Taiwan’s China Policy and Cross-Strait Relations

Chen-yuan Tung
Vice Chairman of Mainland Affairs Council
Republic of China (Taiwan)

Professor Diamond, distinguished scholars and guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honor to be invited to attend today’s special seminar on Taiwan’s democracy. We are so proud of and cherish our achievement of democratization in Taiwan in the last two decades. We are also very appreciative of your support in promoting democracy in Taiwan and Taiwan will stand with all democracies in the right side of the history to further promote democracy in the world. Particularly, Taiwan is an experimental laboratory for democracy in the greater Chinese community, including Hong Kong, Macau, China, and Singapore. Taiwan will continue to play a very important role of a beacon as catalyst and demonstration to trigger democratization in the greater Chinese community.

Nevertheless, the biggest challenge democratic Taiwan faces to preserve and consolidate its own democracy is authoritarian China’s military threat, which also seriously undermines the foundation of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific area. Today I would like to talk about Taiwan’s Policy toward China and relations between Taiwan and China. I would like to share with you how Taiwan manages its relations with China, what the current status of cross-Strait relations is, and what the prospects of cross-Strait relations would be in the future.

I. Taiwan’s China Policy
Three goals
1. Goodwill reconciliation
2. Active cooperation
3. Permanent peace

Four principles
1. Sovereignty
2. Democracy
3. Peace
4. Reciprocity

1. Sovereignty

The Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan is an independent country; its sovereignty belongs to 23 million people of Taiwan; without the consent of 23 million people of Taiwan, the status quo of sovereignty can not be changed.

2. Democracy

The Republic of China and the People’s Republic of China – or Taiwan and China – can seek to establish relations in any form whatsoever. We would not exclude any possibility, so long as there is the consent of the 23 million people of Taiwan.

3. Peace

Four nos
- Not declare independence
- Not change the national title
- Not push forth the inclusion of the so-called “state-to-state” description in the Constitution
- Not promote a referendum to change the status quo in regard to the question of independence or unification

Integration theory
- The integration of bilateral economies, trade, and culture across the Taiwan Strait should be a starting point for gradually building faith and confidence in each other.
This could be the basis for a new framework of permanent peace and political integration.

- A framework of interaction for peace and stability
  - One principle – peace
    - No use of force
    - No unilateral change to the status quo in the Taiwan Strait area
  - Four major issue areas
    - Establishment of negotiation mechanism
    - Exchanges based on equality and reciprocity
    - Establishment of political relationship
    - Prevention of military conflicts

4. Reciprocity

Taiwan and China should interact and establish cross-Strait relations based upon equal footing and reciprocity.

II. China’s Taiwan Policy

China’s Long-term goal

- Not peaceful unification, but creeping annexation of ROC (Taiwan), submissive surrender of Taiwan to China
- Framework: one country, two systems (Taiwan government as a local government)

Tactics: two approaches

Hard-pronged approach

- Military threat
  - Double-digit growth rates of military budget for 18 years.
  - Deploy more than 1,000 missiles targeting Taiwan, and increase 100-125 missiles per year.
  - Taiwan is China’s excuse and scapegoat for its military expansion.
  - China has more than 60 modern submarines while only 12-16 submarines can effectively blockade the Taiwan Strait.
China also procured long range bombers and mid-air refuelers from Russia.

Diplomatic suppression
- Sabotage Taiwan’s relations with diplomatic allies.
- Take away Taiwan’s diplomatic allies (one for each year since 2000).
- Intervene in Taiwan’s interaction with non-diplomatic allies.
- Obstruct Taiwan’s participation in the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international organizations and activities.
- China downgrade Taiwan’s status in the INGOs. For instance, China changes Taiwan’s participation titles in nine INGOs in 2006.
- Bar Taiwan from joining regional integration agreements.

Soft-pronged approach

- Advocate bilateral economic exchanges and cooperation to advance China’s economic development.
- Adopt economic inducements against Taiwan
  - Provide unilateral preferential treatments and benefits to Taiwan businesspeople and different groups.
  - Utilize the cooperation of Taiwan’s opposition parties to pressure Taiwan’s political concession.

III. Current Status of Cross-Strait Relations

- The crux of the cross-Strait deadlock: one-China principle

- Between 2002 and 2005, negotiations over the Lunar New Year charter flights serve as a very good precedent upon which both sides developed a feasible negotiation model on bilateral economic and functional issues.

- The major characteristics of the new negotiation model:
  - Setting aside of disputes, no setting of preconditions;
  - Mutual respect, seeking truth from facts;
  - Government leadership, private sector assistance.

- Based upon this model, Taiwan has reached agreements with China on two arrangements of lunar new year charter flight in 2005-2006 and four special charter flight arrangements, including special cargo charter flight arrangement, special holiday charter flight arrangement, special emergent medical charter
flight arrangement, and special humanitarian charter flight arrangement.

- Currently, Taiwan and China are negotiating two issues (tourists, cargo and passenger charter flights). Nevertheless, China utilizes the negotiation as political leverage and united front tactics to pressure Taiwan to make political concessions to China. We call on China not to impose political framework on the negotiation and we hope both sides reach agreements as soon as possible.

IV. Prospects of Cross-Strait Relations

- Overall assessment of current cross-Strait relations:
  - Military confrontation
  - Diplomatic conflict
  - Political deadlock
  - Economic and social engagement

- Since May 2004, Taiwan has been advocating negotiation with China on 18 economic and functional issues.

- Opportunities: dialogues on economic/functional issues and incremental agreements would gradually pave the way for the establishment of a framework of interaction for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

- Risks: China’s rapid military expansion, increasing military imbalance between Taiwan and China, and assertive stance on Taiwan might cause accidental military conflicts.

- Solution: urge China to be a responsible stakeholder:
  - Renounce the use of force against Taiwan
  - Stop military threats toward Taiwan
  - Give up diplomatic suppression against Taiwan
  - Negotiate with Taiwan to establish a framework of stability and peace

I will stop here. Look forward to questions, comments or remarks from you regarding my presentation. I would also like to wish everyone here the fullest of success. Thank you very much for your attention!!