

## Five: Fatuous And Cruel

### 6: Fearing Democracy, Intimidating Taiwan



On March 23, 1996, Taiwan held its first Democratic election. Along with Li Deng-hui, presidential candidates including nonpartisan figures Chen Lui-an, and Lin Yang-gang, as well as Democratic Progressive Party candidate Peng Ming-min. Jiang was worried over Taiwan holding an election. He was afraid of the reverberation of a democratic election in Taiwan, would stir a longing for democracy in mainland China.



At the time, Hongkong was about to return to China.

The driving force behind the scene was Jiang's wish, to achieve something involving relations between the mainland and Taiwan, and to be credit in China's history book.

Jiang was mediocre and bumbling at best in the matter of foreign affairs, and domestic governance.

However, with the encouragement of some old generals, he decided to teach Li Deng-hui a lesson.

The result of Jiang's ambitions almost started a war, and scared the wit out of himself.



In 1995 and 96, the CCP proceeded to hold quite a few military exercises, missile firing drills, amphibians operations, and transferring troops from various regions, to the coastal area directly across from Taiwan. The US



government was alarmed, thought the situation was serious, and deployed 2 carrier fleets, Independent and Nemet, to patrol the Taiwan Strait.



Jiang was scared. He did not dare to ruin China's relationship with the US. Scarier yet to him, was the likelihood that if conflict broke out, the military would seize power, making him a mere figurehead as the Chairman. He declared that the military exercises were enough. Taiwan heard the news, and reassured.

The election carried on as usual.



The year 2000 witnessed the second general election in Taiwan. The Democratic Progressive Party candidate Chen Shui-bian, was leading in the polls. Jiang had been labeling the DPP as the radical Taiwan Independent camp, and constantly attack them in the media. Jiang was stupefied. He didn't know what he would respond if Chen were elected.

War wasn't something Jiang wanted to launch. He trembled whenever he thought about it. On the other hand, if he chose not to go to war, what would he do about the nationalist fervor he had stirred up domestically. He was overcome with trepidation, every time he thought of the dilemma he had to confront.

Jiang Zemin was proud of his showmanship, but this time, though, he pushed Zhu Rongji, whom he hated very much, to hold a press conference, to deliver a hard line ultimatum.

Two birds with one stone, on one hand, Jiang Zemin shrank from the responsibility himself, on the other hand, he made his old enemy, Zhu Rongji embarrassed himself, and tarnished his image in front of the whole world.



But Jiang tried to make a show of strength: CCTV broadcasted a series called "Chinese Troops" during that period, which was a thinly veiled threat. Troops were mobilized towards the regions neighboring the Taiwan Strait, implying that war was inevitable if Chen Shui-bian was elected.





On February 1, the US House of Representatives passed the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, expressing strong concern regarding the potential war across the Taiwan Strait, while the people of Taiwan stood up to the CCP's intimidation, and elected the Opposition Leader, Democratic Progressive Party Chair Chen Shui-bian, as their new President.



Jiang Zemin, who reached the top thanks to the Massacre, believed only in power, force, and intimidation. As a result, he suffered a major tumble. Not only was Jiang shaken by the election outcome, but also the whole top echelon of the CCP was caught off guard, and left stunned.



On the evening of March 19, 2000, the news anchorman of China's official Communist Television News, read with sober intonation the statement, by the Communist Central Office of the Taiwan Affairs, he read: "We hope the newly elected DPP authorities will not go too far." The vacuity of the statement indicated that the CCP was at loss over what to do. They blundered in the appraisal of the will of the Taiwanese people.



Jiang came across as much more moderate, compared with the tone of pre-election propaganda. He acted as if nothing had happened, as if he had never issued a tough speech before the election. Jiang seemed to have forgotten, that it was he, who tricked Zhu Rongji into playing the part of the villain early on.

It now looked like it was Zhu Rongji who had made a ruckus over nothing. Zhu Rongji regretted deeply for having been a pawn in Jiang's game.





Several years later, Lui Jiaping submitted a letter to Communist Central Leadership, Representatives of the National People's Congress, and Members of the National Political Consultative Conference. He revealed in the letter that Jiang had been two-faced in his tactics handling the Taiwan issue. Jiang pledged, on one hand, to attack Taiwan, hoping to gain the trust of generals and troops, thus maintain his authority over the military. But Jiang, on the other hand, promised the President of the United States that the PLA wouldn't attack Taiwan, as long as the US supported him continuing to hold the position of the Chairman of the CMC.



Jiang barked plenty about taking military action against Taiwan, and even made gestures of an attack on several occasions. But all of it amounted to posturing ultimately. The reality was, Jiang was using Taiwan as a trump card. He would wave it whenever his power was threatened, pretending war was imminent, and giving the troops a sense of

importance.

When things had passed, he'd put the card away, and save it for the next crisis.



Zhu Rongji's image suffered a big blow in the eyes of the international arena. What with him became a symbol for saber-rattling war-mongers. He ended up the figure hurt the most by Jiang's shenanigans.