

Slide 1



**Belize and Taiwan:
A Curious Friendship**

Dr. Mary Ann Meiners
Trevecca Nazarene University
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The slide features a dark blue background with a light blue rectangular area at the top. Inside this area are the national flags of Belize (left) and Taiwan (right). Below the flags, the title "Belize and Taiwan: A Curious Friendship" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath the title, the author's name and affiliation are listed in a smaller white font. A solid light blue rectangle is positioned to the right of the title and author information.

How did I decide to do this study? On my last trip to Belize I encountered several Taiwanese families at the Corozal Church of the Nazarene “English” and I learned that a business faculty member at the University of Belize had earned her graduate degree in Taiwan because “they give scholarships to Belizeans”. This made me curious to learn more about the relationship between these two small countries on the opposite sides of the world.

Belize - Taiwan Connection: Research Questions

1. What is the nature of the political-economic relationship between Belize and Taiwan?
2. How did this relationship develop?
3. What is the future of the relationship?

Background on Belize

- Small Central American country located on the Caribbean Sea south of Mexico
- Area is 22,966 sq. km.
- Population is 360,346.
- Per capita GDP is \$8,200.
- English is the official language.

Source: CIA World Fact Book



First, let me provide some background information about Belize and Taiwan. Belize is about 1/5 the size of TN in area with a population that is about 1/2 the population of Nashville. It is a middle income country with a small manufacturing sector and a large tourist industry. A large portion of the population is engaged in agriculture.

Political Background of Belize

- Mayan origins
- Former British Honduras with independence in 1981.
- Independence was delayed because of a territorial dispute with Guatemala
- Part of the British commonwealth with a parliamentary democracy and open market economy.
- Source: CIA World Fact Book



Background on Taiwan

- Small Asian island nation located off the coast of China
- Area is 35,980 sq. km.
- Population is 23,508,428.
- Per capita GDP is \$48,100.
- The official language is Mandarin.

Source: CIA World Fact Book



Taiwan has an area slight less than 1/3 the size of TN with a population about 3 and ½ times that of TN. The population of Taiwan is over 65 times larger than that of Belize. Taiwan is an more developed upper income country with a well developed and more technologically advanced manufacturing sector.

Political Background of Taiwan

- When the Communists took control of China after WWII, the Nationalist Chinese party fled to Taiwan and set up government there.
- The People's Republic of China claims Taiwan and refuses to acknowledge Taiwan as a sovereign nation.
- Multi-party democracy and open market economy

Source: CIA World Fact Book



When the Nationalist Chinese first came to Taiwan, they imposed martial law but over time they have developed into a well-functioning democracy and market capitalist economy.

Unique Political Situation of Republic of China, Taiwan

- Taiwan refers to itself as the Republic of China
- The People's Republic of China's "one China" policy limits the number of countries with whom Taiwan has diplomatic relations
- Taiwan also can not join any international organization whose members are sovereign nations.
- As a result the Republic of China (Taiwan) is not a member of the UN, the IMF, the WHO or most multilateral organizations. The one exception is the WTO.

China's insistence on a "one China" policy means that any country that had diplomatic relations with China can not also have diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

It also means that Taiwan which refers to itself as the Republic of China can not join any international organization whose members are sovereign nations.

China always blocks such attempts arguing that there is only one sovereign nation.

As a result the Republic of China (Taiwan) is not a member of the UN, the IMF, the WHO or most multilateral organizations. The one exception is the WTO that does not require that its members be sovereign nations.

Current Relationship Between Belize and Taiwan

- Belize is one of only 20 countries that maintains diplomatic relations with Taiwan.
- Because of its small size, only 13 countries including Taiwan maintain full embassies in Belize.
- For the 2017 school year, 26 university students from Belize received scholarships for graduate study in Taiwan.
- Taiwan provides economic and technical assistance to Belize.
- Belize joined in September with 14 other countries to request that Taiwan be included in the UN.



H. E. Ambassador
Diane C. Haylock,
Ambassador of Belize
to the Republic of
China

Belize and Taiwan are not top trading partners. But Taiwan does provide economic and technical assistance for a variety of projects in Belize from moving government forms online to controlling disease in citrus groves. Most projects are in the range of US\$1-5 million. In return, Belize supports Taiwan diplomatically in international forums.

Origins of the Belize-Taiwan Relationship

- After obtaining independence, Belize established diplomatic relations with China in 1987.
- In 1989, Belize shifted to a “two-China” policy and established full diplomatic relations with Taiwan.
- “The switch in relations was apparently motivated by the failure of China to follow through on Belize’s expectation of economic assistance, which Taiwan seemed eager to supply.”
- But recognition also coincided with a change in political parties in Belize and the new party had some informal, personal connections with Taiwan.

“Check book” diplomacy

The Future of the Belize-Taiwan Relationship

- Taiwan has been losing diplomatic allies to China.
- This summer Panama severed ties with Taiwan in order to pursue diplomatic relations with China.
- Taiwan responded by waving visa restrictions for several Central American allies including Belize.
- For now Belize seems content with the current situation.

Because Belize is such a small country, it does not seem to be attracting a lot of attention from China so for now Belize seems content to continue its current relations with Taiwan.

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