

Squaring the Circle: Adhering to Principle, Embracing Ambiguity

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Although the ruling Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT) is only scheduled to name its presidential candidate in mid-June, the campaign has been well under way since late spring. While the KMT has sought to keep public attention focused on cross-Strait issues, opposition candidate Tsai Ing-wen has sought to neutralize the issue by declaring that she would maintain the “status quo of peace and stability” while at the same time deflecting attention from it by arguing that there are more important domestic issues at stake. Still, Tsai dropped some intriguing if ambiguous hints of flexibility on cross-Strait policy during her Washington visit in early June.

Though largely following lessons learned in the past about the potential backlash from interfering in Taiwan elections, Beijing has continued to emphasize that adherence to a “one China” approach is essential to keeping cross-Strait relations on an even keel. Nonetheless, some nuance has also been discernible in the Mainland’s statements.

Tsai is Nominated by DPP, Seeks to Project an Image of Unity and Responsibility

In mid-April, the DPP formally nominated its chairperson, Dr. Tsai Ing-wen, as the party’s candidate in the January 2016 presidential contest, automatically placing her in an advantageous position due to the shift in political fortunes in the November 2014 local elections.¹

In accepting the nomination, Tsai attacked the KMT for its failed leadership on domestic issues such as wealth distribution, unemployment, and Taiwan’s economic governance structure. But articulating an effective cross-Strait policy has proved to be more challenging.

As we discuss in more detail below, Beijing has insisted on adherence to the “political foundation” of “one China” if relations are to prosper. Unwilling to directly endorse this position, Tsai has tried to balance the necessity of maintaining workable relations with Beijing against a need to remain true to the DPP’s position on Taiwan’s sovereign, independent status (unrelated to the Mainland). In doing so, she has attempted in various ways to persuade all audiences that she can successfully straddle these requirements.

Speaking in early April to the DPP’s China Affairs Committee, Tsai equated “maintenance of the status quo” with “preserving peace in the Taiwan Strait and continuing the current stable development of cross-Strait relations”

(維繫台海和平及持續兩岸關係穩定發展).² In accepting the party's nomination several days later, she repeated this mantra but, reflecting both her emphasis on democracy and the need to be true to DPP doctrine, she added that "no matter which party governs in the future, cross-Strait relations must always be in accordance with the will of the people" (無論是哪一黨執政, 兩岸關係都必須以人民的意志為依歸).³

As we have seen, this has proven inadequate to stem all criticism from within the party. Editorial commentary from normally supportive media has pointedly observed that DPP supporters have been quick to criticize candidates who did not uphold certain values and ideals.⁴ Some "dark Green" party members, such as former Vice President Annette Lu Hsiu-lien, have called on Tsai to "clarify" what the "status quo" is, reminding her of the party's 2007 Normal Nation Resolution as well as the 1991 Taiwan Independence Clause and the 1999 Resolution on Taiwan's Future, all of which are grounded in the fundamental principle that Taiwan is a sovereign, independent country separate from the PRC.⁵

Prominent Taiwan independence advocate Koo Kuan-min, having initially said he supported Tsai, distanced himself from her after her statements. As Koo put it, "Maintaining the status quo would be a fatal wound to the nation. It is the policy that would bring the least trouble. However, it is also the most meaningless one."⁶

Pressuring her from another perspective, others in the party argued that while the DPP need not bow to Beijing's demands to openly embrace "one China," if it did not explicitly abandon the goal of formal independence, it would destabilize cross-Strait relations⁷ and bring them to a "screeching standstill."⁸

In response, Tsai has defended her position as one designed to maintain transparency in talks with the Mainland, pay attention to public participation, and emphasize fairness in cross-Strait relations,⁹ asserting that this is "not inconsistent with" the 1999 Resolution on Taiwan's Future."¹⁰

That being said, Tsai took matters further in a public speech in Washington in early June.¹¹ First, she repeated language used before in committing herself to "a consistent, predictable and sustainable relationship with China."

But then, in language that, while ambiguous regarding the question of "one China," was clearly designed to resonate in Beijing, Tsai expanded on what maintaining the status quo would involve.

If elected President, I will push for the peaceful and stable development of cross-Strait relations in accordance with the will of the Taiwanese people and the existing ROC constitutional order.¹²

In answer to a question, she amplified the definition of the "existing ROC constitutional order," saying that it includes "the provisions of the constitution, subsequent amendments, interpretations, court decisions, and practices by the government and

different sectors of the population. Anything that is related to the constitution, the interpretation, and practices are part of this constitutional order.”¹³

This language seemed intended to convey the message that while Tsai would not embrace the “political foundation” of “one China,” as Beijing insists, she would not act in a manner inconsistent with it.

Along the same lines, although she was unwilling to endorse or even recognize the existence of the “1992 Consensus,” she sought to convey similar consistency regarding the agreements reached that year.

The two sides of the Taiwan Strait should treasure and secure the accumulated outcomes of more than twenty years of negotiations and exchanges. These accumulated outcomes will serve as the firm basis of my efforts to further the peaceful and stable development of cross-Strait relations.¹⁴

Tsai said that as president she would follow not only DPP positions but the will of all the people, and would ensure that the “spirit of cooperation” that has underpinned improved relations would continue.

The president elected by the people of Taiwan represents all the people of Taiwan in conducting external affairs. Therefore the conduct of cross-strait policy must transcend the position of a political party and incorporate different views. A leader must take into account public consensus when making decisions. . . .

Through principled engagements, joint initiatives and dialogue, I will ensure that the spirit of cooperation that has guided the betterment of China-Taiwan relations continues.

Although initial negative responses to Tsai’s speech both by some “dark Green” elements within the DPP as well as by Beijing have been registered,¹⁵ more meaningful reactions should become clearer over time. Neither of those audiences was going to like what she said. But at least most people in the DPP camp will likely recognize the importance of her statements to Tsai’s election chances, and the leadership in Beijing may see in them a way out of a potential problem that, in light of all the Mainland’s other challenges, it doesn’t need at this time.

In any case, at the same time the DPP has been struggling with articulating its own views in a way that could bridge various gaps, it has strongly criticized KMT Chairman Eric Chu’s continued advocacy of the 1992 Consensus, including his position in a May 4 meeting with Xi Jinping (discussed below). Tsai expressed alarm regarding what she called Chu’s desire to serve as the “custodian” of the 1992 Consensus legacy and to maintain a KMT monopoly on cross-Strait relations. Moreover, in a formal party statement, DPP Chinese Affairs Director Chao Tien-lin severely criticized the KMT

chairman for saying that “both sides of the Strait are part of one China” (兩岸同屬一中).¹⁶ This, Chao said, went beyond Ma’s “one China, respective interpretations” position, making even greater concessions than Ma with regard to Taiwan’s sovereignty, and further limiting Taiwan’s presence on the international stage.¹⁷

The DPP further charged that Chu’s effort to drive cross-Strait relations through KMT-CCP channels was an attempt to avoid accountability to the legislature. Not only did the party condemn such an effort, but it foreswore following a similar pattern: “For a long time, the KMT has made cross-Strait relations something between the KMT and the CCP, something that is within the privileged class, and something that is dealt with secretly. The DPP will not follow it and Taiwanese will not accept it.”¹⁸

Obviously this does not mean the DPP is giving up on working through some direct channel¹⁹ to come up with a formula acceptable on both sides of the Strait for managing relations. Indeed, the language Tsai used at CSIS may be a reflection of that effort. In any event, we have not reached the end of that story. As Tsai put it in her China Affairs Committee speech, “The DPP will begin dialogues with the Mainland in an active and pragmatic manner, and seek solutions that are acceptable to both sides of the Strait. The DPP will also deal with core issues in cross-Strait relations in a gradual manner and demonstrate our sincerity and resolution to deal with all issues.”²⁰

As part of the effort to facilitate such a relationship, it is evident that Tsai Ing-wen, though not everyone in the DPP, has decided to avoid language that would trigger rejection from Beijing. For example, recently she has stopped referring to Taiwan’s “sovereignty” (主權) separate from “China.” In her speech at the China Affairs Committee meeting, although she referred to “popular sovereignty” as manifest in democracy, when talking of Taiwan’s future Tsai used different terms, speaking of safeguarding “future autonomy” (未來自主性), that is, the “right to choose,” and of preserving the greatest possible space and choice for the next generation (為下一代留住最多的空間和選擇).²¹

Obviously this does not mean the DPP is compromising its principled stand. Despite Tsai’s avoidance of it, the term “sovereignty” was used in the party’s criticism of Chu Li-luan’s trip to China. It was used again in the statement issued by the DPP Central Standing Committee following its meeting in early May, in which the party committed itself to both the maintenance of peace and stability in the Strait as well as to the protection of Taiwan’s sovereignty and the preservation of the democratic values and future autonomy.²² In commenting specifically on the meeting between the heads of the Mainland Affairs Council and Taiwan Affairs Office scheduled for late May (discussed further below), the DPP also cited sovereignty, saying that any exchange with the Mainland must be based on the principles of “sovereignty, reciprocity, and democracy” (主權, 對等, 民主).²³

As noted earlier, Tsai has not focused exclusively on cross-Strait issues. Rather, she has suggested that much more attention should be paid to Taiwan’s many domestic issues. “We all know that playing the cross-Strait card cannot solve all the problems in Taiwan;

we need to shift our attention back to domestic economic and social issues that truly concern us” and the “real challenges” that people face.²⁴ She criticized President Ma Ying-jeou for “only talking about cross-Straits relations” in his mid-May interview with the *Wall Street Journal*. Instead, she said, as the leader of a nation he should reprioritize his agenda and focus on issues such as the domestic economy, income distribution, and food safety.²⁵ Indeed, seemingly adopting a somewhat naïve posture (hard to do for someone as sophisticated as Tsai), she went as far as to say that she didn’t understand why the “1992 Consensus” had become such a hot topic in the wake of Chu’s China trip.²⁶

Mr. Chu Goes to Beijing

After much dodging and weaving about whether he would meet with PRC leader Xi Jinping (and presumably following a lot of behind-the-scenes negotiation), KMT Chairman (and New Taipei Mayor) Chu Li-luan finally made known that he would go to the KMT-CCP forum (formally known as the Cross-Straits Trade and Cultural Forum) in Shanghai on May 3 and meet with Xi in Beijing on May 4.

Speaking at the forum, Chu praised the “Joint Vision for Cross-Straits Peaceful Development” laid down by then KMT Chairman Lien Chan and CCP Chairman Hu Jintao in 2005, stressing that the annual forums held since then had propelled the healthy development of cross-Straits relations. Chu called for continuing to push forward peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, deepening exchanges and sharing the fruits of those relations widely, vowing that the KMT would continue to conduct relations on the basis of the “1992 Consensus.”²⁷

Chu’s counterpart at the forum, Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and fourth-ranking member of the CCP Politburo Standing Committee, also made a speech. Foreshadowing a point Xi would make to Chu the next day, Yu observed that, after 10 years of development, “cross-Straits relations are now standing at a new historical starting point” (两岸关系站在了新的历史起点上). As if to ensure that no one missed his meaning, he immediately continued by stating that what he called obstructionist and destructionist Taiwan independence splittist forces were still the biggest threat to peace and stability across the Strait. The key to moving ahead with peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, Yu said, was to continue to adhere to the political foundation of the “1992 Consensus” and opposition to “Taiwan independence.”²⁸

All of this, of course, was but a prelude to the important business at hand: Chu’s meeting with Xi Jinping the next day. That meeting was not an occasion to strike deals. Rather it allowed both party leaders to lay out the basics of their positions on cross-Straits relations going forward. Whether Xi assumed Chu would, despite his protestations to the contrary, allow himself to become the KMT candidate for president—and possibly even win—seemed less important than Xi’s determination to reiterate and to some extent refine positions he had outlined in earlier statements. The meeting provided the opportunity for Chu to outline the principles that would guide him as he sought to bring the KMT back from the November defeat and, if not in 2016, then in the future take back the reins of

leadership in Taiwan and shape its cross-Strait policies in ways that would be acceptable to the PRC while, crucially, meeting the demands of the Taiwan public.

In his opening remarks, Chu began with a reference to the fact that in 1992, through great efforts of those in an older generation on each side, “both parties reached agreement on the 1992 Consensus that the two sides of the Strait belong to one China, although there were some differences regarding the content and definition” (雙方達成了兩岸同屬一中, 但內涵、定義有所不同的九二共識).²⁹ Making clear the KMT’s continuing adherence to that Consensus, Chu went on to note that, after 2005, the KMT incorporated it into the party charter and that over the past 10 years the KMT and the CCP had achieved a great deal, transforming confrontation and turmoil into reconciliation and peaceful development. At the same time, “on the basis of the 1992 Consensus” (在九二共識的基礎之上), Chu said he hoped that Taiwan would have greater opportunities to expand its international space and to participate in international activities and organizations. He specifically expressed the hope that Taiwan could cooperate in regional economic activities including participation in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Mainland’s “one belt, one road” programs, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Finally, Chu held out a vision of deepening of the 1992 Consensus and promoting cooperation between future generations, with the two sides working together on issues such as regional peace, environmental protection, and economic cooperation.

During a post-meeting press conference, Chu said that the key point for the two sides was to shelve disputes and jointly push for peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. At the same time, he stressed, it was important to respect criticism and different opinions, and noted that he had explained to Xi the different opinions on Taiwan and their historical background.³⁰

In reporting Xi Jinping’s extended remarks, China’s official Xinhua news agency, as well as CCTV, led with the observation that Xi emphasized that “cross-Strait relations are at an important new juncture” (兩岸關係處於新的重要節點上).³¹ He said the past ten years had shown that it was necessary to stick to the course of peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, and he put forth a five-point proposal to facilitate continued progress. The first point was that adherence to the 1992 Consensus and opposition to Taiwan independence constituted the political foundation, “the core of which is to recognize that the Mainland and Taiwan both belong to one China” (其核心是認同大陸和台灣同屬一個中國).

As he had in his meeting with various Taiwan-related groups attending the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing in March and with a pro-unification delegation from Taiwan in September 2014,³² Xi laid special emphasis on this argument. As he put it, “We have always taken adhering to the 1992 Consensus as the foundation³³ for our contacts with Taiwan authorities and all Taiwan political parties.”

And as he had done on those two previous occasions, Xi spoke of deepening the “integration of the interests” (利益融合) of both sides of the Strait and of the need to “take into full consideration” (充分考慮) the feelings of societies on both sides and to make diligent efforts to expand the scope of benefits for people on both sides and their sense of

making achievements. The Mainland was willing to share development opportunities with Taiwan compatriots “first” (首先) and “give priority” (优先) to opening up to Taiwan and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of Taiwan firms investing on the Mainland.

Here Xi added a point on Taiwan’s desire for participation in regional economic activities.

The two sides of the Strait can strengthen their study of the issue, discuss it in a pragmatic manner, and make proper arrangements as long as they do not run counter to the “one China” principle. The Taiwan side has expressed its desire to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and we welcome that.

Xi did two other things of particular note in this presentation. First, in arguing about the essential nature of “heart-to-heart communication” (心灵沟通) and greater mutual understanding, he echoed Chu Li-luan’s position that the two sides need to “respect differences” (尊重差异) (and not merely set them aside).

And second, although he did not imply a timeframe by using the “generation-to-generation” reference he had with former Vice President Siew Wan-chang (Vincent Siew) in Bali in 2013,³⁴ Xi returned to the theme he had struck over the previous two years on the need to build mutual political trust and have the courage to face up to long-standing political differences and difficult problems between the two sides and to actively explore ways to resolve them.

Nuances?

In looking at these various statements, it seems to this analyst that there are nuances in the PRC position that are worth exploring. Perhaps reflecting the internal consideration being given to how to react to a DPP victory discussed in our last essay,³⁵ one could argue that there is some difference implied between the consequences of a successful DPP that simply does not endorse the “political foundation” as identified by the Mainland versus the consequences of a DPP that engages in outspoken rejection of the elements of that foundation. In light of Tsai’s latest statements about acting in accordance with the “existing ROC constitutional order” and using the “accumulated outcomes” of the past more than 20 years as the “firm basis” for her efforts to promote peaceful and stable development of cross-Strait relations, that nuanced difference might eventually be more important than ever.

On various occasions, Xi and others have repeatedly stated that adhering to the “1992 Consensus” and opposing “Taiwan independence” constitute a prerequisite for the Communist Party to engage with Taiwan authorities and political parties. Conversely, as he put it in his statement to Taiwan-related attendees at the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in March, failure to accept that “foundation” and to recognize the “one China” core of the “1992 Consensus” would undermine mutual trust and lead back to the “old path of turbulence” (动荡不安的老路).³⁶ On that occasions Xi also added a

sentence not found in the transcript of his formal remarks as reported in PRC print media: “It is frequently said that ‘if the foundation is not sturdy, the earth will move and the mountains will shake’” (常說「基礎不牢，地動山搖」).³⁷ This was widely taken in Taiwan as a threat.

In his meeting with pro-unification Taiwan activists last September, Xi laid out the logic for this position.

Containing “Taiwan independence” splittist activity is the necessary requirement to ensure peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. There was a time a number of years ago when “Taiwan independence” splittist forces took advantage of being in power to pursue their splittist line, damaging national sovereignty and territorial integrity, wrecking peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, provoking cross-Strait confrontation and anxiety, and inflicting grave harm on the people on both sides of the Strait, especially Taiwan people.

Compatriots on both sides of the Strait remember this as if it just happened and welcome the new situation in which they can safeguard peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

What requires vigilance is that “Taiwan independence” splittist forces have by no means given up and are still doing their utmost to stir up cross-Strait hostility and confrontation and to hinder cross-Strait exchanges and cooperation, and are still the greatest real threat to peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.³⁸

That said, when citing what would trigger not just stasis in relations but actual retrogression, Beijing has often seemed to refer to active rejection of the elements of the foundation and active advocacy of independence positions rather than simply not embracing “one China.”

Thus, for example, in responding to Tsai Ing-wen’s April 9 DPP China Affairs Committee statement about maintaining the cross-Strait status quo of peace and stability, the TAO said that *if one persisted in the “‘Taiwan independence’ splittist position of ‘one country on each side of the Strait’”* it was bound to destroy the political foundation of the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and bring about “turbulence” (动荡不安) in cross-Strait relations, and on this point there were already historical lessons.³⁹ The day before, responding to a question about whether the Mainland visit of the DPP’s China Affairs Department head as part of a SEF delegation would lead to DPP-CCP exchanges, the TAO spokesman said such exchanges would be impossible *if the DPP still advocated “Taiwan independence.”*⁴⁰

Xi made a similar statement, though obviously at a much more authoritative level, in his meeting with Chu Li-luan on May 4.

*To deny the 1992 Consensus, challenge the legal basis of both sides of the Taiwan Strait belonging to one China, or engage in “one country on each side of the Strait” or “one China, one Taiwan” would undermine the fundamental interests of the nation, the country and the people, and shake the cornerstone of the development of cross-Strait relations, and there would be no possibility of peace and no possibility of development.*⁴¹

Moreover, in commenting on Tsai Ing-wen’s then-impending visit to the United States, the TAO expressed opposition to “any person in any form *carrying out ‘Taiwan independence’ splittist activities* internationally.”⁴²

Having said that, while the focus of many statements has been on the consequences of actions to refute “one China,” it still must be noted that Xi’s splitting of the phrase “peaceful development” on an earlier occasion to focus on “peace” separately—stating that “peace is precious, peace requires safeguarding” (和平是寶貴的，和平需要維護)⁴³—and then going on two months later with Chu Li-luan to talk about the impossibility of peace if the cornerstone of relations were undermined, elicited worried questions from observers in Taiwan about whether Xi was raising the specter of some kind of “non-peaceful” approach in response to merely not embracing “one China.”

Moreover, when speaking “on background” to the Mainland press, an unidentified senior TAO official charged that, not only did the DPP do its best to push for de jure independence when it was in power under Chen Shui-bian (2000–2008), but since 2008 the DPP had done its best to sabotage the process every time cross-Strait relations were making progress. “This completely demonstrates how stubborn the DPP is when it insists on tearing apart China and Taiwan, and shows us what the party is truly like, trying to sabotage the peaceful progression of cross-Strait relations.”⁴⁴

In other settings, PRC officials have sought to tar Tsai with a Chen Shui-bian brush, arguing that some of Chen’s most provocative positions—as well as Lee Teng-hui’s—were Tsai’s doing. In making this point, the officials implied that the essential requirement is to accept a “one China” foundation, not merely avoid saying provocative things.⁴⁵

This seemed also to be the message of ARATS vice chairman (and former TAO deputy director) Sun Yafu during a recent trip to Taiwan. After having touted the benefits of the developments in cross-Strait relations since 2008, Sun became the first PRC official to spell out publicly some of the consequences if the “common political foundation” were weakened or undermined. “Relations would become turbulent, consultations would be broken off, conditions for exchanges and cooperation would shrivel up, and management of issues related to foreign affairs would become difficult to handle” (兩岸關係動盪，協商中斷，交流合作的環境限縮，涉外事務問題難處理).⁴⁶ He went further to observe that obtaining the benefits of trade and investment with the Mainland and of Taiwan’s participation in regional economic activities all required cross-Strait relations that be “compatible” (相適應的) with such business arrangements.

So, it would be premature to draw firm conclusions about how Mainland reactions might differ depending on how actively rejectionist DPP positions turn out to be. An important consideration to keep in mind is that Beijing harbors deep suspicions about Tsai Ing-wen's ambitions regarding "Taiwan independence," arguing that she will say one thing during the campaign and move in a different direction once elected. As noted, officials and experts link her to the most provocative aspects of both Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian's separatist cross-Strait policies,⁴⁷ something that her recent reference to China as a "neighboring country"⁴⁸ in a *Wall Street Journal* opinion article will do nothing to change.

But, as we said at the beginning of this section, given the nuances evident in Beijing's statements, as well as the urgency and severity of the myriad of other challenges facing the PRC leadership, one should remain alert to the possibility that the Mainland might limit its reaction if Tsai continues to adopt positions that, while perhaps ambiguous, could be interpreted as not inconsistent with "one China."

Managing Daily Cross-Strait Relations

While a great deal of attention is being focused on the future of cross-Strait relations, challenges remain for those seeking to manage ties on a day-to-day basis, challenges that are related to both specific cross-Strait issues and domestic Taiwan politics.

In our last essay, we noted that implementation of a proposed new PRC north-south commercial air route near the Taiwan Strait mid-line (labeled M503) had been put into abeyance by agreement between Taipei and Beijing.⁴⁹ Subsequent negotiations between the two sides resulted in the Mainland moving the route ever-so-slightly farther west away from the mid-line and in banning PLA aircraft from that area. Moreover, it was agreed that the east-west routes Beijing had planned at various points along M503 would not be implemented at the present time.

The Ma administration argued that, however small the adjustment in the route and however limited the time needed for PLA aircraft to cover the limited area from which they had been excluded, Taiwan was no worse off than before. Moreover, the result was a success for the manner in which the administration conducts cross-Strait relations because Beijing had engaged in negotiations about an activity taking place totally on the western (Mainland) side of the mid-line. The Mainland Affairs Council also made known polling results from the respected National Chengchi University's Election Study Center revealing that almost 60 percent of respondents accepted the specific adjustments the government had accepted and that slightly over 60 percent believed that ongoing coordination over the route as well as over establishment of a cross-Strait flight control mechanism was conducive to regional air security.⁵⁰

The DPP objected to both the PRC action to proceed with the route and the Ma administration's handling of the issue. When a test run of the route was undertaken on March 15, the DPP complained that "China was able to force Taiwan to go along with its unilateral move" and said that the party had lodged a "formal protest" against China for doing so.⁵¹ It also charged that the Ma administration had rashly agreed to the

establishment of the dangerous route because it was anxious to hold a high-level MAC-TAO meeting that had been postponed in part because of the M503 controversy, rather than vetting the issue properly with the people.⁵²

Moreover, although the United States commended Taipei and Beijing for reaching a consensus, saying that the agreement “supports international civil aviation safety in the region and serves as a positive example of Taipei and Beijing managing issues through consultation and dialogue,”⁵³ a DPP spokesman condemned the government’s handling: “This kind of passive and incompetent attitude and practice has jeopardized the country’s best interests.”⁵⁴

As we noted above, Taiwan has expressed strong interest in joining the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Reportedly after Taipei had considered the issue for some time,⁵⁵ former vice president Vincent Siew raised it in a very brief (reportedly 45-second) encounter with Xi Jinping at the Boao Forum on March 28, where Xi apparently expressed a willingness to discuss related issues,⁵⁶ a sentiment he repeated in his May meeting with Chu Li-luan. Taipei then submitted an application to join as a “founding member” of AIIB on the last day such applications were being accepted (March 31). But although at various times and various levels the Mainland had expressed a “welcoming attitude” (欢迎态度) toward Taiwan’s participation “in an appropriate capacity” (以适当名义),⁵⁷ the founding member application was turned down. Action on Taiwan’s application to participate as a non-founding member is still pending.

The Ma administration has made clear that, while it wants to join AIIB, and it is flexible on the name used, for example, “Chinese Taipei” (中華台北), it would only proceed if participation is possible on a “dignified and equal” basis. It also said it had appropriately handled its application, protecting Taiwan’s interest in full participation as well as properly managing cross-strait relations by sending its letter of intent both directly to the AIIB’s provisional secretariat and separately via the TAO (which then forwarded it to the secretariat).⁵⁸

Although the LY had reached a bipartisan consensus that a letter of intent to join AIIB should be submitted under conditions that maintained the country’s dignity and upheld its interests,⁵⁹ a prominent DPP lawmaker accused the administration of violating those terms and committing a “complete denigration of the nation.” He pointed out that while the minister of finance may have signed the letter of application as ‘minister,’ he did not use his full official ROC title and no reference to the Republic of China was included as part of the ministry’s address in the letterhead.⁶⁰ DPP members also complained that the decision had been made by President Ma alone, without due consultation within the legislative or even the executive branch.⁶¹

In any event, though Taiwan’s participation would be of both economic and political benefit, like the other items “agreed” by MAC head Andrew Hsia Li-yan and TAO head Zhang Zhijun in Kinmen in late May,⁶² given the prolonged consideration of many similar questions, actual agreement and implementation are likely to be more difficult and protracted than spinmeisters in both places have suggested.⁶³

Among the issues raised by Hsia in Kinmen was also the draft PRC national security law published in early May that asserted it is the “common duty” (共同义务) of all Chinese “including compatriots in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan” (包括港澳同胞和台湾同胞在内) to safeguard the nation’s sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity.⁶⁴ Hsia observed that the proposed act failed to recognize that the two sides of the Strait are ruled by different governments and ignored the desire of Taiwan’s people to maintain the political status quo. Zhang replied that the proposed revision reflected Beijing’s long-standing position.⁶⁵ “We voiced our displeasure,” Hsia reported, “and [Zhang] explained his stance. That ended the matter.”⁶⁶

W(h)ither the KMT?

As of this writing, the only registered and qualified candidate for the KMT presidential nomination is LY Deputy Speaker Hung Hsiu-chu. Ms. Hung needs to garner over 30 percent backing in a two-part public opinion poll to be taken June 12–13, one part simply reflecting support for her, the other pitting her head-to-head against Tsai Ing-wen. Despite some recent surveys that show Hung gaining significant support—to the point of closing in on or even surpassing Tsai⁶⁷—it remains a possibility that she will not succeed in passing the 30 percent marker. In that case, the KMT will need to decide how to proceed. It is on that basis that some party members still hold out hope that Chu Li-luan can be drafted to become the candidate even though LY Speaker Wang Jin-pyng has put himself forward as a suitable alternative.

We will hold off further comment on the KMT fortunes at this point, pending the formal nomination process. But, despite Ms. Hung’s polling gains, most observers believe that unless something catastrophic derails Tsai’s campaign, even strong PRC statements about the negative consequences of Tsai’s failure to embrace a “one China” position may not be enough to upset what seems like an inevitable DPP victory.

U.S. Stays above the Political Fray But Retains a Strong Interest in Effective Management of Cross-Strait Relations

As opposed to the impression many people had during the 2012 Taiwan presidential election, the United States is taking a studiously neutral position in the 2016 contest. In this regard, a State Department spokeswoman noted that American officials had had “a constructive exchange on a wide range of issues” with Tsai Ing-wen during her recent visit.⁶⁸

That said, one should not underestimate the seriousness of cross-Strait relations for the United States and the continuing attention they will receive in Washington. As Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Russel put it, the U.S. has “a huge and long-standing interest in peaceful and stable cross-Strait relations.”⁶⁹

The U.S. position goes beyond the articulation of that critical goal and also focuses on the need for both sides to adopt policies characterized by restraint and flexibility in order to carry on constructive cross-Strait dialogue and maintain the current low level of tension.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Susan Thornton recently delivered a comprehensive statement on American Taiwan policy that made these points along with reiteration of U.S. policy based on the three U.S.-PRC joint communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act.⁷⁰

An important ingredient of . . . close [U.S.] cooperation [with Taiwan] in recent years has been the stable management of cross-Strait ties. We have an abiding interest in the preservation of cross-Strait stability, and this interest informs our overall approach to cross-Strait issues. . . .

We have welcomed the steps both sides of the Taiwan Strait have taken in recent years to reduce tensions and improve cross-Strait relations. We encourage authorities in both Beijing and Taipei to continue their constructive dialogue on the basis of dignity and respect. Our policy on cross-Strait relations is not directed only at one side of the Taiwan Strait or the other. There should be no unilateral attempts to change the status quo, and that applies to both sides.

Even as we discuss our abiding interest in peaceful and stable cross-Strait relations with our friends on Taiwan, we also encourage Beijing to demonstrate flexibility and restraint. The benefits that stable cross-Strait ties have brought to both sides of the Taiwan Strait, the United States, and the region have been enormous. It is important that both sides of the Strait understand the importance of these benefits and work to establish a basis for continued peace and stability.

Thus, those in the Mainland who distrust Tsai Ing-wen and would have the United States oppose the DPP or “instruct” the DPP what policies to adopt will be disappointed. Similarly, anyone in Taiwan who thinks the quality of future U.S. ties with Taiwan will not be conditioned in significant measure by the degree to which Taipei adopts constructive and effective approaches to cross-Strait relations is ignoring history. Proper management of cross-Strait ties does not constitute the sum and substance of U.S.-Taiwan unofficial relations or U.S.-PRC relations. But given the potential impact of developments in cross-Strait ties on U.S. national interests, no one should doubt that this is an issue to which Washington will attach great importance.

Notes

¹ Alan D. Romberg, “The Times They Are A-Changin’,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 46, March 19, 2015, <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/clm46ar-new.pdf>.

² “DPP China Affairs Committee: Maintain Cross-Strait Status Quo,” DPP, April 10, 2015, <http://english.dpp.org.tw/dpp-china-affairs-committee/>. Chinese text at http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=7802.

³ “DPP Nominates Chair person Tsai Ing-wen as 2016 Presidential Candidate,” DPP, April 15, 2015, <http://english.dpp.org.tw/dpp-nominates-tsai-ing-wen/>. Chinese text is included in the “Press Release of the 9th Session of the 16th Central Executive Committee” (民主進步黨第十六屆第九次中執會新聞稿), April 15, 2015, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=7807.

Some people have seen this as indicating Tsai would not be wedded to the most fundamentalist aspects of DPP doctrine if elected. Others, however, worry that “the will of the people” will be invoked as an excuse not to adopt workable arrangements with Beijing.

⁴ “DPP must stay united and win trust,” *Taipei Times* (Editorial), March 22, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2015/03/22/2003614103>.

⁵ “Annette Lu urges Tsai to clarify her ‘status quo’ policy,” *Taipei Times*, April 18, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/04/18/2003616218>.

The 1991 “independence plank” in the DPP charter called for establishment of a “Republic of Taiwan” (台灣共和國) through a plebiscite and the establishment of a new constitution. The Chinese-language text of that plank as well as of the 1999 Resolution on Taiwan’s Future and the 2007 Normal Nation Resolution are all available at <http://www.dpptp.org.tw/about/program.php?click=1>.

The 1999 Resolution on Taiwan’s Future asserted that Taiwan is already a sovereign, independent state unrelated to the PRC and that any change in that status requires a plebiscite. (An English-language text of that resolution can be found at <http://www.taiwandc.org/nws-9920.htm>.) The party has taken the position that this superseded the 1991 independence plank.

The 2007 resolution on a normal nation, however, referred to several “abnormal” constitutional, international, and political aspects of Taiwan’s existence and called for name rectification and a new constitution to be ratified “at a proper time” through a referendum to make clear the “fact” that Taiwan is “an independent, sovereign state.” It also called for joining the United Nations, an important background factor related to the referendum to join the UN “in the name of Taiwan” that created tensions in cross-Straits relations and U.S.-Taiwan relations in 2007–2008. Beijing has frequently cited not only the continued existence of the 1991 plank in the DPP charter but also the 2007 resolution, as well as the debate regarding a “second republic constitution” that year, as evidence that the DPP is dedicated to eventual Taiwan independence. (An English-language text of the 2007 resolution can be found at http://www.dpp.org.tw/upload/policy/20071029100043_link.pdf.)

⁶ Loa Lok-sin, “DPP’s China policy draws fire,” *Taipei Times*, April 30, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/04/30/2003617140>.

It is not impossible that Koo’s statement was spurred in part by a TAO spokesman statement that day. The spokesman said that it was an unchanging fact that since 1949, although the two sides of the Strait were not united, the Mainland and Taiwan belonged to one China. Moreover, the spokesman added, since 2008, the two sides had brought about peaceful development on the basis of the “1992 Consensus.” “This,” he said, “is the cross-Straits status quo” (这就是两岸关系现状). (“Transcript of the TAO press briefing,” April 29, 2015, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwfbh/201504/t20150429_9696542.htm.)

⁷ Lu Hsin-hui and Scully Hsiao, “DPP elder urges end of pursuit of Taiwan de jure independence,” CNA, April 6, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201504060017.aspx>; Lu Hsin-hui and Evelyn Kao, “Taiwan’s status quo is that of sovereign, independent ROC: DPP member,” Central News Agency (hereafter abbreviated CNA), April 12, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201504120012.aspx>.

⁸ “Hsu [Hsin-liang]: Effective DPP governance impossible if Mainland rejects contacts with Tsai,” *China Times* (translated in KMT News Network, April 17, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16061>).

⁹ Matthew Strong, “Tsai explains Taiwan-China status quo,” *Taiwan News Online*, May 23, 2015, http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2742150.

¹⁰ Worthy Shen and Y.F. Low, “DPP chairwoman defends promise to maintain cross-strait status quo,” CNA, May 23, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201505230019.aspx>. On the 1999 Resolution, see endnote 5.

¹¹ Tsai Ing-wen, “Taiwan meeting the challenges, drafting a model of new Asian value,” Speech to CSIS, June 3, 2015. The authoritative English version, along with section-by-section translation into Chinese, is available on the DPP website at http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?kw=&m1=06&y1=2015&menu_sn=&sub_menu=43&show_title=&one_page=10&page=1&start_p=1&act=&sn=7911&stat=&order_type=desc&order_col=add_date&data_type=%E6%96%B0%E8%81%9E.

¹² 因此，在當選總統之後，我將在中華民國現行憲政體制下，依循普遍民意，持續推動兩岸關係的和平穩定發展。(From DPP-provided text; see endnote 11.)

¹³ Transcript of Q&A session provided by the U.S. Mission of the DPP.

¹⁴ 兩岸之間應該珍惜並維護二十多年來協商和交流互動所累積的成果，我將在這個堅實基礎上，持續推動兩岸關係的和平穩定發展。(From DPP-provided text; see endnote 11.)

¹⁵ Shih Ming-te, a veteran political activist and one-time head of the DPP, quickly lashed out at Tsai, calling her a “female version of Ma Ying-jeou” and charging that she lacks leadership and has no core values. (Loa Iok-sin, “Shih Ming-te pans Tsai Ing-wen’s China stance,” *Taipei Times*, June 5, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/06/05/2003619976>.)

The TAO had responded to Tsai’s June 1 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed piece (“Taiwan can build on U.S. ties,” <http://www.wsj.com/articles/taiwan-can-build-on-u-s-ties-1433176635>) without addressing her specific points but saying that, by denying the foundation and continuing to adhere to the “one country on each side,” there would be no way out for cross-strait relations. (Li Hanfang, “TAO reiterates: There is no way out for the DPP in persisting in a ‘Taiwan independence’ splittist position” (国台办重申：民进党坚持“台独”分裂立场没有出路), *Xinhua*, June 3, 2015, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201506/t20150603_9948750.htm.) In a similar vein, after Tsai’s speech at CSIS, the foreign ministry, which mainly focused on warning the United States not to abandon its “one China” policy or send “misleading signals” to “Taiwan independence” splittist forces, also did not address any of the specifics of what Tsai had said. Rather, it only expressed “resolute opposition” to any individual or organization engaged in international “Taiwan independence” splittist activities. (“Transcript of foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei’s routine press briefing,” June 5, 2015, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/fyrbt_602243/t1270655.shtml.)

In a way, the PRC ambassador to the United States, Cui Tiankai, likely pre-positioned the PRC's response by arguing the day before Tsai spoke at CSIS that she should accept the "one China" principle rather than playing deceptive tricks through making ambiguous statements on whether she will abandon her ambition to seek the island's independence. ("China-U.S. common interests outweigh differences: Chinese ambassador," Xinhua, June 2, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-06/03/c_134294149.htm.) Cui elicited an angry reaction across the political spectrum in Taiwan by casting this in terms of a "test" by the 1.3 billion Chinese people on the Mainland that Tsai should pass. (Loa Iok-sin, "DPP condemns Chinese ambassador to the US," *Taipei Times*, June 4, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2015/06/04/2003619871>; Elaine Hou, "Chinese diplomat's comments inappropriate: foreign minister," CNA, June 4, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201506040018.aspx>.)

¹⁶ Yeh Su-ping and Ted Chen, "Opposition party raises alarm over Chu-Xi meeting," CNA, May 4, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201505040034.aspx>.

¹⁷ "DPP statement regarding the Chu-Xi meeting" (民主進步黨針對「朱習會」之聲明), DPP, May 4, 2015, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=7842.

The party's four criticisms of Chu's meeting with Xi were:

1. Chu's formulation on "one China" went beyond Ma's "one China, respective interpretations" and accepted Beijing's "one China framework" and exacerbated the problem regarding safeguarding Taiwan's sovereignty.
2. By saying he inherited the results of the 2005 Lien-Hu meeting, Chu deepened the limitation of cross-Straits relations to CCP-KMT affairs (國共化) and pushed relations on the basis of party interests (以黨領政).
3. In saying he would further push the five visions from the Lien-Hu meeting, Chu indicated he would likely negotiate a peace agreement under the "one China framework."
4. In saying he would strive for greater international participation under the 1992 Consensus, Chu had abandoned the position of safeguarding national sovereignty and would shrink Taiwan's international participation.

¹⁸ Loa Iok-sin, "DPP rejects unofficial ties with CCP: spokesperson," *Taipei Times*, May 3, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/05/03/2003617374>.

For his part, Chu vigorously rejected the charges against him. He asserted that KMT-CCP ties were not a substitute for ties between governmental authorities and he wondered aloud why there were no party ties between the DPP and CCP. "Smearing the exchanges between the KMT and the CCP, and maliciously distorting and taking my statements out of context might win elections," he said, "but we cannot afford to lose Taiwan." (KMT Culture and Communications Committee, "Chu: Does DPP really want to return to the generation of cross-Straits confrontations?" KMT News Network, May 7, 2015, <http://www.taiwannpfnews.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=111&anum=16072>.)

¹⁹ Yuan-Ming Chiao, "Cross-Straits peace can be maintained under DPP: Tsai," *China Post*, March 23, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2015/03/23/431779/Cross-strait-peace.htm>. Tsai observed, "in the past we have maintained communications with each side, and we hope that these communications will result in each side being able to accept one position."

²⁰ “Tsai: DPP will strive to maintain the cross-Straits status quo if returned to power,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), April 10, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16032>.

²¹ “Press release of the 2nd session of the DPP China Affairs Committee” (民主進步黨中國事務委員會第二次會議新聞稿), DPP, April 9, 2015, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=7802. An authoritative DPP English-language translation is at <http://us7.campaign-archive1.com/?u=514c164469699ac1ac10bfe93&id=030617ca8b&e=5dc267bc37>.

²² “Press release of the 29th Session of the 16th Central Standing Committee of the DPP” (民主進步黨第十六屆第二十九次中常會新聞稿), DPP, May 6, 2015, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?&sn=7848.

²³ “The DPP’s response to the Hsia-Zhang meeting” (民主進步黨針對夏張會之回應), DPP, May 15, 2015, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=7870. In light of Chu Li-luan’s presentation to Xi Jinping, the DPP also said that the MAC should state clearly its rejection of a “one China framework” (一中框架) and the notion that “both sides belong to one China” (兩岸同屬一個中國).

²⁴ Shih Hsiu-chuang and Loa Iok-sin, “Tsai looks ahead as Chu attacks cross-Straits views,” *Taipei Times*, May 7, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/05/07/2003617690>.

²⁵ Wang Yu-chung, “Tsai Ing-wen: When Ma Ying-jeou was interviewed by foreign media, all he talked about was cross-Straits relations” (小英：馬英九接受外媒訪問 只會講兩岸), Newtalk.tw, May 12, 2015, http://newtalk.tw/mobile/news_in.php?id=60036.

The president’s office struck back saying that Tsai apparently did not understand the importance of the cross-Straits peace, prosperity and stability for many countries and investors in Asia, and hence the interest of foreign media in the issue, and that she evidently had not yet prepared well for participation in the election. (Wang Yu-chun, “President’s Office criticizes Tsai in turn for not understanding cross-Straits questions, says she hasn’t prepared well for participating in the presidential election” (總統府反批蔡對兩岸議題不解 沒做好參選總統準備), *Liberty Times*, May 12, 2015, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/1315451>.)

In an interview a few days earlier, Ma also asked rhetorically why, if the cross-Straits policy he had followed for the past seven years was such a failure, Tsai was now saying she wanted to maintain the status quo. (Paul Beckett and Charles Hutzler, “Q&A: Taiwan’s President Ma Ying-jeou on China ties, policy and his legacy,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/q-a-taiwans-president-ma-ying-jeou-on-china-ties-policy-and-his-legacy-1431309939>.) As had others, Ma questioned whether the DPP had any steps ready to actually ensure the status quo. (Claudia Liu, Lee Shu-hua, Sophia Yeh, and Y.F. Low, “Ma meets press to mark 7th anniversary of presidency,” CNA, May 18, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201505180011.aspx>.)

²⁶ Hsiao Po-yang and Lilian Wu, “Maintaining status quo means keeping cross-Straits peace: DPP chairwoman,” CNA, May 8, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201505080023.aspx>.

On the other hand, Tsai revealed a somewhat sarcastic bent when she reacted to Ma’s challenging her on what status quo she was seeking to maintain, and how she would maintain it: “I do not know if he is asking the question for political manipulation or for the good of Taiwan. If he’s truly concerned about making Taiwan a better place, he

should stop talking like a broken record, repeating the same question every day. There is only about a year left in his term as president. He has not done much for the country in the past seven years; he should seize the year to do more things, so that people might have a better impression of him when he leaves office.” (Loa Iok-sin, “Tsai turns focus to nation’s south,” *Taipei Times*, May 15, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/05/15/2003618332>.)

²⁷ Chen Jianxing, Pan Qing and Xu Xiaoqing, “Yu Zhengsheng and Chu Li-luan attend the 10th Cross-Strait Trade and Cultural Forum and deliver speeches” (俞正声, 朱立伦出席第十届两岸经贸文化论坛并致辞), *Xinhua*, May 3, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-05/03/c_1115159990.htm.

²⁸ *Ibid.* Yu also laid out three other requirements: focusing on the common welfare of compatriots on both sides; continuing to help young people realize their dreams; and continuing to promote the expansion of extensive cross-Strait public participation.

The forum proposed a series of recommendations at its conclusion (“9 recommendations proposed at the KMT-CCP Forum,” KMT News Network [from *Taipei papers*], May 4, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16131>):

1. Continue to promote the development of economic integration and promote the standards in the institutionalization of economic cooperation across the Strait.
2. Continue to support large enterprises and actively establish a platform of cooperation for small and medium-sized businesses across the Strait.
3. Strengthen cooperation on agriculture and fisheries, so as to increase the market share of Taiwan's agricultural products on the Mainland.
4. Pay more attention to sentiments of cross-Strait grassroots so that more people would be willing to devote themselves to cross-Strait peaceful development.
5. Create more opportunities for young students from the Mainland and Taiwan to study, work, and start their own businesses.
6. Deepen cross-Strait cooperation in the cultural and entertainment industries.
7. Deepen cooperation on cross-Strait education exchanges, and conclude related agreements.
8. Continue to promote and study transit in Taiwan for Mainland air passengers so as to provide further facilities for people on both sides.
9. Establish a platform to pragmatically study and explore Taiwan's participation in the “One Belt, One Road” initiative, RCEP, and AIIB.

²⁹ “Chu-Xi meeting, full text of Chu Li-luan’s speech” (朱習會 朱立倫談話全文), *CNA*, May 4, 2015, <http://www.cna.com.tw/topic/popular/5027-2/201505045017-1.aspx>.

³⁰ “Xi Jinping proposes five points in cross-Strait relations,” KMT News Network (from *Taipei papers*), May 5, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16133>.

³¹ Chen Binhua, “General Secretary Xi Jinping meets with KMT chairman Chu Li-luan” (习近平总书记会见中国国民党主席朱立伦), *Xinhua*, May 4, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2015-05/04/c_1115169416.htm.

³² Romberg, “The Times They Are A-Changin’,” pp. 9–10.

³³ The *Xinhua* Chinese-language report of Xi’s remarks referred to this as 基础 (see Chen Binhua, endnote 31). An English-language version of Xi’s remarks cited Xi as calling the

1992 Consensus the “prerequisite” for such contacts. (“Xi calls on building community of shared destiny across Taiwan Strait,” Xinhua, May 4, 2015, <http://www.icrosschina.com/news/2015/0504/12081.shtml>.)

³⁴ Romberg, “From Generation to Generation: Advancing Cross-Strait Relations,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 43, March 14, 2014, <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/CLM43AR.pdf>.

³⁵ Romberg, “The Times They are A-Changin’,” pp.11–12.

³⁶ Chen Binhua, “General Secretary Xi Jinping meets with KMT chairman Chu Li-luan,” see endnote 31.

³⁷ This sentence was widely reported in the Taiwan press but was not included in the extensive Xinhua account referred to earlier. (Sung Ping-chung and Lu Su-mei, “Without mentioning it by name, Xi sends a message to the Green: acknowledge one China” [習不點名向綠喊話：認同一中], *China Times*, March 5, 2015, <http://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20150305000881-260301>.) However, Xi is seen and heard using it in a CCTV report on the meeting. (“Today’s News Broadcast” [今天新聞聯播], March 4, 2015, <http://xinwenlianbo.tv/cctv/21260.html>.)

In any event, whether using this phrase was meant to be as threatening as some in Taiwan felt it was is a little uncertain. But surely Xi is trying to get across the seriousness of the matter of accepting the existing “one China” foundation of cross-Strait relations. At the same time, this is apparently an idiom he has used in the past in other contexts. In 2006, for example, when he was party secretary in Zhejiang, Xi reportedly used it when talking about the importance of strengthening grassroots work and building a solid base of social harmony. And in January 2013, as general secretary of the Communist Party, he used it in speaking again about the importance of grass-roots activity. (“Xi Jinping again mentions the new application of the phrase ‘if the foundation is not sturdy, the earth will move and the mountains will shake’” [习近平再提“基础不牢，地动山摇”有何新意], Chinese Communist Party News Network, February 5, 2013, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2013/0205/c78779-20438523.html>.)

³⁸ 遏制“台独”分裂活动是确保两岸关系和平发展的必然要求。2008年前的一段时间，“台独”分裂势力利用执政推行分裂路线，损害国家主权，领土完整，破坏台海和平稳定，挑动两岸对抗紧张，给两岸民众尤其是台湾同胞带来深重祸害。两岸同胞对此记忆犹新，期盼两岸关系和平发展新局面得以维护。需要警惕的是，“台独”分裂势力并未善罢甘休，仍在竭力煽动两岸敌意和对立，阻挠两岸交流合作，仍然是两岸关系和平发展的最大现实威胁。(Zhao Bo and Xu Xueyi, “General Secretary Xi Jinping meets with Taiwan peaceful reunification groups” [习近平总书记会见台湾和平统一团体联合参访团], Xinhuanet, September 26, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-09/26/c_1112641354.htm.)

The mantra regarding the historical inevitability of unification but also that “Taiwan independence” splittist forces and their splittist activities are still the greatest threat to the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations also made its way into the section on China’s national security circumstances in the latest PRC defense white paper. (“China’s military strategy, full text” [中国的军事战略], PRC State Council News Office, May 26, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2015-05/26/c_1115408217.htm.)

³⁹ “Commenting on the DPP saying it will ‘maintain the cross-Strait status quo,’ TAO: The crux of the matter is to uphold well the political foundation of peaceful development of cross-Strait relations” (评民进党“维持两岸现状”说 国台办：关键是维护好两岸关系和平

发展的政治基础), Xinhuanet, April 10, 2015, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201504/t20150410_9549691.htm. (Emphasis added)

⁴⁰ “No CPC-DPP exchanges if ‘one China’ principle not upheld: mainland,” Xinhuanet, April 8, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-04/08/c_134133213.htm. (Emphasis added)

⁴¹ 否认“九二共识”，战两岸同属一个中国的法理基础，搞“一边一国”，“一中一台”，就会损害民族、国家、人民的根本利益，动摇两岸关系发展的基石，就不可能有和平，也不可能有发展。(Chen Binhua, “General Secretary Xi Jinping meets with KMT chairman Chu Li-luan,” see endnote 31. Emphasis added.)

⁴² 我们坚决反对任何人以任何形式在国际上从事“台独”分裂活动。(Transcript of TAO press briefing, May 13, 2015, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwfbh/201505/t20150513_9796382.htm. Emphasis added.)

⁴³ Wang Li-chuan and Li Chun, “Xi Jinping: Without the 1992 Consensus cross-Straits relations will return to turbulence” (習近平：沒有九二共識 兩岸將重回動盪), *United Daily News*, March 5, 2015, <http://udn.com/news/story/7853/744590>.

⁴⁴ Katherine Wei, “China criticizes DPP for ‘vague’ platform,” *China Post*, May 7, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/china-taiwan-relations/2015/05/07/435393/China-criticizes.htm>.

⁴⁵ Private conversations.

⁴⁶ Peng Weilin, “Sun Yafu warns: Relations could come to a standstill and cross-Straits exchanges could be unable to take a step forward” (孫亞夫示警：交流停滯 兩岸會寸步難行), *China Review News*, May 25, 2015, <http://hk.crntt.com/doc/1037/6/7/5/103767548.html?coluid=1&kindid=0&docid=103767548&mdate=0525212503>.

At the same time, Sun is alleged to be the first PRC official to say on the record that the “1992 Consensus” is “one China, respective interpretations” (一個中國、各自表述). (Wang Chun-chung, “Cheng Kung University Professor Liang Wen-t’ao refutes Sun Yafu: Taiwanese are not Chinese” [成大教授梁文韜駁孫亞夫：台灣人不是中國人], *Liberty Times*, May 30, 2015, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/paper/884881>.) If that report is accurate, it would represent something of a breakthrough, because although Beijing hasn’t challenged Ma on this definition of the Consensus, it has also never openly endorsed it.

In a March 2008 telephone conversation between Hu Jintao and George W. Bush, shortly after Ma Ying-jeou’s election, the Chinese interpreter said that Hu referred to the “1992 Consensus” as both sides recognizing there is only one China but agreeing to differ on its definition. This was not only reported by American officials listening in on the conversation but was also carried in the Xinhua English-language account of the conversation. (“Chinese, U.S. presidents hold telephone talks on Taiwan, Tibet,” Xinhua, March 27, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-03/27/content_7865209.htm.) However, this statement was not included in the Chinese-language version of the conversation (“Hu Jintao: On the basis of the ‘1992 Consensus’ cross-Straits consultations and negotiations can be resumed” [胡锦涛：在“九二共识”基础上恢复两岸协商谈判], Xinhuanet, March 26, 2008, http://news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2008-03/26/content_7865604.htm.) Moreover, senior PRC officials privately commented that Hu never said it.

⁴⁷ Private conversations.

- ⁴⁸ Ko Lin, "Tsai stresses status quo, says her U.S. visit not a 'job interview,'" *Taiwan News Online*, May 31, 2015, http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2746440.
- ⁴⁹ Romberg, "The Times They Are A-Changin'," p. 12.
- ⁵⁰ "Majority of the public support preliminary results acquired through the government's handling of the Mainland's M503 and other routes' establishment," Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) News Release No. 018, March 23, 2015, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=111265&ctNode=6337&mp=3>. Attachments to that press release included a summary of the results of the survey (<http://www.mac.gov.tw/public/Attachment/54161648539.pdf>) as well as a chart showing the results of questionnaire broken out in percentage distribution (<http://www.mac.gov.tw/public/Attachment/541616474938.pdf>).
- ⁵¹ Shelly Shan, "China begins M503 route tests," *Taipei Times*, March 16, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2015/03/16/2003613650>.
- ⁵² "DPP: One must not rashly consent to opening the new M503 route out of impatience to hold a 'Hsia-Zhang meeting'" (民進黨: 不能因急於進行「夏張會」而輕率同意啟用M503新航線), DPP, March 17, 2015, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=7757.
- ⁵³ Sophia Yeh, Tony Liao, and Elizabeth Hsu, "U.S. praises flight consensus; DPP blasts policymakers," CNA, March 24, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201503240023.aspx>.
- ⁵⁴ "DPP: M503 handling does not serve the nation's interests, the person in charge must bear political responsibility" (民進黨: M503處理不符合國家利益, 主事者應負起政治責任), DPP, March 24, 2015, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=7781.
- ⁵⁵ "MOF reiterates stance on Taiwan's AIIB bid," *Taiwan Today*, April 2, 2015, <http://www.taiwantoday.tw/ct.asp?xItem=228968&ctNode=445>. The minister of finance stated that the ministry had been studying the issue under Cabinet instruction since November 2014 and that the assessment had been completed in March after broad interagency consultation. He also pledged full liaison with the legislature and said that an inter-ministerial group had been established to enhance communication with the LY on a bipartisan basis.
- ⁵⁶ "Siew delivers message to Xi as Boao Forum opens," *Taipei Times*, March 29, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2015/03/29/2003614643>.
- ⁵⁷ Chen Jianxing, "TAO: Welcome the Taiwan side to participate in AIIB in an appropriate capacity" (国台办: 欢迎台湾方面以适当名义参与亚投行), Xinhuanet, April 2, 2015, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201504/t20150402_9478697.htm.
- ⁵⁸ Yin Chun-chie and Evelyn Kao, "Finance ministry will lead talks on Taiwan's AIIB bid: MAC official," CNA, April 2, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201504020029.aspx>.
- ⁵⁹ Chen Wei-ting, Tseng Ying-yu, Ta Ya-chen, Wen Kuei-hsing, Wei Shu, and Lilian Wu, "Lawmakers agree to submit letter of intent to join AIIB," CNA, March 31, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201503310017.aspx>.
- ⁶⁰ Chiu Yen-ling, Wang Yu-chung, and Shih Hsiu-chuan, "AIIB letters lacked title, ROC name," *Taipei Times*, April 2, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2015/04/02/2003614954>.

⁶¹ Enru Lin, "President Ma made 'unilateral' call on AIIB: DPP," *China Post*, March 31, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/business/2015/03/31/432432/President-Ma.htm>.

⁶² The meeting had originally been scheduled for early February between Zhang and then-MAC head Wang Yu-chi, but that was put off because of an airplane accident at the time and also over the M503 issue.

⁶³ An article in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' online publication claimed that Hsia and Zhang had "reached agreement on a number of key issues." ("MAC, TAO heads wrap up Kinmen meeting," *Taiwan Today*, May 25, 2015, <http://www.taiwantoday.tw/ct.asp?xItem=230747&ctNode=445>.)

However, the Mainland Affairs Council's news release enumerating the achievements was more nuanced in its presentation. ("Third meeting between heads of cross-Strait competent authorities held in Kinmen: Both sides insist on building momentum for cross-Strait developments and creating more palpable achievements on the '1992 Consensus' basis," MAC, News Release No. 25, May 23, 2015, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=111503&ctNode=6337&mp=3>.)

According to that news release, pledging to "push forward operational consultations for SEF-ARATS institutionalized negotiation agenda issues in hope to facilitate the holding of the Eleventh Round of High-Level Talks," Hsia and Zhang said they would "continue active promotion of cross-Strait trade in goods negotiations and to coordinate respective relevant departments to promptly reach a consensus." (It remains to be seen whether the Kinmen meeting will really spur meaningful positive developments in light of the fact that "no progress" was made in an early April meeting on lowering tariffs in four key industries. Wu Fu-hsiang, "Commodities trade negotiations, Reduction of tariffs in four industries make no progress" [貨貿談判 四產業降稅沒進展], *United Daily News*, April 3, 2015, <http://udn.com/news/story/7238/813921>.)

Although news reports coming out of the meeting said that there had been agreement to begin transits through Taiwan of Mainland travelers heading to onward destinations, the MAC announcement merely said that "the two sides will work together to facilitate a consensus in the first half of this year, actively coordinate relevant departments to promptly implement the policy, and will consult on further convenience measures for people's exchange across the Strait." (According to other reports, the Mainland had some issues to work out regarding travel documentation for Mainland tourists, and Taiwan had to adjust certain immigration and customs procedures. "Six points of consensus reached during Hsia-Zhang meeting," KMT News Network [from Taipei papers], May 25, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16213>.)

On the long-pending issue of reciprocal establishment of SEF and ARATS offices, according to the MAC news release, "both sides will promptly convene the eighth round of operational consultations after this meeting to pragmatically handle issues of mutual concern and promptly complete negotiations on the mutual establishment issue. Both sides understand that the safety of the institutions and their staff must be guaranteed, relevant competent authorities must be coordinated to complete respective internal legal operations and supporting measures for notifications and humanitarian visiting functions, and that the aim of the institutions' establishment is to serve the people on both sides." (Ma Ying-jeou told a group of correspondents ahead of the Kinmen meeting that, while

negotiations regarding establishment of reciprocal SEF and ARATS offices were in their final stages, the PRC was concerned that ARATS sites could become gathering places for student movements in Taiwan or be politicized as having diplomatic functions. Yuan-Ming Chiao, "PRC has qualms over representative offices: Ma," *China Post*, May 19, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2015/05/19/436365/PRC-has.htm>.)

⁶⁴ "Full text of the 2nd draft of the National Security Law" (国家安全法[草案二次审议稿]全文), National People's Congress, May 6, 2015, http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/lfgz/flca/2015-05/06/content_1935766.htm.

⁶⁵ Zep Hu and Y.F. Low, "Dignity key to Taiwan's AIIB participation," CNA, May 23, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aall/201505230022.aspx>.

⁶⁶ Shih Hsiu-chuan, "China rejects Taipei's defiance on law," *Taipei Times*, May 24, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2015/05/24/2003619019>.

⁶⁷ "Poll: Hung Hsiu-chu's 50 percent support greatly surpasses Tsai Ing-wen" (民調洪秀柱5成支持度大勝蔡英文), *Apple Daily*, June 1, 2015, <http://www.appledaily.com.tw/realtimenews/article/politics/20150601/620310/>; "Polls: Hung's support rate climbs 3.3 percentage points in 6 days," KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), June 2, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16252>. The former reported that Hung received 50.5 percent support in a head-to-head match-up with Tsai, as against the DPP candidate's 28.45 percent. The latter reported a WantWantChina Times Polling Center survey in which Tsai led Hung by 31.4 percent to 27 percent.

A third poll showed Hung within 1 percentage point of Tsai, all of which suggests that either the Green is running a very sophisticated operation to tilt the polls so that Hung gets the nomination or some other dynamic is at work that is eating into Tsai's lead. ("TVBS poll shows Deputy Speaker Hung behind Tsai by 1%," *China Post*, June 5, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2015/06/05/437693/TVBS-poll.htm>.) What is especially interesting about this last poll is that in a similar survey taken by TVBS two weeks earlier, Hung trailed Tsai by almost 30 points, 46 percent vs. 17 percent. (TVBS, "Public opinion poll regarding the support rate of popular candidates in the 2016 presidential election" [2016總統大選熱門人選支持度調查], May 21, 2015, http://home.tvbs.com.tw/static/FILE_DB/PCH/201505/20150522181222110.pdf.)

⁶⁸ Daily Press Briefing, Department of State, June 5, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2015/06/243249.htm#CHINA>.

⁶⁹ William Lowther, "US not taking sides in elections: US official," *Taipei Times*, May 23, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/05/23/2003618963>.

⁷⁰ "Taiwan: A vital partner in East Asia," Remarks at the Brookings Institution, May 21, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2015/05/242705.htm>.