

Transformational Diplomacy and Washington-Beijing-Taipei Relations

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Abstract

This essay begins with an introduction to the essence of transformational diplomacy, as well as its relationship with the U.S. national security strategy. In addition, this essay examines how mainland China views transformational diplomacy. It also presents three potentially controversial inferences on transformational diplomacy's influence on Taipei, Beijing, and Washington. Three important conclusions of this essay are: (1) because of the "peaceful evolution" nature, transformational diplomacy can be one of the key variables influencing foreign relations between the PRC and the U.S., but not now; (2) political and military arguments between the PRC and the U.S. will loom large as transformational diplomacy is being carried out, but triangular Washington-Beijing-Taipei relations might change dramatically not due to transformational diplomacy but three sets of sensitive bilateral relations among them; (3) without engaging mainland China in a proactive way, Taiwan's role in U.S.'s peaceful evolution strategy toward China will be less significant.

Keywords: Transformational Diplomacy, United States (U.S.), China (PRC), Taiwan (ROC), Democratization

Transformation diplomacy, coined by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in her keynote speech on January 18, 2006, has been viewed as a new direction of U.S. foreign policy in the second term of George W. Bush's presidency. It is in fact an amalgamation of various plans about organizational restructuring and overseas and domestic staffers retraining within the Department of State. Calling for an "outreach" strategy, it recognizes the changing power structure of world politics, encourages U.S. diplomats to be closer to local people and life, and brings forth some far-reaching implications for U.S. foreign relations with emerging major powers, including the People's Republic of China (PRC, hereafter mainland China or Beijing) that is on the rise.

This essay concentrates on the study of transformation diplomacy and its influence, if any, on the sophisticated relationship among the U.S., the PRC, and the Republic of China (ROC, hereafter Taiwan or Taipei). I begin with a brief introduction of what transformational diplomacy is and is not, followed by the *raison d'être* of the advent of transformational diplomacy. I continue by analyzing how mainland China sees transformational diplomacy. Then, I move on to present and remark on some potentially controversial inferences on transformational diplomacy's influence on triangular relations among Washington, Beijing, and Taipei. In the last section of this essay, I conclude by offering some personal observations on the future course of the aforementioned triangular relations along with the development of transformational diplomacy.

The Essence of Transformational Diplomacy

The idea of transformational diplomacy is derived from Bush, who resolute in his foreign policy aims at seeking and supporting "the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation

and culture with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny.”¹ The first half of Bush’s idea is not new. Fostering democracy overseas has long been a major objective of U.S. foreign policy.² The second half of Bush’s idea — ending tyranny — has not been readily justified in part because it is rather controversial, for example, in the sense that the U.S. is occasionally seen as part of the same tyranny which certain non-Western countries have opposed, and in part because the Straussians in and surrounding the Bush administration questionably reinterpret the intention of Leo Strauss as the ultimate supporter of perpetual wars against tyranny.³

Regardless of the controversial understanding of “ending tyranny” and the difficulty in achieving the mission, the plans outlined by Rice are very specific and technical, in the hope that they can lead to “a diplomacy that not only reports about the world as it is, but seeks to change the world itself.”⁴ This kind of transformational diplomacy, according to Rice, is aimed at working “with many partners around the world, to build and sustain democratic, well-governed states that will respond to the needs of their people and conduct them-

1. Office of the Press Secretary, “President Sworn-in to Second Term,” *the White House*, January 20, 2005, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html>>.

2. Steven W. Hook & John Spanier, *American Foreign Policy since World War II* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2004), pp. 11-12.

3. The political standpoints of Leo Strauss include liberal democracy, opposition to communist tyranny, doubt about world federalism, etc.. Defending democracy does not depend on the use of force but on the advancement of politics as a field for human excellence. See Mark Blitz, “Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and American Foreign Policy,” November 14, 2003, <<http://www.opendemocracy.net/content/articles/PDF/1577.pdf>>.

4. Condoleezza Rice, “Transformational Diplomacy,” Remarks at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, January 18, 2006, <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm>>.

selves responsibly in the international system.”⁵ At its core, transformational diplomacy is a set of delicate practices in public diplomacy whose ultimate goal is to promote democracy building around the world.

By enhancing the new skills of diplomats in carrying out multiple tasks and by emphasizing the ability to coordinate with other federal agencies, transformational diplomacy is designed to meet the challenges in extraordinary times from three different levels: global, regional, and local (outside the U.S.).⁶

Global Repositioning. American diplomats are generally located in Europe, and centralized within capital cities. To better allocate American diplomatic resources, in the long run hundreds of positions will be moved to critical emerging areas in Africa, South Asia, East Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere.

Regional Focus. In order to manage effectively various transnational and regional challenges that thwart the efforts for building democracy countering terrorism, fighting disease and human trafficking, and pursuing prosperity, American diplomats have the need to come up with new thinking and more targeted responses. Of these new thinking and responses, the Department of State will do the following:

- I. Establish regional public diplomacy centers that connect the people to the U.S. by regional media in the appropriate

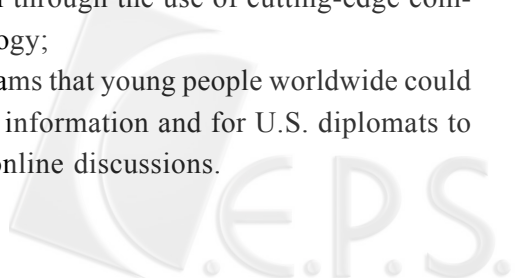
5. *Ibid.*.

6. Office of the Spokesman, the U.S. Department of State, “Fact Sheet: Transformational Diplomacy,” *the U.S. Department of State*, <<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/59339.htm>>. The descriptions of global repositioning, regional focus, and localization are also based on this official document.

- language;
- II. Set up regional centers with the latest information technology to perform such management support activities as human resources anywhere in the world;
 - III. Carry out effective forward deployment by American diplomats traveling to their areas of responsibilities more regularly and to use their expertise and experience more effectively abroad.

Localization. American diplomats are expected to “walk” (either in person or via the media and internet) into the common people of the countries to which they are designated in order to influence the outcomes of the American foreign policy behavior. To achieve this goal, the Department of State will endeavor to:

- I. Enhance the function of American Presence Posts (APPs) currently located in the major regional population centers of some less developed countries, and operated by one U.S. diplomat each who lives and works outside the U.S. embassies;
- II. Use network technology to create more Virtual Presence Posts (VPPs) managed by one or more U.S. diplomats to interact with local people across Europe, Latin America, and Asia;
- III. Enable the State Department workforce to securely and accurately share the information they need whether at their desktops or on travel through the use of cutting-edge communications technology;
- IV. Create internet programs that young people worldwide could increasingly surf for information and for U.S. diplomats to provide interactive online discussions.



As Andrew Natsios remarks, transformational diplomacy is “a vision of an entirely different diplomacy has been articulated at the highest levels of the Bush administration and is already in the early stages of implementation.”⁷ A greater emphasis seems to be put on regional and local approaches to public diplomacy promoting American values that connects the U.S. with the developing world.

Transformational Diplomacy and the U.S. National Security Strategy

Transformational diplomacy is a mean, not an end. It is conceived and conducted to change the world as the U.S. key decision-makers wish. By proactive and effective diplomatic presences in critical emerging areas, it reduces the likelihood of armed conflict in which U.S. troops can be involved and works with international partners to help create and sustain good governance, thereby allowing governments to be more accountable and to facilitate the response of to the needs of the citizens in new or troubled democratic countries.

Transformational diplomacy is part of the U.S. national security strategy. Or, put it on another way, the methods and practices proposed by Rice to meet the challenges from global, regional and local levels are in essence, a working plan for the realization of the U.S. national security strategy. The relationship between transformational diplomacy and the U.S. national security strategy is easily demonstrated by simply comparing the major components of transformational diplomacy with the declared measures undertaken by the current U.S. government. Generally speaking, the major components of transformational di-

7. Andrew Natsios, “American Fortresses,” *Weekly Standard*, Vol. 11, No. 34, May 22, 2006, <<http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/012/216yrfpx.asp>>.

plomacy may include promoting the idea of democracy and open, free society; reaching out to help foreign citizens and countries better or transform their political systems; building partnership with major powers; enhancing the ability of U.S. diplomats to work with their colleagues and other government agencies. Not surprisingly, these components are consistent with the means of achieving national security in the White House.

In *The National Security Strategy of the United States* published by the White House in September 2002, expanding the circle of development by endorsing free markets and free trade, opening societies, as well as building the infrastructure of democracy including, for instance, literacy and education, are some major strategies that enhance the U.S. national security.⁸ Traditional American values and beliefs are tightly upheld by the Bush administration and have become the guiding principles of the U.S. foreign policy toward the less developed and less democratic countries.

In addition, *The National Security Strategy of the United States* in 2002 recognizes the complexity of contemporary world politics, particularly great power politics, and put much emphasis on inter-agency cooperation and coordination in the U.S. government by arguing that every agency of the U.S. government “can build fruitful habits of consultation, quiet argument, sober analysis, and common action” that in the long run will lead to salient progress.⁹

In the latter edition of *The National Security Strategy of the United States* in March 2006, in addition to what has been stressed

8. The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: White House, 2002), pp. 21-23.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

in the 2002 edition, the importance of democratic rule and good governance is likewise highlighted. The U.S. government seeks to provide assistance and is willing to cooperate with partners in critical areas to achieve these goals, mainly because these goals are in line with American moral values and crucial for long-term developments that lead to stability and prosperity. This, in turn, increases the national security of the U.S..¹⁰

An interesting issue that needs to be discussed here is whether or not transformational diplomacy discards the notion of the so-called “George W. Bush Doctrine” — defense of freedom, democracy, and free markets; American primacy and exceptionalism; preemption; unilateralism.¹¹ I tend to argue that transformational diplomacy still follows the roadmap drawn by the doctrine and serves as an extension of the doctrine.

10. The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: White House, 2006), pp. 32-33.

11. There are various notions and analyses of the “George W. Bush Doctrine.” Despite the changeable nature of the “George W. Bush Doctrine,” it is widely recognized that the doctrine itself asserts that the U.S. must take advantage of its superior power to shape the new power structure in international relations. See, for example, Charles Krauthammer, “The Bush Doctrine,” *Weekly Standard*, June 4, 2001, pp. 21-27; G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 5, September-October 2002, pp. 44-60; Bill Keach, “International Law: Illusion and Reality,” *International Socialist Review*, Iss. 27, January/February 2003, <http://www.isreview.org/issues/27/international_law.shtml>; Thomas Donnelly, “The Underpinnings of the Bush Doctrine,” *National Security Outlook*, February 1, 2003 (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 2003); Roger Speed & Michael May, “Dangerous Doctrine,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 61, No. 2, March/April 2005, pp. 38-49; Chris J. Dolan, *In War We Trust: The Bush Doctrine And The Pursuit Of Just War* (Burlington, Virginia: Ashgate, 2005); Mel Gurtov, *Superpower on Crusade: The Bush Doctrine in US Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

Although transformational diplomacy develops alongside the enormous soft power of the U.S., and uses public diplomacy tactics to sway emerging critical countries and their people, it is by no means in a multilateral form. It implies that the U.S. is entitled to enjoy international primacy and historical exceptionalism while being able to take unilateral actions diplomatically in order to prevent serious challenges from taking place and shape the future world in an American way. Thus, cooperation or coordination of the target countries is not definitely necessary. The “George W. Bush Doctrine” is often interpreted in the realm of U.S. national security, but nowadays the doctrine clearly has a non-military side — that is, transformational diplomacy.

Responses of Mainland China

Rice has a clear view on how transformational diplomacy will work in different areas of the world: “Transformational diplomacy is rooted in partnership; not in paternalism. In doing things with people, not for them; we seek to use America’s diplomatic power to help foreign citizens better their own lives and to build their own nations and to transform their own futures.”¹²

From Washington’s standpoint, this causes no problem for the areas and countries concerned because the result is for the good of these citizens. Besides, this means that a certain number of diplomats from Europe, Russia, and Japan will be relocated to mainland China, India, and Indonesia where the battle for hearts and minds in the idea of democracy and liberty is being fought.¹³

12. Rice, “Transformational Diplomacy,” Remarks at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, January 18, 2006, <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/59306.htm>>.

13. “Of 74 new U.S. diplomatic positions, China will get 15, including a dozen at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing. India ranks second with 12 new posts, seven of

With such a changing diplomatic and strategic focus of the U.S. and with a possible U.S. intrusion on national sovereignty and autonomy, mainland China begins to give heed to the possible impact resulting from transformational diplomacy and the oncoming diplomatic offensive from the superpower U.S.. Although Rice's remarks on transformational diplomacy are less noticed in Washington, Beijing's responses are quite apparent.

Positive responses can be found in mainland China's news media, but they are marginal in number and influence. For instance, *The Beijing News (Xinjingbao)* commented on Rice's transformational diplomacy and highlighted the significance of public diplomacy between the PRC and the U.S., providing that the U.S. can clarify the meaning of the term "responsible stakeholder" brought up by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick in September 2005.¹⁴ It is true that Zoellick proposed the U.S. to step up efforts to make mainland China a "responsible stakeholder" in collaboration with the U.S. in the international community but he did not indicate clearly what "stakeholder" stood for in the case of U.S.-PRC relations. Not surprisingly, the view that links the concept of "responsible stakeholder" to the development of transformational diplomacy in mainland China tends to be more optimistic.

However, the majority of responses in mainland China seem

them in New Delhi. And Indonesia is third with five new slots in Jakarta. Other countries that are to receive at least three more U.S. diplomatic slots include Nigeria, Israel, Lebanon, Vietnam, Tajikistan, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela and Nicaragua." See "U.S. to Shift Envoys to China, India," *Washington Post*, February 10, 2006, p. A17.

14. "Clear Interests Helpful for Development of Sino-U.S. Relations (明确利益有助发展中美关系)," *The Beijing News (新京报)*, January 28, 2006, <<http://opinion.people.com.cn/GB/51866/4069352.html>>.

more suspicious or even negative. Suspicious responses are similar to the commentaries of Sebastian Mallaby¹⁵ and Pat M. Holt¹⁶ who criticize transformational diplomacy of ignoring the fact that the U.S. lacks the instruments to transform other societies and building nations, and of mistakenly urging U.S. diplomats not only to encourage democratic elections and open markets but also to shape them.

For example, Tao Wenjiao echoed Mallaby's analysis and questioned the validity of Rice's argument that the ultimate goal of transformational diplomacy is to nurture, shape, and promote democracy.¹⁷ Wang Yiwei asserted that transformational diplomacy simply focused on U.S. external behavior and foreign policy output. Without a deeper scrutiny of the root and idea of American diplomacy, the consequence of transformational diplomacy would be trivial.¹⁸ *The Xinhua News Agency* also pointed out that Rice's transformational diplomacy is being experimented with two developing countries — Afghanistan and Iraq. Having interfered with these countries militarily, the U.S. is providing a great deal of economic assistance, both to democratize them and to make them U.S. allies in international relations.¹⁹

15. Sebastian Mallaby, "Rice's Blind Spot," *Washington Post*, January 23, 2006, p. A15.

16. Pat M. Holt, "The Risks of Proactive US Diplomacy," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 2, 2006, <<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0302/p09s02-coop.html>>.

17. Tao Wenjiao, "US Diplomacy Difficult to 'Transform' (美国外交难 转型)," *International Herald Leader*, February 10, 2006, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/herald/2006-02/10/content_4161309.htm>.

18. Wang Yiwei, "Can Face-lift in Diplomacy Cure US Mental Disease? (外交整容能否医治美国心病?)," *The Beijing News*, January 12, 2006, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2006-01/21/content_4080334.htm>.

19. "Secrets in US 'Transformational Diplomacy' (美国 转型外交"暗藏玄机)," <http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2006-01/26/content_4102027.htm>.

Negative responses in mainland China are not rarely seen. Some mainland Chinese observers regard transformational diplomacy as part of the scheme aimed at promoting U.S. hegemony and peaceful evolution, with mainland China being the key target of the U.S.. Yu Wanli once argued that there was no significant difference between Bill Clinton's humanitarian intervention and Rice's transformational diplomacy because both were aimed to transform the world in light of the U.S. development model. What really differed humanitarian intervention from transformational diplomacy lay in the fact that the latter occurred in an extraordinary post-9/11 era, and has gained domestic legitimacy and support due to the threat imposed by various forms of terrorism. In the name of anti-terrorism, democracy, and the U.S., transformational diplomacy is equivalent to hegemonic diplomacy that erodes the principle of sovereignty.²⁰ Another disapproving viewpoint stressed that the nature of transformational diplomacy in the Middle East is straight and simple — to reduce the coordinating ability of the PRC, Russia, and major European powers in their Middle East policies.²¹

Although the PRC officials have not acted in response, some scholars and news media in mainland China were skeptic as to the purpose and promotion of transformational diplomacy. To date, transformation diplomacy has not been carried out proactively, and its impact on mainland China has not yet emerged. Since mainland China remains untouched as the U.S. high-level officials call for greater

20. Yu Wanli, "Transformational Diplomacy: Subverting Sovereignty in the Name of Anti-terrorism, Democracy and the US (转型外交：以反恐、民主与美国的名义颠覆主权)," *Dongfang Daily* (东方早报), February 17, 2006, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/comments/2006-02/17/content_4191150.htm>.

21. "Dongfang Shidai Shishi Jiedu (东方时代环球时事解读)," April 28, 2006, <<http://www.dongfangtime.com/Article.asp?ArticleId=2889#>>.

freedom in mainland Chinese politics, economy, and society, it is thus very likely that transformational diplomacy at this incipient stage will be discounted or disregarded by mainland China as long as it does not lead to further U.S. interference in its domestic affairs.

Exploring Some Inferences about Transformational Diplomacy's Influence on ROC-PRC-U.S. Interactions

This section explores three inferences resulting from the surfacing of transformational diplomacy. The first and second inferences are highly related to the last one concerning Washington-Beijing-Taipei relations.

[Inference 1] *Transformational diplomacy is endorsed by the U.S. government to disintegrate or end China and create an international community that is obedient to the U.S..*

This inference represents a view stronger than most of the negative views on transformational diplomacy in mainland China. The U.S. desire for supporting democracies and ending tyrannies is interpreted as the plot of converting most countries to U.S.-like ones. Somewhat in line with the democratic peace theory, when most countries are democracies, the U.S. will be able to establish a world where the U.S. is a key player enjoying paramount influence and leadership. Besides, so long as American imperialism exists, the ambition of the U.S. to bring peaceful evolution to mainland China will never cease.²²

22. See, for example, "US's 'Transformational Diplomacy' that Disintegrates China (搞垮中国的美国 转型外交)," *Guandian Yu Fangguandian* (观点与反观点), Center for International Communications Studies, Tsinghua University, May 20, 2006, <http://www.media.tsinghua.edu.cn/data/2006/0520/article_369.html>.

The first question that comes into mind is why the U.S. wants to disintegrate mainland China. The U.S. may wish to create a world community of democracies, and the U.S. may be willing to play a leading role in plenty of issues around the world. However, even if these were true, few would argue that disintegrating or ending mainland China by means of transformational diplomacy would best meet U.S. interest. The disintegration or demise of mainland China that has a population of 1.3 billion and weapons of mass destruction will bring an immediate disaster — e.g., the fleeing of refugees — to the world, not to mention the impact on the U.S. itself.

The second question is whether democracies will obey the U.S. so easily. History shows that democracies may not agree with one another. The clash between the U.S. and the European Union (EU) over airplane and agricultural subsidies is so evident that it is not very logical to maintain the fact that a world community consisting of democracies will remain obedient to the U.S.. Moreover, do democracies not fight against one another? It is still controversial in the study of international security.²³ Hence, the contention that transformational diplomacy is intended to enlarge U.S. influence is logically acceptable, but Inference 1 is too far-fetched if its supporters cannot provide us with concrete evident and persuasive causal explanations.

[Inference 2] *Not only economic but political and military skirmishes between mainland China and the U.S. will loom*

²³ For the cases against the democratic peace, see, for instance, Christopher Layne, “Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2, Fall 1994, pp. 5-49; David E. Spiro, “The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace,” *International Security*, pp. 50-86; Edward D. Mansfield & Jack Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War,” *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Summer 1995, pp. 5-38.

large as transformational diplomacy aimed at both economic and political reform continues; as a result, Taipei and Washington deserve to think twice before calling for an opener economic and trade system without advocating a more democratized regime in mainland China.

This inference is coherent with the view expressed by the Mainland Affairs Council of the ROC Executive Yuan.²⁴ The first half of the inference has a high potential because, as implied before, transformational diplomacy at the early stage will not be discounted or disregarded by mainland China so long as it brings about further U.S. interference in its domestic affairs. However, whether the second half of the inference — a demand for simultaneous political reform and economic development is more appropriate — is necessary and sufficient or not remains debatable.

There are two schools of thought, roughly categorized, that are of help for this debate. One tends to play down the importance of economic development in the wave of democratization; the other establishes the logical causation between democratization and economic development.

The first school of thought actually mixes up many viewpoints, but one can find one thing in common: economic determinism never plays a decisive role in democratization. For instance, some political scientists find out that power relations of three levels of analysis — domestic class power relations and alliances, state power structures, as well as the transnational power structure — determine whether

24. "Mainland Working Report," *Mainland Affairs Council, the ROC Executive Yuan*, April 2006, pp. 8-11, <<http://www.mac.gov.tw/big5/mlpolicy/mwreport/95/9504.pdf>>.

democracy can emerge, steady, and then sustain itself.²⁵ Some assert that the western idea of democracy has prevailed in the aftermath of the Cold War.²⁶ Hence, coincident economic development seems neither necessary nor sufficient for the achievement of democracy. In other words, there is no immediate need to link economic development to the request for political reform.

The second school of thought emphasizes on the role of economic development in democratization. Although the analyses of scholars in this school of thought vary, a widely accepted conclusion is that economic development does matter. Some believe that economic development is important for democratization and makes democracy possible, but political leadership and elites' positive attitude makes it real.²⁷ Others accept that the importance of economic development to democratization, with the concurrent high levels of literacy and education.²⁸ Therefore, in a sense, promoting economic growth can be seen as part of the democratization strategy. More specifically, in order to democratize a country, only promoting its economic development or enhancing economic and trade relations is acceptable because

25. Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens & John D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 5.

26. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

27. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 316.

28. Seymour M. Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 53, 1959, pp. 69-105; Stephan Haggard & Robert R. Kaufman, *The Political Economy of Democratic Transition* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 25-44; Adam Przeworski, et. al., *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 78-136.

ultimately it will pave the way for democratization and political reform.

Neither school of thought would really disapprove of the approach that separates the promotion of economic development and the call for democratization. The former does not think that economic development is the key factor making a shift from authoritarian to democratic rule; there are some other factors that are more important than economic development. The latter tends to argue that economic development alone can lead to democratization; that is, strategies that are aimed at regime change may not necessarily be in need of concurrent economic development and political reform.

It remains apparent that one of transformational diplomacy's goals is to familiarize the U.S. with the emerging powers and their citizens. It also remains evident that transformational diplomacy seeks to realize democracy building — e.g., open society, free market, and liberal democracy — in the world. Nonetheless, more logical and objective deductions are indispensable to justify Inference 2, which implies that Taiwan and the U.S. ought to call for simultaneous political reform and economic development in mainland China, not to mention the fact that it is enormously difficult now to ask mainland Chinese leaders to democratize or carry out political reform.

[Inference 3] *Transformational diplomacy will bring about a salient impact on strategic interactions among Taipei, Beijing, and Washington.*

After the announcement of transformational diplomacy on January 18, 2006, some suppositions about its influence on triangular relations among Taipei, Beijing, and Washington are being raised. As a matter of fact, transformational diplomacy may have something to do with

Beijing-Washington relations and have little to do with Taipei-Beijing or Taipei-Washington relations.

The elaboration of Rice on the approach of transformational diplomacy may help explain why. She said that transformational diplomacy begins with the arrangement that U.S. diplomats are in the right places, with the necessary tools and training to carry out their mission abroad. Furthermore, she asked for U.S. diplomats to “work effectively with their partners in the United Nations and other international organizations” partially because this will not only strengthen U.S. national security but also improve the fiscal stewardship of the U.S..²⁹ On the one hand, transformational diplomacy will lead to some degree of worry for Beijing if Washington takes public diplomacy as the idea of selling democracy in mainland China very seriously. On the other hand, transformational diplomacy may signify the fading out of hardcore neoconservatives and denote a revised realist international approach that moderately cooperates with major international organizations and allies.³⁰ Although mainland China is not a major ally of the U.S., the latter is in need of the former to cope with international terrorism, the North Korea and Iran nuclear issues, and so on, not to mention the fact that collaboration between both countries in major international organizations will certainly facilitate the strategic goal of the U.S..

29. Condoleezza Rice, “Realizing the Goals of Transformational Diplomacy,” *Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, Washington DC, February 15, 2006, <<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/61209.htm>>.

30. “Diplomatic Relations: As ‘Neocons’ Leave, Bush Foreign Policy Takes Softer Line; Ms. Rice Changes Approach To Iran and North Korea; Democracy Still Key Goal; Cheney’s Waning Influence?” *Wall Street Journal*, February 6, 2006, p. A1.

Then, does transformational diplomacy influence the current frameworks of ROC-U.S. and ROC-PRC relations? Not really. Transformational diplomacy is being conducted to provide effective forward presence of U.S. public diplomacy in critical areas and countries, of which the PRC is a principal target. Contemporary ROC-U.S. relations are largely influenced or undermined by the provocative decisions unilaterally made by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taipei, while government-to-government interactions between the ROC and the PRC are stalled because the DPP and the Chinese Communist Party are in deep disagreement over the future of Taiwan. Transformational diplomacy launched by the U.S. does not play an influential role in the two games.

In the current situation, change in Beijing-Washington relations will definitely affect the diplomatic strategy and consideration of Taipei, which might in turn alter the nature of the aforementioned triangular relations. Yet, as the impact of transformational diplomacy on Beijing-Washington relations is still unclear, it would be bold to infer that transformational diplomacy will bring about a salient impact on strategic interactions among Taipei, Beijing, and Washington.

What's Next ?

Will transformational diplomacy be a buzzword only? It does not seem that Rice pays much attention to the technical part of transformational diplomacy — i.e., global repositioning, regional focus, and localization. Rather, in line with *the National Security Strategy of the United States*, she seems to put more emphasis on the strategic side of transformational diplomacy — i.e., the promotion of American values in the rest of the world. Furthermore, resistances from the foreign service officers in the Department of State will be another factor to consider when Rice endeavors to carry out transformational

diplomacy. It is thus fair to argue that transformational diplomacy was launched by Rice, but one knows better what it is rather than how on earth to achieve it. If this remains true, then transformational diplomacy will become one of many buzzwords used in the practice of U.S. diplomacy.

In the not-too-distant future, transformational diplomacy will be kept by the U.S. government, and will not be used to disintegrate or end mainland China but to help achieve the mission that transforms mainland China from authoritarian to democratic. As transformational diplomacy is being carried out, political and military arguments between mainland China and the U.S. will loom large but they will be manageable. Triangular Washington-Beijing-Taipei relations will not change dramatically because of transformational diplomacy but because of the three sets of sensitive bilateral relations among them.

More importantly, transformational diplomacy can have a deep impact on the PRC-U.S. relation, but it has not taken place yet. It takes time to observe the consequence of transformational diplomacy on the PRC. Does transformational diplomacy play a crucial role in PRC-U.S. relations? I think the answer is “Not yet.” Transformational diplomacy can be one of the key variables influencing foreign relations between the PRC and the U.S., but not now.

Given the complex nature of PRC-U.S. relations, decision-makers in Washington are adopting a hedging strategy,³¹ in collaboration

31. Bill Gertz, “Pentagon ‘Hedge’ Strategy Targets China,” *Washington Times*, March 17, 2006, <<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20060316-114755-3306r.htm>>. For a broader analysis of the hedging strategies between Beijing and Washington, see Evan S. Medeiros, “Strategic Hedging and the Future of Asia-Pacific Stability,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Winter 2005-2006, pp. 145-167.

with transformational diplomacy, to make the PRC a responsible, democratic stakeholder in world affairs. Helping the promotion of democratization in mainland China is certainly one of the few niches Taiwan enjoys when Taiwan wants to contribute to the effort of the U.S. in managing its relations with mainland China. Without engaging mainland China in a more proactive and successful way, Taiwan's role in facilitating the U.S. hedging strategy and diplomacy toward mainland China will be less significant.

