

Consolidating Positions

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In recent weeks all parties within Taiwan and across the Strait have focused on consolidating their positions. Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen, holding a commanding lead in polls, focused on gaining control of the legislature. Her Kuomintang (KMT) opponent, deputy Legislative Yuan (LY) speaker Hung Hsiu-chu, formally nominated in July, espoused a number of controversial positions and has not yet recovered from the fallout. Hung also lost ground to a new entry, veteran conservative politician and former KMT elder James Soong, who presented himself as the candidate of reason and experience.

Beijing left no doubt about its continuing insistence on adherence to some form of “one China” if cross-Straits relations are to go well under the next Taiwan administration. It also continued to raise warning flags about the impact of heightened cross-Straits tensions on U.S.-PRC relations.

Politics in Taiwan

The DPP Seeks To Score Big

Tsai Ing-wen focused most of her recent attention on domestic issues and the constituencies she hoped would not only bring her victory in January but would also place her party and its allies in control of the legislature. According to some reports, the Pan-Greens hoped to win as many as 64 out of the total of 113 seats.¹ Although there was some dissent within the party, it was decided that the DPP would cooperate with “compatible” non-DPP candidates where the latter had a better chance of defeating KMT opponents. As Tsai put it, “To have the forces of reform occupy more than 50 percent of the seats in the legislature, we must endorse the most competitive candidate in each electoral district... When there is a candidate in the progressive camp who is most likely to win, of course the person does not have to be nominated by the DPP.”² Tsai spoke of forming a “majority coalition” in the LY, asking those “with similar ideas and ambitions” to form a stable majority.³ Reports indicated that the DPP would not nominate candidates in 11 electoral districts to provide a clear field for third-party contenders who had a better chance of defeating the KMT.⁴ At the same time, she continued to caution supporters against overconfidence, urging the DPP not to let up in campaigning efforts.⁵

As Tsai continued to hammer away at the Ma administration’s alleged incompetence, she tried to push forward policies on energy, education, and social welfare that would have broad appeal. At present, it isn’t entirely clear how successful she has been in that effort, but there is no indication that Hung (or Soong) has found a way to erode Tsai’s lead or threaten what most observers see as an inevitable outcome.

Regarding cross-Straits policy, Tsai seemed satisfied to rest on the points she made while in the United States in June. As the DPP spokesman said in response to the PRC’s

Taiwan Affairs Office call for Tsai to define the cross-Strait “status quo” she would maintain,⁶ Tsai had “made herself quite clear” that she would base her cross-Strait policy on the ROC Constitution, the people’s will, and the fruits of the labor of the past 20 years of negotiation.⁷ Repeating a frequent theme, the DPP spokesman added that both sides have responsibility to maintain cross-Strait peace and stability and development. And he called for continuing communication and dialogue to help “enhance understanding, resolve differences and seek common ground, while shelving differences.”⁸

Taipei Mayor Ko Wen-je’s statements during his August visit to Shanghai that he “understands and respects” the Mainland’s position that the 1992 Consensus is the foundation of cross-Strait peaceful development, and his endorsement of the idea that both sides of the Strait were “one family,” occasioned some kudos for skillfully finessing sensitive questions (not picking a fight while not actually endorsing the PRC position, at least on the 1992 Consensus).⁹ But they also occasioned criticism. Independence supporters said Ko had abandoned principle and that his stance was even worse than Ma Ying-jeou’s.¹⁰ The popular DPP mayor of Tainan, Lai Ching-te, was among those who bridled at Ko’s statements, declaring that Taiwan had its own ethnicity, so if the two sides were parts of one family they were no more than “distant relatives” (遠親). In any case, Lai said, if one wanted to talk about being family, the PRC first needed to dismantle the missile threat to Taiwan.¹¹

For her part, Tsai Ing-wen said she respected Ko’s use of the term “one family.” On the other hand, she observed that city-to-city exchanges were not based on a “political premise” (政治前提) and were only intended to achieve greater understanding between municipalities.¹² By implication, she was dismissing the notion that this was a model to follow at a higher level.

The KMT Evinces Disarray and Loses Leverage

Meanwhile, although not focusing exclusively on cross-Strait issues, the KMT continued to hammer away at Tsai and the DPP, pressing for a definition of the “status quo” they were seeking to maintain and for details on how they intended to maintain it.

The KMT’s leverage to press this issue was somewhat undermined, however, by the controversy its candidate, LY Deputy Speaker Hung, caused in calling for “advancing” Ma Ying-jeou’s “one China, respective interpretations” (一中各表) formula to “one China, common interpretations” (一中同表), widely taken as an actively pro-unification position. Similarly, Hung’s statement that she “couldn’t say the ROC exists,” later explained to mean that otherwise she would be endorsing state-to-state relations, also caused a ruckus.¹³

By the time Hung was formally nominated at the KMT’s July 19 congress by a 45-second round of applause, she had been reined in and had sworn to adhere to the existing party positions, which were written into the party’s campaign platform.¹⁴ But in the meantime, though Hung asserted she had been grossly misinterpreted and was only seeking to promote Mainland recognition of the existence of the ROC government, not unification, she had already alienated many in the public and frightened many in the party, a number

of whom resigned. As one high-ranking KMT member said, “The impact caused by Hung’s remarks is palpable.”¹⁵ Her call to negotiate a cross-Straits peace accord had a similar effect. None of her proposals appeared in the KMT political platform.¹⁶

Both because of her weakness going into the KMT congress, and her continuing poor polling numbers afterward, rumors persisted up until the congress and even afterward that she would either not be nominated or would be replaced. As late as the third week of August, as this article was being written, Hung was still fending off rumors that she would be forced to step down from the nomination, perhaps accepting the position as vice presidential candidate alongside either a KMT “heavyweight” or even PFP veteran James Soong, who announced his candidacy in early August.¹⁷

Hung’s problems within the KMT seemed typified by the differences she appeared to have with party chair Chu Li-luan about whether she would visit the United States.¹⁸ Eventually it appeared decided Hung would not go due to time constraints, but the issue has arisen again¹⁹ and is still unresolved as of this writing. But whether it will be Hung or Chu who takes the lead in making the final decision, Hung has stated that she has “every respect for Chu” and that in the future she would respect his campaign strategy.²⁰

The Horse Race

Once Soong entered the race, he moved slightly ahead of Hung in the polls, and his team seemed to hope that pan-Blue voters would drop support for Hung and move to him at the last minute in order to stave off a DPP victory, a move that in Taiwan political parlance would be called “dump Hung, save Soong” (棄洪保宋). But Tsai’s support in several polls exceeded the combined totals for Hung and Soong,²¹ and thus such a movement seemed an extreme long shot at best.

Some people thought Soong’s main aim was not really to win the presidency but to win a substantial share of votes in that contest and to ensure that the PFP also did reasonably well in the LY election. By denying Tsai an outright majority either for herself or for the DPP in the LY, the PFP would garner some political leverage while ensuring the DPP agenda did not automatically become policy.

As we turn our attention to how the PRC has been addressing future cross-Straits relations, it is worth noting that, at least according to one poll, while economic uncertainties abroad have taken a heavy toll on projections for Taiwan’s economic growth this year,²² investors’ concerns over political uncertainty posed by the January elections overshadow all else. Whereas between 13 and 18 percent of surveyed investors worry about the impact on Taiwan’s economy of such factors as Eurozone debt problems, the pace of economic recovery in emerging markets, further volatility in China’s equity market, or a possible interest rate hike by the U.S. Federal Reserve, over 35 percent of respondents believe that the January 2016 Taiwan presidential election poses a greater threat than anything else to the Taiwan domestic economy.²³

PRC Attitudes

Seeking Clarity from the DPP

As indicated earlier, in the wake of Tsai Ing-wen’s trip to the United States and her carefully crafted positions about basing her cross-Strait policies on the “existing ROC constitutional order” and the “accumulated outcomes” of more than 20 years of negotiations and exchanges,²⁴ Beijing pressed for a clear answer about how Tsai defines the relationship across the Strait and the status quo she says she seeks to maintain.²⁵

Whether phrased in terms of “demands” or articulation of views about what is necessary to maintain peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, the Mainland continued the drumbeat of exhortations on this subject, both in public and in private throughout the recent period. As part of this effort, various elements in the Chinese system expressed concern about the reception Tsai received in Washington and about studied American neutrality in the election, and they warned that the U.S. should not underestimate the stakes in Taiwan’s election or send “wrong signals” to “Taiwan independence forces” about the U.S. position.²⁶

PRC spokespeople continued to insist that the Mainland would not interfere in Taiwan’s election (as well they might given the negative experiences when Beijing tried to tilt the table directly in the past). But, as distasteful as some aspects of Ma Ying-jeou’s policies may have been for Beijing, and whatever qualms it may harbor about the KMT candidate, it was clear that the Mainland’s mistrust of the DPP and Tsai Ing-wen, personally, far outweigh any qualms about the KMT. This may explain why in recent statements Mainland officials have come closer to openly taking sides than in any other recent election.²⁷

Even if some of the things Tsai has been saying during the campaign, including in her important CSIS speech, seemed intended to reassure that she would avoid provocation, the dominant tone of remarks from Mainland officials was skeptical and reflected concern about her ultimate intentions. While there were hints that Beijing’s response would be “proportionate” to what Tsai said and did, the bottom line was that it would also be “principled,” and that there *would be* negative consequences if the next Taiwan administration did not embrace some form of “one China.” Clearly those consequences would be far worse if that administration actively rejected “one China” or advocated some form of separatism.

Laying Out the Options

The most important public statement in recent weeks was a speech by TAO Director Zhang Zhijun at a conference on August 6.²⁸ While touting the benefits that have accrued to people on both sides—especially those in Taiwan—over the past seven years under the “1992 Consensus,” Zhang echoed an earlier warning by Xi Jinping that cross-Strait relations were at an historic juncture. Either they would continue to advance along the path of peaceful development toward a brighter future or they would “retrogress, turn back the wheel of history, once again returning to the evil road of ‘Taiwan independence,’ causing cross-Strait relations once again to sink into tension and

turbulence, confrontation and conflict” (走回头路，开历史倒车，重新回到台独”邪路上去，使两岸关系再次陷入紧张动荡、对抗冲突).

Zhang held out a vision of greater peace and stability rather than instability or conflict in cross-Strait relations. Previous gains would be guaranteed and vast opportunities would be opened, whether for cross-Strait economic bilateral cooperation in various fields, regional economic cooperation, or Taiwan’s participation in international organizations and events.

On the other hand, Zhang warned, the “Taiwan independence” forces that persist in promoting splittist positions constitute the greatest threat to cross-Strait peace, and the biggest obstacle to advancing cross-Strait peaceful development. The Mainland sincerely hoped for a positive course, he said, but with regard to the major issues of upholding national sovereignty and territorial integrity, “our position is clear and steadfast and there will not be the slightest vacillation” (我们旗帜鲜明、立场坚定，不会有丝毫动摇).

Zhang emphasized that the “essence” (核心意涵) of the “1992 Consensus” is that Taiwan and the Mainland both belong to one and the same China, and that *this* is both the fundamental status quo in cross-Strait relations and an immutable “fact.” Using nautical allusions, Zhang said that upholding the essence would allow cross-Strait relations to break through the waves and maintain course; otherwise, those relations would inevitably go off-course and be battered by the raging storm, ending up on a reef or running aground.²⁹

Zhang rebutted suggestions that the Mainland was slowing the pace of cross-Strait relations, allowing them to stagnate or even move backward. As if to give proof of his point, with Taipei and Beijing having recently agreed to raise the number of round-trip cross-Strait flights to 890 per week from 840,³⁰ the 11th “high-level” SEF-ARATS meeting (the first in 18 months) was convened in late August in Fuzhou, where agreements on avoidance of double taxation and aviation safety were signed.³¹ Although the issue of instituting transit stops in Taiwan for Mainland passengers heading to onward destinations was discussed, hoped-for progress on the May agreement on this subject between the MAC and TAO heads³² did not materialize.³³ When Zhang and his Taiwan counterpart, MAC head Andrew Hsia Li-yan, meet again in September, that subject along with the reciprocal establishment of SEF and ARATS offices will obviously be on the table.³⁴

Zhang’s basic line was, of course, not new. And it was consistent with what he stressed during his mid-August visit to the United States. But the fact that he and others³⁵ continued to press that position with some vigor served to reinforce the impression that there would be meaningful consequences if a new Taiwan administration merely failed to embrace “one China,” even if it avoided attacks on the notion of “one China” or active support for separatism.³⁶

Factoring In the U.S.

It is anticipated that Xi Jinping will raise the issue of Taiwan in his meetings with President Obama in late September, but most observers feel that it will not occupy a prominent place on the agenda. That said, it is obvious that Beijing believes the United States does not take seriously enough the risks involved—to cross-Strait relations and to U.S.-PRC relations—should the next Taiwan government fail to endorse the “one China” foundation, and Xi may well want to alert Washington to the potential problems.

Meanwhile, the U.S. reaffirmed its “one China policy” after Tsai’s meetings in Washington,³⁷ with the head of the “unofficial” agency that handles Taiwan relations making clear that “stable management of cross-Strait relations has been a major factor that has made possible significant progress these past seven years in U.S.-Taiwan relations.”³⁸ On the other hand, the U.S. reaffirmed its commitments to Taiwan under the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act.

We remain committed to fulfilling our responsibilities under the Taiwan Relations Act. Key priorities with Taiwan include ensuring it has the ability to defend itself, and remain free from coercion or intimidation. When free from coercion, Taiwan has increasingly engaged China with confidence.³⁹

Conclusion

As we head into a more intense phase of the Taiwan election campaign, one in which we will presumably see the candidates come together in a head-to-head debate, some elements seem to have firmed up, others remain in flux. In the former category, Tsai Ing-wen seems well settled on her cross-Strait policy. Her main challenge will be holding to that line in the face of pressure from both her political opponents in Taiwan and the Mainland to define her position with greater clarity or else be vulnerable to the charge that, while she is trying to please everyone, in fact she is pleasing no one—or at least not some important audiences.

Hung Hsiu-chu may or may not prosper as the KMT candidate. She has accepted the disciplined platform positions the party has adopted and is unlikely to reiterate the sort of problematic statements she made earlier in the year. It will be of considerable interest to observers of the Taiwan political scene to see how the party seeks to reverse current trends and achieve a victory—including in the LY—that many pundits currently see as all but impossible.

James Soong may not achieve the success he has so long sought in terms of winning the presidency, but he might well make himself a quite relevant player in terms of the new LY structure and his own personal leadership role on Taiwan’s political scene.

While committed to continue benefiting the people of Taiwan, the PRC seems to have firmed up its determination to impose penalties on the next Taiwan government if it refuses to embrace “one China,” something that a DPP administration will likely refuse to

do. A victory by either Hung or Soong would, of course, generate a quite different scenario. But assuming a DPP victory, it remains to be seen how far Beijing will go with its “principled but proportionate” approach.

What the Mainland does will depend on what is said before the January 16 election, between the election and the May 20 inauguration, and in the inauguration speech; and on what is done once a new administration is in office. Some astute observers on the Mainland believe that opportunities were lost during both the Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian administrations to advance cross-Straits relations; they fear Beijing may be about to do the same thing with Tsai Ing-wen. Assuming Tsai wins, and assuming she does not fulfill the Mainland’s worst nightmares by becoming an active separatist once in office, one presumes those people will try to temper Beijing’s reaction. But whether they can have meaningful influence over Xi Jinping’s decisions is questionable, as he seems to be his own closest adviser on matters relating to Taiwan (as on much else). However, at least there is creative thinking going on.

Notes

¹ “Pan-Greens expect to take 64 seats in the next legislative elections,” Formosa Television News (FTVN), August 20, 2015, <http://englishnews.ftv.com.tw/read.aspx?sno=685E87ABAC6846D036C73670993B4D09>. Tsai has sought to downplay expectations, looking for half of the LY seats in a coalition with others (see below), suggesting that 64 is overly optimistic. (Chao Chia-lin, “Tsai Ing-wen: Respects Ko Wen-je’s statement that ‘the two sides of the Strait are one family’” [蔡英文：尊重柯文哲“兩岸一家親”的說法], *China Review News*, August 20, 2015, <http://www.zhgpl.com/doc/1038/9/7/1/103897196.html?coluid=93&kindid=5670&docid=103897196&mdate=0820160541>.)

² Lao Iok-sin, “Tsai signals more space for third-party hopefuls,” *Taipei Times*, June 7, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/06/07/2003620129>.

³ Wang Cheng-chung and S.C. Chang, “DPP vows to form legislative, executive coalition if elected,” Central News Agency (hereafter abbreviated as CNA), August 23, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/api/201508230013.aspx>.

⁴ Chi-hao James Lo, “DPP forfeits 11 districts for legislative election,” *China Post*, June 26, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2015/06/26/439254/DPP-forfeits.htm>.

⁵ “DPP presidential candidate Tsai downplays expectations while KMT’s Hung reassures supporters,” FTVN, August 21, 2015, <http://englishnews.ftv.com.tw/read.aspx?sno=59B26E3C8DB607B55D39552BE34F70C4>.

⁶ “Taiwan Affairs Office: DPP must clearly answer what the relationship is between the two sides of the Strait” (国台办：民进党需明确回答两岸之间是什么关系), June 10, 2015, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201506/20150610_10005936.htm.

⁷ Stephanie Chao, “Tsai sets out four missions to complete following US tour,” *China Post*, June 11, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2015/06/11/438145/Tsai-sets.htm>. The four missions were to improve negotiations with third-party forces for the LY election; have DPP-backed think tanks continually put forward policy proposals on current issues such as long-term care, unemployment, a new

economic system, food safety and other social welfare issues; have DPP members from local governments propose a “consolidated governance plan” to carry out the “regional governance” approach raised in 2014; and to hold a transparent election campaign as a precondition for uniting and renovating the nation.

⁸ Lu Hsin-hui and Lilian Wu, “DPP head to promote cross-Straits ties under Constitution: spokesman,” CNA, June 10, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/api/201506100019.aspx>.

⁹ Ko said he believed that under current conditions, the two sides should conduct exchanges based on what he called the “2015 new perspective” (一五新觀點), i.e., adhering to mutual trust, mutual understanding, mutual respect, and mutual cooperation. (“Ko: I respect Mainland’s position on ‘1992 Consensus,’” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), August 4, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16542>.) Defending his statement, Ko said he meant his “one family” remark as a gesture of “goodwill.” (Huang Li-yun and Y.F. Low, “Taipei mayor explains controversial ‘one family’ remark,” CNA, August 22, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201508220018.aspx>.)

Beijing’s only reported response was from Politburo Standing Committee member Yu Zhengsheng, who was quoted as saying Ko’s reference to “one family” was a “good thing” (好事). (Ch’en Yan-ch’iao, “Regarding Ko Wen-je’s statement on the two sides of the Strait being one family, Yu Zhengsheng: Good thing” [柯提兩岸一家親 俞正聲：好事], *United Daily News*, August 21, 2015, <http://udn.com/news/story/7331/1135396>.)

¹⁰ Sean Lin, “Ko comes under fire from pro-independence groups,” *Taipei Times*, August 22, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/08/22/2003625922>.

¹¹ “Are the two sides of the Strait one family? God Lai says ‘distant relatives,’ and [in any case] first remove the missiles” (兩岸一家親？ 賴神籲「遠親」先撤飛彈掉), *Liberty Times*, August 19, 2015, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/1417730>; “Lai on Ko’s ‘Both sides of the Strait are like family’ remark: Echo unlikely in Taiwan,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), August 20, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16623>.

¹² Chao Chia-lin, “Tsai Ing-wen: Respects Ko Wen-je’s statement that ‘the two sides of the Strait are one family’” (see endnote 1).

¹³ Chen Yan-t’ing, “Hung Hsiu-chu: I can’t say the ROC exists, otherwise . . . ”

(洪秀柱：我不能說中華民國存在 否則 . . .), *Liberty Times*, July 2, 2015, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/1367208>.

¹⁴ “Hung: I will adjust my cross-Straits policy discourse,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), July 8, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16418>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “KMT releases draft of new political platform,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), June 26, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16362>.

¹⁷ Alison Hsiao, “KMT’s Hung vows not to quit,” *Taipei Times*, July 30, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/07/30/2003624230>; Tseng Ying-yu and Lilian Wu, “Hung quashes rumors of her quitting presidential race,” CNA, August 19, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/api/201508190032.aspx>.

¹⁸ “KMT’s Hung ‘unlikely’ to visit US, says source,” *China Post*, June 22, 2015, <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/national/national-news/2015/06/22/438954/KMTs-Hung.htm>. Hung argued that time was short and, although the U.S. really didn’t know her, she did not need to visit the United States because Washington clearly understood her cross-Strait policy. (Tai Ya-chen and Y.F. Low, “National interest main consideration whether to visit U.S.: Hung,” CNA, June 20, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/api/201506200023.aspx>; Alison Hsiao, “US doesn’t understand me, Hung says,” *Taipei Times*, June 20, 2015, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2015/06/20/2003621139.>)

¹⁹ Wang Cheng-chung and Y.F. Low, “No decision yet on whether to visit U.S.: KMT presidential candidate,” CNA, August 18, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/api/201508180024.aspx>.

²⁰ “Hung: No two suns within the KMT,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), June 23, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&num=16344>.

²¹ Typical results were seen in the Taiwan Indicator Survey Research (TISR) poll of mid-August, which showed Tsai holding at 37.1 percent, Soong at 20.5 percent, and Hung at 13.9 percent. (TISR_TMBS_201508_1, 台灣民心動態調查、總統參選人評價, August 14, 2015, http://taiwansecurity.org/files/archive/381_40b74183.pdf.) A TVBS poll from the same period showed Tsai at 38 percent, Soong at 20 percent, and Hung at 17 percent. (蘇迪勒風災後, 2016 總統大選民調, August 11, 2015, <http://www.tvbs.com.tw/export/sites/tvbs/file/other/poll-center/0408061.pdf>.) In both cases this represented an increase for Tsai over preceding weeks, a basically steady support rate for Soong, and a precipitous drop for Hung. In both polls, the fall in Hung’s numbers was reflected in every demographic group regardless of age, geography, or party affiliation.

²² Earlier projections of growth in 2015 in the neighborhood of 3.5 percent dropped precipitously to 1.56 percent following poor performance in the second quarter according to the official estimates as of mid-August. (Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, ROC [Taiwan], “GDP: Preliminary estimation for 2015Q2 and outlook for 2015–6, August 14, 2015, <http://eng.dgbas.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=37987&cNode=3339>.) Growth in 2016 was forecast at 2.7 percent.

²³ Tien Yu-pin and Frances Huang, “Investors worried over political uncertainty in Taiwan: poll,” CNA, August 20, 2015, http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2790897, reporting on a poll taken by the Cathay Financial Holding Company.

²⁴ Alan D. Romberg, “Squaring the Circle: Adhering to Principle, Embracing Ambiguity,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 47, July 14, 2015, p. 3, <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/clm47ar.pdf>.

²⁵ Tsai may face increasing pressure on this issue from the KMT, as well. A recent article in the Taiwan press observed that when one takes into account how the “Republic of China” was defined in the Lee Teng-hui era, in which Tsai played a key role, questions arise about whether Tsai’s ambiguous phrasing does not, in fact, conceal a commitment to the “two states theory.” (Shao Zonghai, “One cannot over look the implied meaning of Tsai Ing-wen’s ‘existing constitutional order’” [邵宗海：不能忽略蔡英文「現行憲政體制」

的話外音], August 21, 2015, *China Times*, <http://www.chinatimes.com/realtimenews/20150821003936-260409>.)

²⁶ “China reprimands US over Taiwan meeting,” Xinhua, June 10, 2015, http://www.chinadailyasia.com/nation/2015-06/10/content_15275107.html; Zhang Weiran and Diao Haiyan, “Fan Changlong calls on U.S. side not to send wrong signals to Taiwan independence forces before elections” (范长龙要求美方在台湾大选前不向“台独”势力发错误信号), *Zhongguo Xinwen She*, June 13, 2015, <http://military.people.com.cn/n/2015/0613/c1011-27149495.html>.

²⁷ At a press conference in late August, having underscored the critical importance of the “1992 Consensus” as the essential foundation of political trust and related consultation mechanisms, TAO head Zhang Zhijun pointedly concluded that he had faith the Taiwan people “can make the proper choice” (能夠做出正確選擇; Kuo Mei-chun, “Zhang Zhi-jun: Without the 1992 Consensus, I’m afraid the cross-Straits consultative mechanism will collapse” [張志軍：沒九二共識 兩岸協商機制恐塌], *United Daily News* [hereafter abbreviated UDN], August 26, 2015, <http://udn.com/news/story/8525/1146172>.)

²⁸ The full text of Zhang’s remarks is available at http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201508/t20150806_10418375.htm.

²⁹ Zhang’s counterpart, Hsia Li-yan, a couple of weeks later rebutted Zhang’s definition of the “core” of the “1992 Consensus,” saying it was to defend the sovereignty of the Republic of China under the formula “one China, respective interpretations.” (“Zhang Zhijun: Cross-Straits relations face two choices,” KMT News Network [from Taipei papers], August 17, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16603>.)

³⁰ Lee Hsin-yin, “Cross-Straits scheduled flights increased to 890 per week,” CNA, July 3, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201507030019.aspx>.

³¹ As it has been explained to this writer by a senior official at the MAC, the double taxation agreement will require LY approval since it entails amendment of existing Taiwan laws. Given the stalemate over an LY oversight bill, for the moment that agreement is unlikely to be taken up. The aviation safety agreement, however, does not affect existing legislation, so will only need to be sent to the LY for its information and can proceed without LY action. (Private correspondence)

³² Romberg, “Squaring the Circle,” endnote 63, p. 22 (see endnote 24).

³³ Unsurprisingly, each side points a finger at the other as the one responsible for failure to come to terms. Taiwan has indicated that Beijing is insisting on crossing the center line at this stage, which Taipei considers a security threat. A Mainland official involved in cross-Straits affairs, however, was quoted as saying that “Beijing never said it wanted to immediately cross the center line of the Taiwan Strait but Taipei merely tried to avoid any discussion about this issue. This is too passive.” Moreover, that official charged that it was unreasonable for Taiwan to request that the Mainland increase the number of flights while refusing to expand flight routes, and to call on the Mainland to grant Mainland travelers permission to transit through Taiwan before completing the Taoyuan Aerotropolis project. (“Transits of Mainland travelers in Taiwan not included in new SEF-ARATS agreements,” *China Times* [translated in KMT News Network], August 19, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16620>.) Nonetheless, both sides say they are committed to resolving the problems, and

now seem somewhat more optimistic about the prospects for agreement by the end of the year.

³⁴ Before the latest high-level SEF-ARATS meeting, Taiwan officials said a commodities trade agreement was unlikely to be concluded by the end of 2015. (Lin Meng-ju and Romulo Huang, “Pre-negotiation talks on cross-Straits trade pact set for Beijing,” CNA, August 17, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201508170033.aspx>). After that meeting, however, negotiators held out hope that such an agreement could, in fact, be wrapped up by the end of the year. (Hung Chiao-wen and Lee Hsin-Yin, “Officials hope to conclude cross-Straits trade pact before year-end,” CNA, August 21, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/asoc/201508210029.aspx>.) Moreover, although no date was set for the next SEF-ARATS high-level meeting, major items to be addressed were said to include not only the pending transit agreement but cooperation on environmental protection, reciprocal establishment of SEF and ARATS offices, the commodities trade pact and dispute resolution agreement that remain to be negotiated under the June 2010 Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), along with exchanges in education, culture, and science and technology. (“Mainland, Taiwan sign agreements on flights safety, Taxation,” Xinhua, August 16, 2015, http://www.china.org.cn/china/Off_the_Wire/2015-08/26/content_36416156.htm.)

³⁵ Zhang Zhijun’s deputy, Li Yafei, addressed a conference in mid-August where he made similar points. Without “naming names,” he said that if there were individuals persisting in taking the “Taiwan independence” position of “one country on each side [of the Strait]” or rejecting the common political foundation of the “1992 Consensus” while claiming that they could inherit and share the results of cross-Straits peaceful development, they were not only engaged in self-delusion and wishful thinking, they were cheating and misleading Taiwan society and people. (Wang Yu-yan, “TAO’s Li Yafei: If cross-Straits relations are unstable, I’m afraid exchanges will retrogress” [國台辦李亞飛：兩岸關係不穩 交流恐倒退], UDN, August 20, 2015, <http://udn.com/news/story/7331/1132962>.)

Speaking at the same conference as Li, Zhou Zhihuai, head of the Taiwan Studies Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), was even more direct. He said the DPP lacked four capabilities necessary to maintain peace and stability in cross-Straits relations: the capability to maintain cross-Straits peace (because it would not abandon support for the Taiwan independence movement); the capability to deal with cross-Straits relations (because it did not endorse the common political foundation); the capability to develop cross-Straits economic and trade relations (because of Tsai’s pursuit of an economic development model that did not depend on the Mainland); and the capability to deal with Taiwan-U.S. relations (because cross-Straits problems would undermine the stability of Taipei-Washington ties). (“Zhou Zhihuai: DPP cannot maintain cross-Straits peace and stability,” KMT News Network [from Taipei papers], August 12, 2015, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=16582>.)

Finally, Zhou’s deputy, Zhu Weidong, gave a lengthy talk at the Central Party School on July 21 entitled “The current Taiwan situation and the future prospects for the development of cross-Straits relations” (当前台湾局势与两岸关系发展前景. A video of the lecture is available at <http://www.71.cn/2015/0721/823485.shtml>; the text is at

<http://www.71.cn/2015/0721/823494.shtml>.) Although Zhu said he is a long-term optimist, he highlighted a number of immediate challenges. One is that Tsai Ing-wen advocates “soft independence,” not the sort of readily identifiable (and hence easily opposed) threat represented by a plan to declare *de jure* independence. Moreover, Zhu noted, the KMT is very weak and unable to present a counterforce to contain the DPP’s independence tendencies, especially in the LY. Still, given his long-term perspective, Zhu argued that the Mainland should make no compromises on its principled stand, but rather should use its economic leverage to bring Tsai around to accept what is necessary. Also of note, Zhu argued that the U.S. does not want to see cross-Straits relations develop too fast, and so, despite previous support for Ma and surface neutrality in this election, Washington not only is willing to acquiesce in the DPP’s return to power but would be happy to see Tsai win in order to slow the pace of cross-Straits reconciliation. (Similar reasoning seems to be making the rounds in certain circles in Taiwan as well.)

³⁶ “Zhang Zhijun: Cross-Straits relations face two choices,” see endnote 29.

³⁷ Daily Press Briefing, Department of State, June 5, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2015/06/243249.htm#CHINA>.

³⁸ Rita Cheng, Huang Chao-ping, and Lilian Wu, “Stable cross-Straits ties key to growing U.S.-Taiwan ties: AIT head,” CNA, July 13, 2015, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aipl/201506060014.aspx>.

³⁹ Daily Press Briefing, Department of State, August 13, 2015, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/dpb/2015/08/246080.htm#CHINA3>.