

2007

Dinner Speech: Membership for Taiwan in the United Nations

Lung-chu Chen

Dinner Speech

Introduction

By Lung-chu Chen

Ladies and gentlemen. We are very, very fortunate to be able to invite Ambassador Crispin Grey-Johnson as our keynote speaker.

He has been Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations. In addition, he's also High Commissioner to Sierra Leone and Ambassador to Ivory Coast and Liberia, since 1999. Previously, he served as Ambassador to the United States, Brazil, and Venezuela and as High Commissioner to Canada. He certainly has very distinguished diplomatic career, and he has been very much devoted to urging the unity and cooperation of West African countries.

I first met Ambassador Grey-Johnson last June, when Tony Jenkins, who spoke in our previous session, invited me to a UNCA discussion to talk about UN principles of self-determination with specific reference to Taiwan. On that occasion, after my presentation, Ambassador Grey-Johnson asked a question and made very enlightening remarks.

He has been a real friend of Taiwan. He is the leader of Group of Friends of Taiwan in the United Nations, those 26 countries having diplomatic relations with Taiwan. The Group of Friends of Taiwan submitted, year after year, joint proposals before the United Nations, which is discussed by the General Committee. This year, I understand the discussion is set on September 17th, even though they haven't succeeded in getting the whole question inscribed in the formal agenda of the General Assembly.

However, they have done a remarkable job. As a result of their very supportive efforts, more and more members of the United Nations come to see how important it is for them to come to grips with the question of Taiwan's representation in the United Nations. After all, any decision by the United Nations must be serving the common interest, yet, we realize we

need a sense of realism balanced with a sense of idealism. Step by step, through our continuing efforts, having friends like Ambassador Grey-Johnson, will certainly be extremely helpful.

It gives me a great pleasure and honor to present to you Ambassador Grey-Johnson.

Speech

By Crispin Grey-Johnson

Dr. Chen, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is always a pleasure for me to seize on any occasion that presents itself to speak up for Taiwan. This occasion, though, is special in that it is an international forum convened outside of the United Nations, about the United Nations and Taiwan. As a Permanent Representative to the United Nations, it is not often that I have an opportunity to levitate, as it were, and view from the outside, with outsiders, what like-minded colleagues and I do within the United Nations in respect of the question of Taiwan. Therefore, this occasion for me is unique.

First I would like to explain to you what we do to promote the Taiwan cause, as well as how we do it. There are 26 member states of the United Nations that have established formal diplomatic relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan). They are from Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the Pacific. They may, for the most part, be small, but they are sovereign and equal members of the organization. They, therefore, have the same rights, responsibilities, and privileges as any other member state. These 26 countries at the United Nations have organized themselves into a Group of Friends of Taiwan, with the Gambia (that's me) as Chairman, and Tuvalu, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, El Salvador, and Nicaragua as Coordinators. The Chairman and Coordinators operate as the Bureau of the Group, and it is within this Group that positions are taken in respect of Taiwan's relations with the United Nations, and strategies are crafted to promote the cause.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York serves as the Group's Secretariat. I should add that the Holy See (the sabbatical), which enjoys observer status with the United Nations, is the only European state that has officially recognized