

Pessimism Looms over Taiwan Debacle in APEC:

In the first meeting held in the afternoon of October 23, under the auspices of Tamkang Forum, many deans who attended the meeting expressed their opinions after Taiwan' s withdrawal from APEC. The consensus impression they gave seems to be one of depression, even despair.

The first two discussants, Prof. Yu Chuan-tao, former president of National Central (Chung Yang) University and Prof. Wei Wou, Dean, College of International Studies, appalled that Taiwan' s forfeiture of her seat in APEC has resulted in two losses, not merely in the international stage at large, but also in the economic stage in particular. A situation like this may be beneficial to some politicians, but devastating to the future of Taiwan, they concluded.

Prof. Wei continued to observe that after the 9/11 event, it brought about a thawing of antagonism between Washington and Beijing, but a reverse trend is also happening between Uncle Sam and us. It is our own fault that we have lost our winning chips. Our leader' s obsession with ideology is too deeply rooted and the whole situation is getting out of hand and more perilous and rueful than before.

Prof. Thomas B. Lee, Director, Center for International Affairs and National Security, regretted that many people don' t believe they are Chinese, so, whenever the issue pops up, they forget about the Confucian term of "Ethical (Moral) Righteousness" , and averts it as a thorn in their flesh. As for those in power on the other side of the Strait, their jingoism also made them look ugly. Just take a look at Jiang Ze-min: when he shakes hands with each delegate, his pompous way reminds us of an

ancient emperor granting audience to his subjects. If this trend continues, both sides are bound to embrace each other with “arms” in one day.

Prof. Chen Ting-ko, Dean, College of Management, criticized Mr. Lin Hsin-yi, Minister of Economic Affairs, for lack of tactfulness in dealing with the crisis. He should level it off by a humorous remark, then back out, but instead, he raised a hand, and his counterpart on the mainland side was even worse; he had no sense of proprietorship, and his stiff response was simply unacceptable to any civilized human being. All in all, Taipei is a loser in the whole game.

Prof. Lin Yao-fu, Dean, College of Foreign Languages & Literatures, re-echoed Prof. Wei’ s apprehensions because, as he said, if certain politicians utilized Taiwan debacle in APEC as a pawn in the election battle, they may win the power struggle but lose Taiwan in the international arena in the long run.

Prof. Chiou Jong-rong, Dean, College of Business, believed that in the upcoming ten years, Taiwan will be forced to face the challenge of new economy, biochemistry and high-tech advancement. But if we have lost ourselves in the quagmire, not knowing where our directions are in the future, our destiny can be deplorable.

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