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05.12.2022

Taiwan Municipal Elections: Major Defeat for U.S. Politics U.S. in the region

Washington must take note of what has happened, being forced to rethink some elements of its policy towards China, especially in relation to Taiwan... These elections could mark a turning point in the relationship between China and Taiwan, reopening an era of bilateral dialogue and peaceful coexistence, establishing mutually advantageous cooperation mechanisms for both sides of the Taiwan Strait.



The recently concluded XX Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) persisted in the guideline of peaceful reunification of the country under the idea of sustaining two political systems for a period of time. Under the principle of the existence of one China, the CPC has proposed to promote "broad and deep consultations with all parties, circles

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and personalities of the various social strata of Taiwan on inter-coastal relations and the reunification of the motherland with a view to jointly advancing the peaceful development of these relations and the process of peaceful reunification of the motherland," according to the text of the report submitted to the Congress. by General Secretary Xi Jinping.



However, the document accurately states that the conflict must be resolved internally based on the decision made by the Chinese people. Therefore, while the prospect of peaceful reunification will persist, China will never agree to renounce the use of arms and will reserve the option of taking all necessary measures. The report specifies that this decision is not directed against the Taiwanese but against "the interference of external forces, as well as against a tiny minority of secessionists adhering to the 'independence of Taiwan' and against their secessionist activities."

Almost exactly one month after he uttered these words, Xi Jinping met in Bali, Indonesia with his US counterpart Joe Biden. On that occasion, the Chinese president let his American colleague know that the Taiwan issue is at the very core of China's core interests, that it is the basis of the political foundation of China-US relations, and "constitutes the first red line that should not be crossed in Sino-US ties."



U.S. President Joe Biden met with Chinese President Xi Jinping on November 14 on the sidelines of the Group of 20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia

These facts have apparently been fundamental – but not unique – factors in the decision of the Taiwanese to give a resounding defeat to the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (PDP) in the municipal elections last Sunday, November 27.

Other factors also played a role in the election results. Paradoxically, the controversial August visit of former U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the war in Ukraine played against the ruling party. The Taiwanese people acting with prudence and pragmatism, observed on the one hand the repercussions of Pelosi's visit and the gigantic military exercise developed by China that in fact blockaded the island by sea and air. On the other hand, the war in Ukraine has shown the consequences that a major military conflict could have, as is expected to happen if Taiwan were to propose independence. As the Spanish analyst Xulio Ríos says, the Taiwanese have not known war for more than seventy years and the prospect of a conflict is not something they would want for their future.



The PDP, founded in 1986, has been the main driver of Taiwan's "independence" ideas vis-à-vis China. He came to power for the first time at the beginning of the century to govern during the period 2000-2004, winning again the elections in 2016 at the hands of his leader, the current "president" Tsai Ing-Wen who has assumed a much more aggressive policy towards China raising an inflexible "independence" proposal.

For its part, the Kuomintang party, which emerged as a bearer of progressive ideas during the monarchy and as a great promoter of the republic under the leadership of Sun Yat-sen, had a transcendental shift to the right after the assumption of its top leadership by Chiang Kai-shek in 1926. After the end of the civil war that ended with the CCP's victory in 1949, which in turn led to the creation of the People's Republic of China, Chiang and the Kuomintang took refuge in Taiwan under the protection of the United States that has since sustained their government, even granting China the seat on the UN and the Security Council until 1971.

The creation of the PDP during 1986 put an end to the Kuomintang-led one-party regime the following year, which nevertheless remained in power uninterruptedly until 2000. However, in recent years he has maintained a rapprochement with the People's Republic of China and the CCP under the policy of three denials: no independence, no unification and

no use of force. This management allowed to build a kind of truce based on non-aggression and to advance in the development of mutually advantageous cooperation that even led President Xi Jinping to meet in November 2015 in Singapore, with Ma Ying-yeou, maximum ruler of Taiwan and leader of the Kuomintang at that time.

But the arrival of the PDP to power in 2016 under Tsai's leadership, meant a reversal of everything advanced, also creating conditions for an increase in tensions in the South China Sea, the environment of Taiwan and the entire region. This policy supported by the United States in order to justify its interventionist presence in the region has led to it being considered the most dangerous area on the planet, only surpassed in recent times by Ukraine, since in recent years a variety of nuclear equipment have been deployed, especially in warships and airplanes.



Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen resigned as head of the Democratic Progressive Party after the defeat in Saturday's 11/26 election.

This decision by Washington, advanced by both the Democratic and Republican administrations, has reached levels of paroxysm since the coming to power of Joe Biden, who has ordered increased challenges to Beijing through a greater military presence of the US Navy in the seas adjacent to China and interventionist actions that violate the bilateral agreements that were established between the two countries under the principle of the existence of "a single one". China." All this in order to provoke tensions that maintain the conflict and guarantee the United States an increase in arms sales to the region and particularly to Taiwan. The PDP and Tsai Ing-wen government has been a loyal ally of the United States in fulfilling these objectives.

Although some analysts say that municipal elections are not influenced too much by the way the relationship with China is handled but are only a mechanism by which citizens evaluate local management in terms of efficiency, corruption and good use of resources, the truth is that these results have an ascendancy throughout Taiwan because they are considered a thermometer for the 2024 general elections, In addition, the context makes them have influence at the regional and global levels.

The Blue Bread alliance formed by the Kuomintang with the People's First Party and the New Party won 16 of the 21 districts and 9 of the territory's 15 largest cities, including the Taipei capital, acrushing defeat for the PDP.



But, the election results must be interpreted not only as a setback for the PDP and the "independence" ideas in Taiwan, but also as a failure of the Democratic Party of the United States, Joe Biden and Nancy Pelosi herself, although she no longer has greater influence on the politics of her country. In this regard, Washington must take note of what has happened, being forced to rethink some elements of its policy towards China, especially in relation to Taiwan.

On the other hand, these elections could mark a turning point in the relationship between China and Taiwan, reopening an era of bilateral dialogue and peaceful coexistence, establishing mutually advantageous cooperation mechanisms for both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Sergio Rodríguez Gelfenstein for La Pluma, November 30, 2022

Edited by María Piedad Ossaba

La Pluma. Net 02.12.2022