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1. Since many people seem to get the different strains of reaction in Taiwan mixed up, I thought I'd make a thread clearing things up. One thing that both supporters and detractors of China have in common is when they speak on Taiwan, they tend to get many facts wrong.

2. One of the things I've seen pro-China people do is mixing up the positions of the old-school KMT (think Chiang Kai-shek) with the current separatists. Little do they know that until the 1980s, separatism was illegal.

3. They'll say things like "haha, Taiwan thinks it's the REAL China." This is not entirely accurate for many reasons. For one, nobody seriously claims that the "Republic of China" is the sole legitimate government of all of China anymore.

4. Secondly, per the "ROC" constitution itself, Taiwan is but a province of the "ROC." The "ROC" and Taiwan are not one and the same, though there are certainly overlaps. Hardline separatists want to abolish the "ROC" and establish a "Republic of Taiwan."

5. Meanwhile, the DPP, though branding itself as the pro-independence party, is in reality a status-quo party (like the KMT is today). What it does nowadays is blur the line between the "ROC" and Taiwan, and say that Taiwan is already an independent country called the "ROC."

6. To the old-school KMT, the "ROC" means China in its entirety, whereas to the DPP, the "ROC" is Taiwan, though they really only talk about the "ROC" in more formal and political settings. To hardline separatists, both the PRC and the "ROC" are China, and are both therefore bad.

7. So why is there the conception that "Taiwan claims to be the real China?" Well, this is the result of the Civil War. Unlike the DPRK & the southern regime, which were established just one month apart, the Republic of China was the predecessor to the People's Republic of China.

8. What Mao and Chiang had in common was that they viewed the Chinese Civil War as just that - a civil war, not a war between two countries, but a war between two entities that sought to represent the country in its entirety.

9. When the "ROC's" central government was relocated to Taipei, Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT did not establish a new country. The way they saw it was that Taiwan, Penghu, Jinmen, and Mazu was the remaining territory of China that had not "fallen" to communists yet.

10. Now here is where international politics come in. Since the 1940s, the US has conspired to create a "Two China" or "One China and one Taiwan" situation. THIS IS WHY it was so important to both the CPC and the KMT that the regime on Taiwan did not change its constitutional map

11. The CPC didn't care that the "ROC" map contained Tuva and outer Mongolia. What that map represents was the point of unity between Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek - that their battle was one of a domestic, and not international, character.

12. This is why it's so annoying when westerners bring up the "ROC" map to poke fun at Taiwanese reactionaries, including separatists, because it shows that they don't know what they're talking about. The Taipei regime hasn't actively sought to recapture the mainland for decades

13. Even Chiang Kai-shek knew it was a near impossibility, and although slogans of "liberating the mainland" continued even after his death until the 1980s, nobody took them seriously.

14. Now, how did the separatist movement form? For the full story, I highly recommend parts 3, 4, 5 of my Taiwan series on @CarlZha's @SteelSilkn. Below is a tl;dr that's still rather lengthy.

15. Taiwan was returned to China in 1945 following Japan's defeat in WWII. The Japanese returned to Japan, and the KMT sent its government officials to handle Taiwanese affairs and reincorporate it with the rest of China.

16. Han Chinese have been in Taiwan for 400 years, and Han Chinese have been the majority ethnicity in Taiwan long before there even was a KMT or an "ROC," but the majority of the Han Chinese in Taiwan hailed from southern Fujian on the Chinese mainland.

17. Now, all of the sudden, you have mainland Chinese people not just from that area, but from all over China, speaking all sorts of dialects that are foreign to the Han Chinese on Taiwan, whose native language is Hokkien.

18. Furthermore, Taiwanese people were colonized by Japan for 50 years, one can expect some cultural differences from this fact alone, on top of regional differences stated above.

19. For the rest of the thread, I will refer to the two groups of people as benshengren (■■■), meaning "people of this province" - those whose families were already in Taiwan prior to 1945,

20. and waishengren (■■■), meaning "extraprovincial people," meaning new arrivals from the mainland (from 1945 until the mid-1950s) and their descendants. Remember this.

21. Since China was in the middle of a Civil War, the KMT didn't have time to seriously govern Taiwan, but it did tax the Taiwanese people in order to support the war, and the Taiwanese people felt the effects of war on the mainland, namely inflation

22. Mutual misunderstandings and the mishandling of contradictions by the KMT led to the 228 Incident in 1947. As a result, the KMT declared martial law in Taiwan, which did not end until 1987. All forms of opposition against the KMT were handled heavy-handedly.

23. At the time, the it was mainly communists who were opposed to the KMT, and they tended to view the government in Beijing favorably. Keep in mind that separatism wasn't really a thing until much later. Chiang Kai-shek cracked down on them hard.

24. Many were executed, countless were jailed, and the rest stopped organizing. However, contradictions between benshengren and waishengren were still brewing as a result of the KMT's policies.

25. For one, since the "ROC" only had control over 3/1000 of its claimed territories, the KMT declared that elections for representatives in the "National Assembly" were to be suspended until China is reunified. Representatives were last elected in the 1940s.

26. Needless to say, much of the higher level of the government was dominated by waishengren, and, until the 1990s, the "President" was elected by said assembly, which hadn't been elected since the late 1940s, hence benshengren felt like they were ruled over by outsiders.

27. The vast majority of waishengren in Taiwan, though weren't bourgeois, but were rather soldiers who reluctantly followed Chiang to Taiwan. Most soldiers joined the National Army to escape poverty. Many were kidnapped into serving, especially during the latter years of the war

28. However, because the ruling elite was waishengren, many benshengren viewed waishengren in general as their oppressors, though the KMT certainly didn't care if someone who challenged its power was a benshengren or waishegren.

29. Since benshengren felt oppressed by waishengren, and average Joe waishengren felt hated by the benshengren, the KMT was able to tell the waishengren that it was looking out for them.

30. Another thing was the KMT didn't want to piss off the waishengren too much, since many didn't even want to be in Taiwan in the first place. In fact, many were told they'd only be in Taiwan for a few years, and hence many families were separated by the war.

31. How were the benshengren kept in check, then? For the longest time, the KMT kept its support in Taiwan by making good with the bourgeois benshengren as well as the landed elite in the countryside, though it did carry out land reform.

32. It also kept workers (both bensheng and waisheng) in check via rubber stamp unions that were controlled by the KMT. What it didn't account for, though, was the rise of a middle class. When that happened, the KMT didn't really know how to deal with it.

33. Whereas prior opposition to the KMT was communist, the new petty-bourgeois opposition to it was quite liberal, being against the KMT for its lack of democracy, but also not really challenging its anti-communist propaganda.

34. They looked to bourgeois democracies like the US for inspiration, and began calling for democracy in the abstract.

35. This eventually led to the formation of the Dangwai Movement (Dangwai ■■ means "outside of the party). Until the 1980s, the only political party that was legal in Taiwan was the KMT, but people could run for legislator as independents.

36. Dangwai was therefore a coalition of the independents. Long story short, there was quite a long struggle for bourgeois democracy in Taiwan, and the Dangwai Movement eventually formed into the Democratic Progressive Party.

37. While all of this was happening, pro-independence groups were active in places like the US and Japan. Since separatism was banned, the more well-known separatists faced prison sentences if they returned to Taiwan.

38. Interestingly, though, and not surprising, is that those who gained leadership positions in the DPP were opportunists. Look up the Kaohsiung Incident. Basically all of the lawyers who represented the defendants became prominent members of the DPP

39. By then, it was damage control time for the KMT. Chiang Ching-kuo ended Martial Law, and the DPP became a legal party. Letting Taiwan become a bourgeois democracy at that point was the best way of maintaining the stability of bourgeois rule in Taiwan

40. Now that the DPP was a bourgeois party, it needed to differentiate itself from the KMT and appeal to the masses for votes. But how? The KMT, too, was also a bourgeois party, and now that the KMT's one-party rule had ended, how are the two different?

41. Hence, this is where vulgar and reactionary identity politics come in. Until the 1990s, most people in Taiwan viewed themselves as Chinese. Being both Chinese and Taiwanese was not seen as a self-contradiction the way it is now by some separatists.

42. To garner support, the DPP played itself up as the party for benshengren. Waishengren bad! KMT = waisheng party (though during Chiang Ching-kuo's leadership, he actively got benshengren, such as his successor Lee Teng-hui, involved in higher levels of government.)

43. Then in the 1990s, other cultural shifts were happening. The logical conclusion of the Chinese nationalism that was instilled in Taiwanese people up until then would've meant viewing the Chinese mainland positively as it got more prosperous.

44. Thus, I believe Lee Teng-hui began his shift towards the end of his leadership in the 1990s by promoting a new Taiwanese identity in order to maintain the status-quo of Taiwan's relationship with the US.

45. If the Taiwanese people got closer with the mainland, it would've been bad for the US and those who benefit from Taiwan's status as a client state. When the first DPP leader replaced Lee in 2000, this sort of identity shift was promoted at a much faster rate

46. KMT bad, and the KMT is a party for waishengren, and waishengren come from the Chinese mainland, as does the CPC. Therefore all of the Chinese mainland bad! Chinese mainland is Chinese, therefore China bad! But waishengren are Taiwanese now if they're "good."

47. At the same time, the US didn't want to provoke Beijing too much, so it always made sure that Taiwan's leadership would never formally declare independence. This is why the "ROC" is so useful. It mean China when convenient, and it means Taiwan when people want it to.

48. It's become a protective umbrella of sorts for the reactionary leadership.

49. Anyways, this thread is getting kind of long, so I'll start ending it, but believe me when I say that even THIS is a very gross oversimplification of the issue. This is why I highly recommend my series on @CarlZha's Silk and Steel Podcast for more details.

50. He and I also did an episode on @DecolonizedBP which can be viewed here: https://t.co/IWAOLsUD2q - it's basically a very abridged version of our series on @SteelSilkn