

## Taiwan to Send First Official Delegation to China

By **SHERYL WUDUNN** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** APRIL 7, 1989

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In its boldest move yet to broaden contact with mainland China, Taiwan announced today that it would send its Finance Minister to Beijing next month as head of its first official delegation to visit the mainland since the Communist revolution 40 years ago.

Shirley Kuo, the 59-year-old M.I.T.-educated Finance Minister, is to take part in the annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank beginning May 4 in the Chinese capital.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement in Taipei that it would maintain its policy of no official contacts with the mainland, adding that the delegates would have no contact with the authorities in Beijing during their three-day visit.

While it had been expected that Taiwan would send a delegation to the annual meeting, the announcement that Miss Kuo would lead it came as a surprise on both sides of the Taiwan strait. Until now even low-level Government employees have been banned from visiting the mainland.

The announcement reflects the growing ties between China and Taiwan, as well as Taiwan's increasing assertiveness in its foreign relations. In the last few years, Taiwan has stopped calling the mainland authorities "Communist bandits" and has allowed its residents to visit relatives on the mainland.

But it is not clear that Taiwan is sending an olive branch to the mainland. Instead, Miss Kuo's visit seems a sign of Taiwan's diplomatic aggressiveness, a practical move to demonstrate that Taiwan is not willing to stand behind a rigid mainland policy at the risk of diminishing its role in the international community.

"It is a sign of a more flexible diplomacy not geared just to Beijing, but to the rest of the world," Chao Chien-min, a professor at the Institute of International Relations at National Chengchi University in Taiwan, said in a telephone interview today.

"The Government wants to present its case in an international forum; otherwise it will remain isolated," Mr. Chao added.

In another sign of this new flexibility, President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan indicated on a trip to Singapore last month that Taipei would seek to strengthen ties with countries that also have diplomatic relations with Beijing.

After their defeat by the Communists in China's civil war, the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949 and established a Government that still claims authority over all China.

Since then, the Government on Taiwan has maintained a policy of prohibiting any official contacts, compromises or negotiations with the mainland. It continues to claim to be the Republic of China, but now only 23 countries officially recognize it.

Press reports in Taiwan had anticipated that the Government would send a delegation to the annual meeting, but most had doubted that the group would include Government representatives. A 12-Member Delegation

In fact, the Government announced today that the 12-member delegation will include not only Miss Kuo but also officials from the Foreign Ministry and banks with close connections to the Government. Among them are Samuel C. Shieh, chairman of the Bank of Communications and Hsueh Yu-chih, Foreign Ministry consultant and former Ambassador to South Korea, news agency reports from Taipei said.

Last fall, a delegation of Taiwan scientists went to Beijing to take part in an international conference, but it was not an official delegation representing the Government.

This year, more than 20 Taiwan journalists came to Beijing to cover the recent annual session of the National People's Congress, China's legislature. In some cases, they were granted special access to senior Beijing officials.

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