

## The Development of Public Opinion during “The Formosa Arrest” —With an Analysis of the Main-stream Print Media

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### ABSTRACT

In January 1979, the United States severed its official relationship with ROC, causing Taiwan to face the most serious diplomatic challenges since losing its UN seat to the PRC in 1971. Besides, a polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) toxication incident and an energy crisis occurred in the same year. As a consequence, a pessimistic atmosphere spread all over the whole island-nation. Under such an “impacted society,” ROC citizens began to search for causes or engage in activities so as to express their displeasure with the ruling party.

While the Formosa Incident burst out on December 10, 1979, the Taiwanese people found an outlet to unleash their anger and tension. But since the KMT-controlled media continued to dominate public opinion, any anti-government expressions or critical views were scrutinized as “subversive.” Hence, the people’s sympathetic attitudes toward the “Formosa Incident” resulted in a renewed reign of terror, which was dubbed as the “Formosa Sacrificial Rites”. Under the circumstances, not only the high official but everyone else could become an “accomplice” during the time of the totalitarian rule. The paper strives to reiterate the gloomy past, reconstruct the “general will” of the Taiwanese people, and analyze the development of public opinion during the 1979 “Formosa Arrest”.

**Keywords:** Formosa Incident, Formosa Arrest, public opinion, Danwai, Kaohsiung Incident