience to colonial government 2. Most Taiwanese Christians are local elites	1. Western-centric theology 2. Non-church movement (Uchimura Kanzō)

Taiwan in the 1950s~1960s

The dominion of post-World-War-II Taiwan was taken over by the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) which had been defeated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The dream that people in Taiwan pursued was the “dream of democracy” which both islanders’ political elites and mainlanders’ intellectual elites had shared. However, the dream was at last crushed by the authority.

With regard to the international environment, it was the early age of the Cold War. In order to gain political support from the United States, Chiang Kai-Shek’s KMT regime which ruled as a pro-capitalist-camp right-wing dictatorship defined Taiwan as an outpost of Cold War.

“Party-state system” and “dual patron-client system” are the two pillars KMT used to maintain its control over society in Taiwan. Firstly, party-state system which is derived from Lenin’s political idea defined the ruling party KMT as the vanguard party of Chinese national revolution and endowed KMT’s organization with the penetrating power paralleled to every essential social organization. Secondly, dual patron-client system stressed the dual ruling structure of KMT’s central and local politics. While political positions as political favors in central government were almost distributed to

those whose origins are mainland China, local political elites were coopted under the KMT's "divide-and-rule" policy which used carrots-and-sticks strategy. During this period, KMT faced criticism from liberal intellectuals whose political ideas were mainly published in the magazines *Free China Journal*(自由中國). Social forces which had integrated mainlanders' and islanders' pro-democracy elites demanded that KMT fulfill its promise of implementing democracy in Taiwan. At last, KMT crackdown on *Free China Journal* and the first wave of post-WWII democratic movement failed.

After KMT took over Taiwan in 1949, its anti-Communist policy directed the ruling elites to take hostile attitude toward any organization with cosmopolitan elements. During this period, the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) had been rooted in Taiwan for nearly a century and had kept close relations with the World Council of Churches (WCC), an ecumenical Christian organization. In the political atmosphere of a US-led anti-Communist camp, the KMT government labelled PCT as a pro-Communist Christian organization. Therefore, the relations between the KMT regime and PCT was deteriorating. From the perspective of theology, there are two opposing streams of political theologies: one is the US-originated evangelical-fundamental theology which was adopted by pro-KMT Christian denominations; the other is PCT's ecumenism which is connected to European-originated Protestant tradition.

Zeitgeist	International Environment	State Power	Social Forces	Religion-State Relations	Political Theology
Perishing Dream of Democracy	1. Early Stage of Cold War 2. Taiwan as an outpost of Cold War 3. KMT as a pro-US, right-wing dictatorship	1. Restructuring of "party-state system" 2. Establishment of "dual patron-client system"	1. Criticism of KMT's dictatorship 2. Democratic alliance of mainlanders' and islanders' elites	Deteriorating	Two opposing theologies: 1. US-originated evangelical-fundamental theology 2. PCT's ecumenism

Taiwan in the 1970s~1980s

The Sino-US-Soviet triangle relations shifted because of the China's deteriorating relations with Soviet Union and US' reengagement with China to contain Soviet Union. It followed that the Republic of China (Taiwan)'s representation of China in the United Nations was replaced with the People's Republic of China. Therefore, the international status of China was rising and that of Taiwan was failing.

It was the time of the "dream of freedom" when people in Taiwan quested for democracy. Due to the KMT regime's losing "external legitimacy" caused by Taiwan's falling international status, the

KMT initiated releasing political power to strengthen its “internal legitimacy.” On the side of society, non-party democratic movement was rising and growing in the 1970s. These democrats appealed to implementing democracy by ending the KMT’s one-party dictatorship on one side, and to building up a new independent state named Taiwan by popular consent on the other. Responding to an external diplomatic crisis and internal mass protest, the KMT regime adopted liberalization by opening a limited parliamentary by-election.

There was a distinct shift in the religion-state relations in 1970s. The relations between Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT) and KMT regime fell into conflict. In response to Taiwan’s diplomatic crisis in 1971, PCT proposed three essential official statements to express its position on political issues. These official statements include Statement on Our National Fate (1971), Our Appeal (1975), A Declaration on Human Rights (1978). The key values of these statements can be generalized as the following ideas: human rights, political reforms, national self-determination. The most representative political-theological theory is “theology of contextualization” which is proposed by Reverend Shoki Coe (Chang-Huei Hwang), who was in exile in Britain but also influenced the theological ideas of Bishop Desmond Tutu. The Theology of Contextualization (處境化神學) is a theological method stressing that one can read the Bible through the eyes of his/her own ever-changing social context, and reinterpret Bible as a response to contemporary situation. Wang Hsien-Chih’s indigenous theology and Chen Nan-Jhou’s identity theology influenced Christians in PCT to interpret the Bible in the context of Taiwan’s history.

Zeitgeist	International Environment	State Power	Social Forces	Religion-State Relations	Political Theology
Dream of Freedom	1. US.’s strategic shift 2. ROC’s replacement with PRC in the UN 3. Rising China & falling Taiwan	1. KMT’s releasing of political power to consolidate its “internal legitimacy” 2. Limited parliamentary by-election	1. Non-party democratic movement 2. Purposes: democracy & Taiwan independence 3. Attaining the goal: political liberalization	1. Intense 2. PCT proposed three official statements 3. Key values: (1) human rights (2) political reforms (3) national self-determination	1. Theology of contextualization (Shoki Coe) 2. Indigenous theology (Wang Hsien-Chih) 3. Identity theology (Chen Nan-Jhou)

Taiwan in the 1990s

As Taiwan stepped into the 1990s, the dynamics of political reform had been brewing for a long time. Both political elites and people shared the same “dream of constitutionalism.” Economic globalization had been triggered due to dismantling of the welfare state and deregulation of the markets in most countries in Europe and the United States. In China, Tiananmen Square protests did not change the Chinese Communist Party regime’s authoritarian nature. In contrast, it gave CCP’s political elites an excuse to claim its governing model as “China Model” which adopted a market economy on the one side and political authoritarianism on the other. At the same time, the foreign policy of the United States toward China was to integrate China into a global trade system. The Clinton administration believed that economic development in China might lead to loosening China’s authoritarianism and even to democratization in China. In response to this global change, Lee Teng-Hui administration adopted a pragmatic foreign policy which attempted to keep unofficial but substantial relations with other countries.

In Taiwan’s domestic politics, there was a window of opportunity for massive political reform. Inside the ruling party KMT, the confrontation between the “nativist group” (本土派) headed by Lee Teng-Hui and the “non-mainstream group” (非主流派), led by some mainlanders, resulted directly in the split-up of the KMT. On the societal level, there were massive social protests, which had been formulated since 1980s and peaked in the Lily Student Movement in 1990. Social and political opposition forces converged to demand that the ruling KMT initiate political reform. Lee Teng-Hui, as president of both the Republic of China (ROC) and the ruling KMT, masterfully seized his own “Machiavellian moment” to manipulate a power struggle among different factions in KMT, opposition party Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), and various social forces. Therefore, the process of democratization in Taiwan was initiated by the ruling elites.

As a close alliance of social protests and political opposition since 1980s, PCT maintained its critical attitude toward the ruling KMT. Since 1987, PCT made many official statements on political issues: rights of indigenous people, popular sovereignty of the Taiwanese and the right of self-determination, environmental protection, and normalized relations between Taiwan and China. Furthermore, PCT showed its strong support for DDP’s appeal of democracy and criticized KMT’s authoritarian regime. During this period, political theology in PCT stressed the fate of Taiwanese people. Theologian Huang Po-He proposed “Theology of Self-determination” (出頭天神學) which made analogy between Hebrew liberation from Egyptian Empire and Taiwanese liberation from a foreign regime. The characteristic of self-determination theology is that Christian faith should care not only about the salvation of the individual’s inner soul but also the redemption of a collective and national fate.

Zeitgeist	International Environment	State Power	Social Forces	Religion-State Relations	Political Theology
Dream of Constitutionalism	1. Economic globalization 2. Post-Tiananmen's China 3. US foreign policy: integrating China into world trade system 4. Taiwan's pragmatic diplomacy	1. Split-up inside KMT the ruling group 2. Lee Teng-Hui's Machiavellian moment: manipulating multiple power struggle in Taiwan 3. Top-down democratization	1. Massive social protests 2. Lily Student Movement 3. Alliance of opposing social forces	1. Intense 2. PCT' good relationship with the opposing forces 3. Criticizing authoritarian regime	Self-determination theology (Huang Po-He)

Taiwan in the 2000s~Now

The early years of 21st century accelerated the maturing of Taiwan's democracy. People in Taiwan were awakened by the drastic change internationally and domestically and started to pursue the "dream of equality" and the "dream of autonomy."

On the world stage, both economic and political countercurrents appeared. An economic countercurrent was the anti-globalization movement which was caused by the trade liberalization and an uneven distribution of wealth. The political countercurrent was an anti-democratic turn triggered by populism in many countries and further manipulated by democratically elected leaders with authoritarian tendencies. These leaders, including Turkey's Recep Erdoğan, Russia's Vladimir Putin, Hungary's Victor Orban, and Brasil's Jair Bolsonaro, all seized on people's discontent with economic globalization and their fear of instability in order to increase their own political power and to repress the opposition. During this period, China experienced a great leap in becoming the world's second largest economy. In the United States, as Trump became president, he started to review and change the United States' China policy. The China-US trade war could be regarded as a symbol of this alternation.

With regard to domestic politics in Taiwan, cross-strait political-business alliances, which were initiated by CCP's "united front" (統戰) strategy, were formed and consolidated. The political-business alliances constituted threats to Taiwan's democratic process. During Chen Shui-Bian's presidential term, Taiwan accelerated being integrated into the global economy and China's market. During Ma Ying-Jeou's term as president, Ma's cross-strait policy was to deepen Taiwan's ties with China to start political negotiations with China. It is during Ma's term when the post-1990-generation youth were baptized in several new waves of social movements, from the "Wild

Strawberry Movement” in 2008 to the “Sunflower Movement” in 2014. The key issues of these movements include: deepening democracy, civic nationalism, social and economic justice.

Taiwan’s new civic movements brought about a new generation with a highly political consciousness. Moreover, China’s President Xi Jinping expanded his own political power unprecedentedly and furtherly ignited Hong Kong’s “anti-extradition movement.” These factors led to a landslide victory by the DPP’s moderate presidential candidate Tsai Ing-Wen. After Tsai became president, she tries to rebalance the U.S.-China-Taiwan triangle relations by standing close to the US and firmly against China. Even in the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, Tsai chose to stand by Western countries and even offer resources to support Ukraine.

During this post-democratization period, PCT still kept close ties with the DPP and held hostile attitude toward the KMT. However, it is time for PCT to reconsider the principles of religion-politics relations and redefine its role during an era of democracy. Theologians have to think: how to keep the tradition of prophet? How to develop a series of political-theological ideas to accommodate contemporary Taiwan’s context? How to keep PCT’s autonomy from party politics?

Theologians in PCT still attempted to construct theory. Lou Guang-Shii’s “Theology of State-Founding” followed the PCT’s contextualized and nativized route to develop its reinterpretation in the eye of Taiwan’s history and in pursuit of national self-determination. Chiu Kai-Li’s reflection of post-colonial theology must be challenging and reflective because she proposed that PCT think about the possibility of liberation from old nationalist discourse. In an era of plural society, we must think of the possibility of accommodating the voices of the oppressed class, race minority, gender minority, and the other minority groups. PCT’s theology must have dialogue with different camp of theology: feminist theology, postmodern theology, and post-colonial theology.

Zeitgeist	International Environment	State Power	Social Forces	Religion-State Relations	Political Theology
1. Dream of equality 2. Dream of autonomy	1. Anti-globalization movement 2. Anti-democratic turn 3. China's economic rise 4. China-US trade war	1. Cross-strait state-business alliances 2. Ma Ying-Jeou’s Era: deepening Taiwan’s ties with China 4. Tsai Ing-Wen’s Era: Rebalancing the U.S.-China-Taiwan Triangle Relations	1. New wave of social movement 2. Essential public issues: deepening democracy, civic nationalism, social and economic justice	PCT’s different attitude toward two main political parties: close ties with DPP & hostility toward KMT	1. Theology of state-founding (Lo Kuang-Hsi) 2. Reflection of Post-colonial theology (Chiu Kai-Li): thinking about the possibility of liberation from old nationalist discourse

Reflection: The Role of the Church in Taiwan's Politics

At last, I will offer my simple reflections on the role of the church in Taiwan's politics. I propose three main roles for church to play in contemporary Taiwan: prophet, guardian, and educator.

First, as a contemporary prophet in the era of democracy, the church must bring back the spirit of prophet in the Old Testament. The prophet in the Old Testament always derived their moral and ethical principles from God's revelation and stood against the powerful but with the weak and the oppressed. This tradition was inherited by the Protestant tradition which even develop modern "rights of resistance" or the "rights of revolution." Therefore, the church is not a collaborator of any political party, but a protector of civil society.

Second, as a guardian of the people, the church must just keep and enlarge its role now. What the church can do is to play as a service-oriented non-government organization. Institutions with the function of social service which are widely sponsored by church must be kept. Also, the church can also supervise the government to make welfare-oriented social policy. The church as a guardian of people seeks to attain the purpose of social and economic justice.

Thirdly, as an educator in contemporary society. Although many people nowadays might say they live in a democratic society. However, democracy does not exist only in institution but also in culture. Democracy is a way of living. I think the church could practice democratic life inside the church by inviting Christians to participate in church affairs and to interpret Bible in the eye of their own life. Also, the church can awake people's civic consciousness.

Thailand

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China and Thailand's Authoritarian Regime: Strongmen's Cooperation and People's Resistance

Sippachai Kunnuwong

Introduction

China's attempts to shape a new global order and power come at a price for people in authoritarian regimes. This article offers a perspective from Thailand, a country of over 60 million people that has experienced a recent military coup in 2014. On the one hand, the former junta leaders have continued to stay in power with China backing. On the other hand, amid such authoritarian cooperation, the Thai pro-democracy activists teamed up with their counterparts in the region to form a pan-Asia movement against authoritarianism.

Background of Thailand's Foreign Policy

Thailand is situated at the strategic heart of mainland Southeast Asia, which also includes Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam. Connecting these nations is the mighty Mekong River, the third longest river in Asia that flows from its source on the Tibetan Plateau in China to the South China Sea. Hence, the Mekong sub region is nicknamed "China's backyard".

As a center for logistics in the region, Thailand has attracted the interests of the world's superpowers, either from an economic or security point of view. Prior and during the Cold War, it received development and military assistance from the US as a base to quash communist threats in the region. In return, Washington endorsed the Thai authoritarian regimes and helped consolidate the late King Bhumibol Aduldej's political influence.

Thailand is known for mastering a balancing act in navigating external influences. A flexible foreign policy known as "bamboo bending with the wind¹," or "solidly rooted, but flexible enough to bend whichever way the wind blows in order to survive," helps Thailand avoid conflict with a major power and maintain its sovereignty and security. But after the Cold War, the US turned its back against dictatorships and supported democratic development around the world.

A Rising China and Domestic Politics

In the mid-1990s, China began its quest to become a new global and economic superpower. Its influence in Thailand and Southeast Asia increased sharply. One of the catalysts for this shift was China's non-interference in the Thai domestic affairs that was welcomed by the Thai rulers.

After the 2004 military coup that ousted former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, the US' advocacy for Thailand's democratic return was seen by the Thai conservatives as a 'biased' intervention. China quickly took this advantage to extend its cooperation with the junta government. However, it must be noted that during the Thaksin administration the Thai-Sino relationship leveraged to unprecedented levels, another example of Thailand's "bamboo in the wind" strategy.

Fast forward to the year 2014, Thailand was once again under military rule. The Thai military led by former army chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha seized power from the elected government of Yingluck

¹ Busbarat, P. "Bamboo Swirling in the Wind": Thailand's Foreign Policy Imbalance between China and the United States." *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, no. 2, ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, Aug. 2016, pp. 233-57.

Shinawatra who is Thaksin's sister. This time, the coup coincided with the rise of Xi Jinping as China's leader and his ambitious plans to shape a new international order.

The US cut its assistance to Thailand shortly after the coup. China, however, maintained its stance not to be involved in the "internal issues". The Chinese state media Global Times even blamed "Western-style democracy"² for Thailand's political chaos.

A Sino-Thai Cooperation after the 2014 Military Coup

Since the 2014 coup, Thailand-China cooperation has flourished. In 2015, Thailand and China agreed to build a high-speed railway that would connect China's Kunming to Singapore. While the project in Thailand is delayed, the Laos stretch of the railway network opened in late 2021.

The Thai-China business partnership also led to the construction of the Eastern Economic Corridor - partially funded by China³ - that aim to boost growth in the industry sector and serve as another pan-Asia trade route⁴.

Since 2012 China has become Thailand's largest trade partner. Before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, China was the major country of origin of tourists to Thailand. Chinese migration to Thailand has also surged. According to statistics, up to 400,000 Chinese have taken up residence in the country in the last decade⁵.

The two countries also increased their defense cooperation as Xi also aimed to increase global defense diplomacy activities and the Thai junta increased their defense budget after the coup. However, Thailand remained committed to its alliance with the US so as to keep its relations with both the global powers in balance.

According to the China Index project, Thailand is ranked third among the countries with the most PRC influences⁶. The index indicates that the country's military cooperation was one of the largest in the world. It also finds Thailand's law enforcement has helped China to arrest and hand back Chinese dissidents to the authorities.

People's Resistance and the Pan-Asia Anti-authoritarianism Alliance

The increased bond between China and the Thai junta, however, wasn't without resistance. Some development projects by China were opposed by the Thai public. Thai environmentalists have protested against China's plan to dredge parts of the Mekong River in Thailand for a marine trade route that could pose detrimental threats against the river's ecosystem and local livelihoods⁷. After strong public opposition, in 2020, China put the plan on hold.

Another issue concerned the operation of dams in China constructed on the Mekong River upstream. The Thai activists accused China of controlling the flow of the river, causing droughts in the Mekong downstream region⁸. Experts stated that China uses the location of the dams to leverage its position in the geopolitics of the Mekong countries.

Thailand's national politics also gave rise to the resistance against authoritarianism in China

² <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2014/06/18/china-is-a-big-winner-from-thailands-coup/>

³ <https://prachatai.com/english/node/8499>

⁴ <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/thailand-eastern-economic-corridor/>

⁵ <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/enter-dragon-thailand-gets-closer-china>

⁶ <https://china-index.io/country/Thailand>

⁷ <https://www.france24.com/en/20200110-the-97-kms-between-china-and-mastery-of-the-mekong>

⁸ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mekong-river-idUSKCN21V0U7>

as well. The post 2014 military coup period coincided with the rise of anti-China sentiment in Hong Kong. As the activists in both places challenged their own governments, they also stood in solidarity with one another's struggle for democracy.

In 2016, Thai activists invited Hong Kong counterpart Joshua Wong to attend an event in Bangkok. Wong was scheduled to speak about Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement. Unfortunately, Wong was detained by the Thai immigration officers upon arrival and was forced back home⁹. Thai activists claimed that Wong was detained at China's request. This fueled an anti-Beijing attitude among the Thai protesters seeing it as backing the junta regime.

In 2020, as the youth-led emerged in Thailand. Activists from both countries formed an online movement called "Milk Tea Alliance," named after a shared passion for sweet tea drinks. The movement began after Chinese internet users launched a campaign against a young Thai actor whose TV drama has been popular in China, and his Thai model girlfriend. The two were both accused of having expressed support for Hong Kong and Taiwanese independence by sharing comments online.

Later that year, as part of the growing movement against the military-aligned government in Thailand, the protesters staged a protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok. A protester was quoted in the media, saying the Thai and Chinese models of government were "based on authoritarianism", and considering China "a threat" to Thailand in various aspects, including closer ties between the Prayuth administration and Beijing¹⁰.

The movement has since grown to include Taiwan and Myanmar, which experienced a military coup in 2021. But as the Hong Kong, Thai and Myanmar governments brutally staged crackdowns against peaceful protesters, thousands of activists in these countries have since been charged, detained and convicted on charges related to their activism.

What happens in Thailand is not unique. When the Myanmar military seized power in the 2021 coup, China and Russia were the supporters of the junta, blocking the UN Security Council to issue a stronger stance against the Myanmar coup¹¹. Both countries still sell arms to the Myanmar military despite those weapons having been used to brutally attack Myanmar civilians¹².

Conclusion

What we can see from the situation in Thailand and other places in the region, on the one hand, is a rising China that tries to expand its power through economic assistance and is willing to work with regimes despite poor human rights records. On the other hand, the transnational movements that were formed across Asia, offering a sense of solidarity as well as sharing protest tactics, couldn't weather the repression by their own authoritarian governments. I argue that, as the transnational movement continues to face repression from the authoritarian alliance led by China, the international community and civil society must join hands to strengthen the efforts in countering authoritarian powers.

⁹ <https://time.com/4518898/joshua-wong-bangkok-airport-detained-thailand-demosisto/>

¹⁰ <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3103884/thailand-activists-mark-chinas-national-day-demonstration>

¹¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-russia-undermine-international-myanmar-response-eus-top-diplomat-says-2021-04-11/>

¹² <https://www.dw.com/en/china-russia-arming-myanmar-junta-un-expert-says/a-60868089>

TEF Youth Webinar Q&A Session

Christopher Lin: He thanked the panelists. He asked two questions of Ms. Moon. First, although he acknowledges that the concept of security is subject to the interpretation of governments and appreciates her idea of diversifying the concept of security, he asked how she accounts for the aggression of countries like China and Russia. He believes that aggression is not up for interpretation – if you invade a country or threaten military action against a country, you’re an aggressor under any interpretation and there’s no excuse. He mentioned that he, who is from Taiwan, and Ms. Moon, who is from Korea, are both under the threat of an aggressive country. He asked Ms. Moon how that fits into her concept of peace building and an alternative concept of security. He also posed a question to the co-conveners and the PCT. He noted a disconnection between the presenters from the previous webinar versus this time. He asked, if one of the roles of the church is to unite people with differing priorities, how can we bridge that gap? Does the PCT have any response to that?

Alex Ko: He was grateful to hear the four panelists’ sharing. He noted that he is from Taiwan. He said regarding the Russia/Ukraine war he believes the United Nations Security council has failed in its mission. After the UN’s formation after WWII, war should not be fought on the ground, but conflicts instead should be brought to the negotiation table. But now there have been many tragedies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Russia, Ukraine, and other countries. Terrorism has taken the power and also influenced neighboring countries. Although there is no war in Taiwan currently, China has tried many times to invade Taiwan and repeatedly tries to harass Taiwan by sending troops and planes to the Taiwan Strait so that Taiwan has to send its armies and air force to the strait. War (since WWII) is changing, and we have seen how geopolitical issues can have an impact on our daily lives, so it is important to rethink the meanings of security and protection. This brought him to the question – how can Christian youth in the church practice their faith in a way so as to have an influence on the geopolitical issues affecting people’s daily lives? This is a question for the speakers and/or pastors – In the future, when we are sending ecumenical representatives to different countries, how do we prepare them to share peace or learn from different cultures and different churches and bring this peace and learning back to their mother country? He believes this is a way to break through obstacles and to promote peace rather than war.

A-Young Moon: Responding to Christopher Lin, she said she appreciated his question. She noted that her definition of New Cold War, Cold War or security does not absolve governments or nation states of their aggression. We need to mention exactly what aggression is, but regarding this situation of Russia and Ukraine, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was predicted a long time ago and the international community had chances to intervene to help lower the military tension between Russia and the Ukraine but failed to intervene. The EU had a chance. The US also had the opportunity to intervene up until the last minute. However, the international community did not jump in to try to mediate. They did not bring up mediation as the first option. Everybody was watching, and President Biden was always on the news sharing his information about Russia’s imminent invasion, but he

could never pinpoint an exact date, and we witnessed how this invasion was accepted by the international community. She said she does not at all support Russia's aggression toward Ukraine. At the same time, as a peace activist and peace researcher she thinks we need to focus on the confluence of everything that is happening at the time of military conflicts. Russian military aggression and invasion of Ukraine is happening, but right beforehand during the build-up of military tension between Russia and Ukraine there was also aggression by the Ukraine government. As for the Ukrainian people, they may have different ideas. There are multiple, diverse layers to the situation. But she is now doubtful that the EU countries can assert influence. For example, Sweden and Finland are trying to join NATO, and they are trying to re-balance the power game, but there is no strong voice to stop Russia. Another problem is imbalanced media coverage of military conflicts. For example, the mainstream media has constantly been accusing Russia, but she has never experienced accusations by the mainstream media of the US for war crimes. In talking about this imbalance of media coverage, it is not to excuse Russia's actions. However, she wants to have focused and balanced observations about what is going on and there should be a shift in focus to the Ukrainian people's voices. Her friend in Ukraine does not support Russia, but he also does not support the Ukraine government. We need find more diverse voices to reshape this situation. She also noted that she agrees with Alex. She asked -- how can you find a way as a Christian? How can we go beyond nationality to find something good in each other? I think that is the challenge that we face.

Sippachai Kunnuwong: He noted that his presentation may seem like an attack on China, but as he mentioned, during the Cold War the US also supported authoritarian regimes in Thailand until the time when they did not need them anymore. For him, this system of domination exists all the time no matter the country or pact. He agrees with Ms. Moon – go beyond nationality, go beyond preconceived concepts of things. He said that he did not have an answer to the second question about how to make a contribution – he himself is still trying to figure it out. However, he thinks – in reference to the presenter, Mr. Liao – that it is important to redefine the self. You yourself need to recognize this system of domination – not just authoritarianism, but also patriarchy, homophobia, and all others that exist -- it starts with the self.

Victor Hsu: He shared about the ecumenical history concerning the role of youth. He reminded us of the East Asia Christian Conference formed in 1957. DT Niles, the first General Secretary, told the assembly that he believed the role of the church should be to train young people to go to the periphery of society and build society from the periphery, particularly in urban areas in Asia, to improve conditions in those areas.

Bin-Jou Liao: He mentioned the need to think about the role of the church in contemporary society. The church has three roles: prophet, educator, and guardian. The church may define itself as the guardian of the weak and the oppressed to offer social services and to supervise the government to make welfare-related social policies. Regarding the church as a prophet – even in the era of democratic society there is room for improvement and a need to reconsider the church's role in church/state relations. For example, the PCT's role was very ambiguous following Taiwan's

democratization. He believes the church needs to reclaim the Scottish Protestant tradition of resistance. The church must take on the roles of the Old Testament prophets like Amos and Isaiah to say things that the government does not want to hear. The church must not be a collaborator with any political party but a protector of civil society. Even in a democratic society a deepening of our democratic culture is necessary. The Scottish Protestant tradition placed emphasis on education, and many famous philosophers came from that tradition. Great power is linked to knowledge and intellect. The church has to play the role of educator to practice democratic life inside the church. Outside the church it must awaken people's civil consciousness.

Fanny: In response to Alex, she believes that sometimes Christians ask too often what Christians need to do in response to social issues. She feels that the focus should not be on what we as Christians should do but rather emphasize what should we do as human beings. As humans, what social issues should we be concerned about? For example, how can we put forth more effort to support minorities? Christians have some ethical responsibilities; churches especially have a responsibility and in some countries the churches have a very influential status. People can ask themselves, as a human – as a creation of God – what should I do? If they believe there is something that needs to be done, they should just go ahead and do it. As a layperson, do whatever you believe you can do. Churches can create not only training or education programs, but young people can also use their creativity to do whatever they can to support the issues. If they need more support, they can find so many resources from whatever platform they are using. Churches also need to extend their influence beyond the church and to have some more cooperation and collaboration with civil society organizations.

Kathleen Joy: She noted that being a Christian, it is a privilege to stand up for people's rights and to pray for others. However, in the Philippines, the word Christian means only being inside the church, so it became taboo for Christians to become activists. This mindset needs to be changed. Jesus stood up for the rights of the people. As Christians, we should try to emulate Jesus and do the same.

Nancy Lin: She noted that this has been an excellent webinar, and apologized that the time was up, as it would be wonderful to have more time to discuss all the points raised. She commented on the inspiration and challenge expressed by the youth panelists and thanked everyone for their faithful participation. She hopes that the TEF community will have a chance to meet together in person in the near future. Thank you and God bless!

Note:

Relative News:

