

Century of Struggle, a Democratic Taiwan

October 10, 2011

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Legislative Yuan President Wang Jin-pyng, Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, Republic of Guatemala President Alvaro Colom Caballeros, Republic of Nauru President Marcus Stephen, Republic of Palau President Johnson Toribiong and Mrs. Toribiong, Vice Presidents and Prime Ministers of the ROC's diplomatic allies, delegations from around the world, members of the diplomatic corps and other representatives in the ROC, Vice President Vincent C. Siew, Presidents of the Five Yuan of the ROC, distinguished guests, compatriots from overseas, fellow citizens, journalists, and friends watching television: Good morning to you all!

## 1. Why we commemorate the Xinhai Revolution

Today is the 100th birthday of the Republic of China, and the 100th anniversary of the Xinhai Revolution. It is with a buoyant spirit that we celebrate this occasion and share in the joy of this landmark moment in history. A hundred years ago today, the Wuchang Uprising, guided and set in motion by our founding father Dr. Sun Yat-sen, in one fell stroke toppled the Qing imperial government along with China's millennia-old monarchical tradition, thus establishing Asia's first democratic republic—the Republic of China. Today, people in Taiwan and other predominantly ethnic Chinese communities the world over, including mainland China, are commemorating Double Tenth.

It is with deep reverence that we here salute the idealistic, courageous, self-sacrificing revolutionaries of that time. We salute Lu Hao-dong of Guangdong, Huang Xing of Hunan, Qiu Jin of Zhejiang, Lin Jue-min of Fujian, and Luo Fu-xing of Taiwan. These are just a very few of the many heroes who fought to establish the Republic. Since the inception of the Republic 100 years ago, countless numbers of our citizens have perished amid the travails of the Northern Expedition, the War of Resistance against Japan, government action to end the Communist rebellion, and the defense of Taiwan and its outlying islands against invasion by Communist forces. The vast majority of those who gave their lives are nameless heroes who sacrificed their youth and their very existence so that the Republic of China might prosper.

Esteemed friends and fellow citizens: The October 10th uprising is a memory and heritage shared by both sides of the Taiwan Strait. I wish to take this opportunity,

therefore, to remind the mainland authorities: In commemorating Double Tenth Day, it must not be forgotten that the aspiration of our founding father Dr. Sun Yat-sen was to establish a free and democratic nation with equitable distribution of wealth. The mainland ought to courageously move in that direction.

In commemorating the Xinhai Revolution, one also must not deliberately cut out certain parts of history, but must bring to light the actual facts of history and face the existence of the Republic of China head-on. The Republic of China's existence is referred to not in the past tense, but in the present. For the Republic has continued to flourish in Taiwan for more than six decades, radiating its vitality to every corner of the earth. As time goes by, we will continue to flourish and radiate vitality.

## 2. The Republic of China remakes itself in Taiwan

Esteemed friends and fellow citizens: It was the sacrifice of 20 million soldiers and civilians of the Republic during the War of Resistance against Japan that enabled Taiwan to end Japan's colonial rule. And had it not been for the retrocession of Taiwan from Japan to the Republic, the setbacks encountered by ROC armed forces in the civil war against the Communists in mainland China might have spelled the death of the Republic more than six decades ago, with no chance for a transformative rebirth or possibility of development of the two sides of the strait along different trajectories.

For more than 60 years now, the Republic of China has ensured the security of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen, and Matsu; safeguarded the viability of Chinese culture; created an economic and a political miracle; and realized the aspirations of early Taiwanese advocates of parliamentary governance. And beyond that, it has proven to the world that democracy can take root, blossom, and bear fruit in a Chinese society.

Today, the people of Taiwan enjoy freedom, democracy, and affluence. They have come to identify solidly with their nation, the Republic of China, and the ROC Constitution has long served as the bedrock of a society-wide consensus. The ideals that Dr. Sun Yat-sen sought in establishing the Republic were not achieved in the mainland during his lifetime, but they have come to full fruition here in Taiwan.

Today, as we celebrate the ROC Centennial Double Tenth National Day, we take great pride in the Republic, and in Taiwan's democracy. The vitality and the way of life which today's Taiwan displays have become benchmarks for Chinese communities worldwide.

Despite its relatively small land area and limited natural resources, Taiwan has pulled itself up by its own bootstraps to become a major economic presence. Its companies are world leaders in the manufacture of high-tech products such as semiconductors, tablet PCs, smartphones, and photovoltaic equipment. Moreover, they have made outstanding contributions to energy conservation and reduction of carbon emissions.

In the 2011 World Competitiveness Yearbook released by Switzerland's International Institute for Management Development in May, Taiwan ranked No. 6 overall, its best score ever. In the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2011-2012 issued in September, Taiwan placed No. 13, our country's best performance in five years, and occupied first place in eight of the survey's sub-indices.

Our young people are bursting with talent. They have turned in brilliant performances in the fields of design and invention as well as cultural and creative undertakings. In the six biggest international invention shows, they often walk away with the lion's share of the prizes. Some 80 percent of the world's Chinese-language pop music is created in Taiwan, and we have taken a place on the world stage in the fields of cinema, theater, dance, and design. Taiwan moviemakers in particular have made their presence felt. An amazingly talented younger generation is opening up limitless vistas for Taiwan's movie industry.

The people of Taiwan are compassionate. There are over 40,000 nonprofit organizations with more than a million volunteers who work in anonymity for the greater good throughout Taiwan. More than that, they also travel overseas to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Last year, 8 percent of our citizens were blood donors, a ratio ranking among the world's highest. The people of Taiwan provided financial sponsorship for 300,000 poor children, 200,000 of whom lived overseas. And their annual charitable donations exceed NT\$35 billion (US\$1.1 billion), most of which comes from people of modest economic means.

In this land, we can see numerous examples of admirable people who have lived out their dreams. The generosity of ordinary people like Chen Chou, Chen Shu-chu, and the army veterans Yin Tien-chia and Hung Chung-hai, is simply stunning. The beloved Dr. Lien Jih-ching is known far and wide for his work in combating malaria in West Africa. Ultra-marathoner Kevin Lin is a tremendous credit to Taiwan. We certainly take pride in the world champion baker Wu Pao-chun, not to mention U.S.

baseball major league pitcher Wang Chien-ming, who has returned to the mound after overcoming a debilitating injury. An elderly woman named Yang-Huang Mu-tan, despite her poverty, could not be tempted to keep a huge bundle of money she had found, and food safety official Yang Ming-yu went above and beyond the call of duty to expose a case of tainted foods. In the meantime, film director Wei Te-sheng recently released the brilliant epic "Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale." And last but not least, I cannot go without mentioning world record-breaking LPGA champion Yani Tseng.

In these individuals, we witness the exemplary spirit of kindness, hard work, tenacity, firmness of purpose, and faith-the driving force of Taiwan's advancement.

Free and democratic. Robust and innovative. Caring and compassionate. Globally engaged and self-confident. Such is our country's image. Let us applaud this Republic of ours to show our deepest appreciation for the countless heroes who have expended so much energy and sweat for its well-being.

### 3. New prospects to unfold with a golden decade

Esteemed friends and fellow citizens: Despite turbulence in the global economy over the past three years, Taiwan has weathered the storm with class, and has emerged considerably more competitive than it had been before. All of our people deserve the credit for this outcome. In the face of the pressure of global competition, the next decade will be a critical period for us. We must strive to fully realize our vision for a golden decade. We must remain confidently engaged with the world, pursuing development through innovation, and moving forward in the spirit of social justice. We need to thoroughly transform the Republic of China, so that it can join the ranks of advanced nations.

Esteemed friends and fellow citizens: Cross-strait peace is an essential condition for Taiwan's prosperity and development. Over the past three-plus years, our government has pressed for improvement of cross-strait relations under the framework of the ROC Constitution and based on the "1992 Consensus," whereunder each side adheres to the "one China" principle but is entitled to its own interpretation of what "one China" means. Within this framework, we are maintaining the status quo of "no unification, no independence, and no use of force." This has greatly relaxed tensions across the Taiwan Strait and garnered the international community's affirmation and support.

In the past three-plus years, we have signed 15 agreements with mainland China. Each conforms to the principles of parity, dignity, and reciprocity while putting Taiwan first for the benefit of its people. The people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are ethnically Chinese. Our hope is that the two sides will be able-based on a clear-eyed appreciation and acceptance of reality-to seek common ground while respecting differences, assist and cooperate with each other, and build a peaceful relationship within an institutionalized framework.

Mainland China is now Taiwan's largest trading partner, the largest contributor to our yearly trade surplus, and the largest destination for our investments. In addition, it is a major engine of global economic growth. In order to open up new business opportunities, we must make wise use of Taiwan's advantages to expand our presence in the mainland market, and we must accelerate efforts to conclude free trade agreements or economic cooperation pacts with other countries. On the 22nd of last month, for example, we signed an investment agreement with Japan. We are also actively negotiating with Singapore on a bilateral economic cooperation agreement. Moreover, this administration seeks to take part in regional economic integration and is working hard to create the conditions necessary to enable Taiwan to join the growing Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership Agreement within 10 years.

Moving forward, we will continue to pursue the policy of viable diplomacy. We will seek to further consolidate ties with our diplomatic partners while building high-level trust between this country and nations with which we lack formal diplomatic relations, such as the United States, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, and the member states of the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. We also seek to extend our presence in the international community. Ten days ago, for instance, the United Kingdom became the seventh country to sign a youth working holiday agreement with us. Five days ago, the Netherlands also granted ROC citizens visa-free privileges to enter six of its overseas territories. And beginning from the day after tomorrow, Burkina Faso will grant landing visas to ROC passport holders. This brings to 124 the total number of jurisdictions that accord us such treatment, which is 70 more jurisdictions than when I took office. This shows that when a nation is viewed positively by the international community, its people enjoy respect.

Esteemed friends and fellow citizens: In conducting cross-strait relations, we cannot maintain peace through wishful thinking. Only a strong defense can safeguard Taiwan's security and afford our people the confidence to pursue further improvement in cross-strait relations. During the past three-plus years, we have made great strides

forward in enhancing our soldiers' skills and manufacturing our own weaponry. We have also made a series of purchases of advanced defensive weaponry. Over the next decade, we will continue to beef up our defense capabilities and develop a crack fighting force that meets Taiwan's defensive needs. We must do this to safeguard the sovereignty of the Republic of China and maintain security in the Taiwan Strait.

#### 4. Conclusion

Esteemed friends and fellow citizens: When Dr. Sun Yat-sen founded the Revive China Society, only some 20-odd people joined initially, but they stuck to their ideals, dared to put them into practice, and accurately assessed the circumstances facing them. As a result, they succeeded 17 years later in overthrowing the Qing regime and establishing the Republic.

In commemorating the anniversary of the outbreak of the 1911 revolution, we must remain true to the idealistic spirit of the nation's founding fathers. We cannot allow ourselves to be daunted by adversity. On the contrary, we must have the courage to strike out in bold and pioneering new directions, so that our nation can become "the gold standard" among ethnic Chinese societies. "The Republic of China" is more than the name of a nation; it also stands for a free and democratic way of life, and serves as a model for those living in other ethnic Chinese societies who yearn for freedom and democracy.

The month of October bears special significance for the ROC, but for me it also has a very special personal significance. Sixty years ago in October of 1951, at a time of great turmoil, my parents brought their family, including one-year-old me, from Hong Kong to Taiwan, seeking a life of freedom and tranquility. Never could they have imagined that more than 50 years later their son would have the opportunity to become the ROC president!

I am deeply grateful to this nation, and to this land. I want to do all I can to build Taiwan into a bastion of freedom and prosperity that will continue to nurture future generations and enable every child to realize his or her dreams, regardless how rich or poor their family may be.

During my more than three years as president, I have been keenly aware of my heavy responsibility and have not dared to relax my efforts in the least. Although the global environment is constantly changing and challenges are apt to arise at any moment, I

have faith in this land and confidence in its people.

Esteemed friends and fellow citizens: The Republic of China is our nation, and Taiwan is our home. The Republic's road ahead and Taiwan's future lie in the hands of our 23 million people. We must unite and work together to make Taiwan more dynamic, more attractive, and more competitive.

Today, regardless of ethnicity and political leanings, and without distinguishing between locals and expatriates, we come together to celebrate the birthday of the Republic of China. We boldly resolve to strengthen Taiwan, reinvigorate the Republic, and lay the foundation for an outstanding second century. Let us transform the Republic of China into a nation that is even more respected by and inspiring to people around the world than it already is.

Let us now proclaim together:  
Long live the Republic of China!  
Long live Taiwan's democracy!

Thank you, everyone!