

From Generation to Generation: Advancing Cross-Strait Relations

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When PRC leader Xi Jinping met with the Taiwan's former vice president, Vincent Siew, at the APEC leaders meeting in early October, he went beyond reiterating the standard position on the importance of promoting peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. Xi said that, in the “long term,” political differences between the two sides must be resolved and not be passed on from generation to generation. In this essay we explore that statement and its implications.

Xi Jinping Pushes Political Dialogue . . .

Just as *CLM* 42 was being posted online in early October, PRC leader Xi Jinping and Taiwan's former Vice President Vincent Siew were meeting in Bali, Indonesia, where each headed his government's delegation to the APEC leaders meeting. Predictably, Xi emphasized the importance of enhancing cross-Strait political trust and hammering out a common political foundation as the key to guaranteeing the continued peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

But Xi then went on to say that, looking to the long term, the longstanding political differences between the two sides must eventually be resolved step by step and not passed down from generation to generation (总不能将这些问题一代一代传下去).¹ Elaborating on how this could take place, Xi noted that the Mainland had stated many times that, within the “one China framework,” it was willing to hold “equal consultations” (平等协商) with the Taiwan side regarding cross-Strait political questions and to make “fair and reasonable arrangements” (合情合理安排).

Xi's call for eventual political talks was not new. It is a staple of virtually every policy statement by a senior PRC official about cross-Strait relations. But his “generation to generation” comment was not standard fare and it raised questions about whether he was amending or even discarding the “patient” approach laid out in Hu Jintao's December 31, 2008, “six-point” speech,² indicating that he would push harder for political talks in the short term, perhaps seeking unification within a more compressed timeframe, or whether he had something less ambitious, and less hurried, in mind.

Xi's line was echoed and amplified in a series of high-level remarks in the following weeks. At a cross-Strait “peace forum” several days after Bali, State Council Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) Director Zhang Zhijun observed that Xi's “generation to generation” remarks had “deep meaning” (寓意深刻), were based on a “profound sense of history” (厚重的历史感), and bespoke a “sincere aspiration” (真诚的愿望). “At the same time,” Zhang said, “they clarified fundamental considerations involved in the resolution of cross-Strait political differences” (同时讲清了解决两岸政治分歧问题的基本考虑).³

Even though the two sides agreed the easier and economic issues should be addressed first, economic and political issues are not always strictly separated from one another, Zhang argued. Moreover, a number of the cross-Strait agreements already concluded, as well as topics of interest to Taiwan for future agreement, have political dimensions. For example, the handling of Taiwan's participation in foreign-related activities cannot circumvent political aspects of cross-Strait relations.

Admittedly, Zhang went on, the differences between the two sides are complex and will take time to resolve. The Mainland recognizes this and “has the strong determination as well as the necessary patience” (有坚定的决心, 也有必要的耐心) to ultimately realize reunification. “But that does not mean waiting passively without doing anything” (但这并非意味着消极等待, 无所作为).⁴ While “some political differences can be shelved temporarily, it is impossible to avoid them totally or for a long time” (一些政治争议尽管可以暂时搁置, 但不可能完全和长期回避). Paying attention only to economics and not politics (只经不政) is not sustainable

Putting a gloss on the adage Xi had used with Wu Poh-hsiung in June about how the Mainland realized that “three feet of ice cannot melt in a day” (冰冻三尺, 非一日之寒),⁵ Zhang cautioned that, nonetheless, if the two sides did not have communication and dialogue about difficult political questions, and did not start talking, then not only would there be no way to resolve the problems, but the ice “could become thicker and harder” (有可能会结得更厚, 冻得更硬).

. . . and Senior Officials Link It to Reunification

Zhang and other senior officials went further, linking political talks and peaceful development to ultimate reunification. It is virtually a requirement in comprehensive remarks on cross-Strait relations to talk about reunification. But often when speaking to Taiwan audiences in recent years, Mainland officials have gone out of their way to draw a distinction between peaceful development and a final resolution in the form of reunification. Zhang himself has done so in the past.

Obviously, the objective of that approach is, while not retreating from the ultimate goal, to try to assure people in Taiwan that peaceful development of cross-Strait relations is about the here and now, not about creating a path straight to unification. Lately, however, speeches by senior PRC officials have not made such an explicit distinction and have actually drawn quite direct links between political talks, peaceful development, and reunification, all in the context of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In his speech at the “peace forum” in October, Zhang Zhijun made a number of references to reunification, including linking it to peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, but these points were not highlighted and seemed more or less to follow a well-trodden path.⁶

But when State Councilor Yang Jiechi addressed a seminar in November, he appeared to take things a bit further. Yang asserted that the “most distinctive feature” (最鲜明的特色) of the important thought of peaceful development of cross-Strait relations is the “close

integration of the historic mission of completing the unification of the motherland with the ambitious goal of revitalizing the Chinese nation” (把完成祖国统一的历史使命同实现中华民族伟大复兴的宏伟目标紧密联系起来).⁷

This point was repeated again several days later by recently retired TAO Deputy Director Sun Yafu at a conference in Hong Kong. While citing Xi Jinping’s “generation to generation” remarks, Sun turned the connection around a bit. He spoke of the necessity to address and resolve some important political differences in order to create conditions for the advancement of peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. But then he seemed to change direction and closed his speech with ringing rhetoric not only linking peaceful development of cross-Strait relations to completing the great task of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation but also identifying unification as an “historical necessity” (歷史必然) in the course of moving forward in that cause and expressing confidence that, in the rejuvenation process, all Chinese could with one heart complete the great work of unifying the motherland.⁸

The connection between peaceful development and reunification was also advanced in an article that Zhang Zhijun published in *People’s Daily* on December 31, 2013, to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the path-breaking January 1, 1979, Standing Committee “Message to Taiwan Compatriots.”⁹ In the course of his comprehensive look at Taiwan policy and cross-Strait relations, Zhang both began with a reference to achieving reunification and ended with one, including seven such references in all. Moreover, in his concluding paragraph he made the same sort of linkage Yang had between the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and that ultimate goal.

We should fully implement all the requirements of the 18th CPC National Congress regarding Taiwan-related work, unswervingly implement the central authorities’ fundamental policies regarding Taiwan-related work, steadfastly take the correct path of the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, continue to create new prospects for the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, and in the course of realizing the Chinese nation’s great rejuvenation accomplish the great cause of the motherland’s reunification.¹⁰

One month later, at a Taiwan work conference in late January, Politburo Standing Committee Member Yu Zhengsheng gave an “important speech” in which he made the linkage even more explicit.¹¹

The general goal of Taiwan-related work in the current circumstances is to achieve reunification of the motherland in the process of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Taiwan-related work should focus on maintaining the correct direction of cross-Strait relations’ development and consolidate the political, economic, cultural and social foundation for the peaceful development of cross-Strait ties so as to create favorable conditions for peaceful reunification.

Taiwan Pushes Back

Whatever Xi's intention and that of his colleagues, Taiwan's response to all these statements was to reiterate Taipei's view that it was premature to address the question of authoritative political dialogue, much less to resolve significant political differences or even speak of unification. The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) press release on the Siew-Xi meeting made no reference to the "generation to generation" comment, reporting instead that during their conversation Xi had "strongly affirmed and valued the spirit of shelving disputes and building mutually beneficial cross-strait relations shown by the two sides."¹²

Asked about the matter at his press conference after meeting with Xi, Siew stressed the importance of the 1992 Consensus, saying that the political differences across the Strait arose out of the history of the past 60 years and could not be resolved in just a few years. Rather, one must slowly accumulate mutual trust, and only when that process has reached a certain point can those differences be resolved. Pressed specifically on Xi's "generation to generation" remark, Siew said that as long as leaders and people on the two sides enhance mutual understanding, interactions, and trust, and create a consensus, they will probably find a way to create a fair and reasonable plan to solve differences slowly. But, he added, no one knows how long that will take.¹³

When the Mainland sought to press Taiwan participants in the October Shanghai "peace forum" to endorse a more rapid pace of political dialogue and negotiation it backfired, not only creating open disagreements, but also generating outspoken complaints about the PRC's high-pressure tactics. Debate was particularly intense about the idea of a "peace framework" (和平架构), which was one of the four main topics at the forum.¹⁴ The controversy was triggered by a PRC paper arguing in favor of a peace accord, characterizing it as a "national accord" under the premise of protecting China's territorial integrity "during the interim period before unification." The author insisted that the principle that "the two sides of the Strait belong to one China" was crucial to a peace pact. But he also went further, arguing that while a peace accord was not a unification pact, its "political connotations of unification" could not be ignored.¹⁵

Taiwan attendees reacted strongly. As one Taiwan participant put it, placing a peace accord in a "before unification" context does not "face reality." "It's like the Republic of China does not exist."¹⁶ If the Mainland did not face objective reality and if it set a "one China framework" as a precondition, said another participant, it would be difficult for the two sides at the forum to continue their discussion.¹⁷ In essence, as one press account described it, the two sides largely talked past each other and often were diametrically opposed, with the Blue and Green members from Taiwan holding a largely unified position against their Mainland counterparts.¹⁸

Thus, the most that participants could agree on were broad generalities such as fostering conditions for the leaders of the two sides to meet and "enhancing" coordination and cooperation in external affairs. But when it came to specifics, particularly on political and security issues, there were yawning gaps. Even the official Chinese new agency took note of that.

Despite the consensus reached among academics from both sides, their views differ on particular issues, such as how to make reasonable arrangements for cross-Strait political relations in the context of continued political confrontation; how to clarify the legal relationship between the one-China framework and the existing rules of the two sides; the political meaning of an official end to the state of hostility between the two sides; and how to establish a mechanism to build confidence in military security across the Strait.¹⁹

Similarly, at a KMT-CCP forum several days later, the Mainland side sought to include reference to the “one China framework” in the preamble to the concluding report. As at the peace forum, Taiwan participants not only resisted including such a reference but opposed any reference to political issues in the conclusions, and it was only after what one media report characterized as “intensive discussions” (密集商談) and “political wrangling” (政治角力) that a set of 19 common recommendations was agreed upon, none of which touched on political questions beyond the standard reiteration of opposition to Taiwan independence and adherence to the 1992 Consensus.²⁰

Speaking at a dinner with Yu Zhengsheng on the eve of the KMT-CCP forum, honorary KMT chairman Wu Poh-hsiung apparently tried to square the circle by employing a “generation to generation” formula that would be acceptable in Taiwan. Wu said he “hoped that people would continue to *promote peaceful relations* between the two sides of the Strait from generation to generation and achieve the mission of jointly rejuvenating the Chinese nation” (希望一代接一代，繼續推動兩岸和平關係，實現共同振興中華的任務; emphasis added).²¹

But at the same time as these rhetorical tugs of war were going on, Taiwan officials, including President Ma Ying-jeou, insisted that Taipei had not “avoided” politics when necessary. Ma pointed to the 1992 Consensus, which he identified as a “high-level political issue.” Moreover, even if making a rather different point from Zhang Zhijun’s, in ways Ma argued together with the TAO director by asserting that some of the cross-Strait agreements already contained “low-level” political aspects. In any case, Ma denied he was willfully seeking to push handling of political issues off to future generations. The point was not whether an issue was political, it was whether it needed to be addressed.

It is not that we avoid touching the political issues and pass them on generation to generation. [In fact my administration is] willing to discuss any issue as long as it is an urgent one.²²

Ma pointed to the fact that there was no consensus in Taiwan to talk about the kinds of steps Beijing had raised such as a peace accord or mutual military confidence-building measures. Reiterating a point he had made before, Ma argued that the essence of cross-Strait peace already existed so a formal accord was unnecessary, whereas there were still tasks to complete in the economic area.²³ “We don’t exclude such negotiations, but there are priorities. We don’t see now as the right time, and there is no need to discuss a peace pact (with China) at the moment.”²⁴

The Ma administration clearly wants to maintain momentum in cross-Strait relations and to make progress to the degree that it is possible. But as MAC head Wang Yu-chi observed, while Taipei believes the direction of cross-Strait relations must be positive and that they must not be allowed to backtrack, public opinion must be taken into consideration in determining the pace of cross-Strait exchanges.²⁵ Based on that public opinion, Wang said, it is still too early to talk about political issues. In line with Ma's thinking, Wang commented that a peace accord is neither a high priority nor urgent.²⁶ Accordingly, he said, "we are keeping to our own schedule."²⁷

Wang-Zhang Meeting

In laying out his view about not passing political differences on from generation to generation, Xi Jinping also told Vincent Siew that the people in charge of the responsible departments from both sides of the Strait could meet and exchange views on those issues that needed tending. It was not by accident, therefore, that Wang Yu-chi and Zhang Zhijun had a short "encounter" in the lobby of the Bali hotel on the margins of the APEC meeting where Xi and Siew met in October. The fact that for the first time they referred to each other by their official titles²⁸ became a major topic of discussion in Taiwan, though it is worth noting that PRC media did not even report that they had done so, much less comment on it.²⁹

Zhang invited Wang to visit the Mainland, and arrangements were eventually made for them to meet in Nanjing and Shanghai between February 11 and 14, 2014. In the meantime, however, there was obviously a certain degree of verbal arm-wrestling going on. As late as January 10 Wang said the two sides were still discussing time, venue, and agenda,³⁰ and formal confirmation of the visit did not come until January 28.³¹

In the run-up to the trip, both the Legislative Yuan (LY) and the Mainland side put severe strictures on what could be discussed—apparently either in private or in public. The LY ruled out anything that touched on "one China" or any cross-Strait political topic.³² And despite efforts in Taipei to deflect the question, the Mainland reportedly insisted that Wang avoid topics such as "the ROC," human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, as well as any reference to the title "president."³³ (When asked about any PRC limits on what Wang could raise, a TAO spokesman responded only indirectly, saying that China did not want anything to happen that "could disturb arrangements for the talks."³⁴)

On the other hand, a PRC official reportedly said that Beijing hoped that at least a "consensus memorandum" could be signed at the end of the talks as the "enforceable" basis of future talks.³⁵ But this was clearly way beyond anything Wang was authorized to do and any kind of joint document was ruled out by Taipei before he set off for Nanjing.³⁶ Indeed, the MAC head said he would not even touch on any sensitive political issues—"I think it's better to make this meeting simple"³⁷—although Wang said he would "stand firm" on the government's positions on cross-Strait relations³⁸ and would make "appropriate comments on suitable occasions" (在適當場合說該說的話).³⁹

To demonstrate his follow-through on these last points, Wang later highlighted the fact that he had attached a name card with his official MAC title to a wreath he presented at

the Sun Yat-sen mausoleum in Nanjing and that he had publicly referred to the “Republic of China” in remarks he made on leaving the mausoleum. Perhaps not as directly “confrontational,” at several points Wang also called on the two sides to face the “cross-strait reality.”⁴⁰ Finally in this regard, Wang reported that, while in their meeting Zhang Zhijun had referred to Ma Ying-jeou either as “Mr. Ma” or “your leader,” Wang had consistently referred to Ma as “president.”⁴¹

As things turned out, the two ministers focused primarily on “operational” issues such as health insurance for students, prospects for advancing the post-ECFA follow-on agreements and for Taiwan’s participation in regional economic activities, communication channels between TAO and MAC, exchange of media bureaus, and the proposed exchange of offices between the two “unofficial” bodies that handle cross-strait relations on a day-to-day basis, Taiwan’s Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Mainland’s Association for Relations across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS).

On the communication channel, as of this writing, details are apparently still being worked out. But they reportedly will involve telephone links between the two ministers, their deputies, and chief secretaries.⁴² Moreover, it was agreed that Zhang Zhijun will pay a return visit to Taiwan “soon,” perhaps as early as April, with a second Wang trip to the Mainland anticipated for later in the year.

With regard to Taiwan’s drive for participation in regional economic activities, there seems to be a delicate minuet going on. First of all, there is the question of the priority between cross-strait economic relations and engaging in regional economic efforts. Which, if either, comes first? And then there is the issue of whether and how Taiwan and the Mainland relate in terms of regional structures.

On the former, although the MAC speaks of advancing cross-strait economic cooperation and participating in regional economic integration as activities to be pursued “side by side,”⁴³ and the briefings of both sides following Wang’s visit implied that this was a view shared by the Mainland, it seems that Beijing in reality has a different perspective.

In any enumeration of goals, Mainland briefers have consistently listed completion of ECFA follow-on agreements ahead of discussion of regional activities. Moreover, Zhang is reported to have told Wang that before the two sides can jointly explore a viable approach “to building a link between cross-strait economic cooperation and regional economic cooperation” (previewing the Mainland’s view on the second topic), the two sides should finish up the post-ECFA work, including ratification of the services trade agreement still awaiting LY approval as well as completing and ratifying the commodities trade agreement and the agreement on dispute resolution.⁴⁴

On the second issue, how cross-strait economic relations tie into participation in regional activities, it is reasonable to assume that Taipei has no desire to be subsumed within a “Chinese” membership or delegation to either the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) or the Transpacific Partnership (TPP), both of which are high priorities for Ma. Nonetheless, as indicated above, Beijing has consistently talked about

how the two sides need to work together to link up their bilateral economic cooperation with regional efforts.

It was therefore intriguing when at this year's APEC leaders meeting in Bali Vincent Siew spoke about "jointly participating" in regional economic activities. But the likely limits of his conception were evident in his advocacy to Xi that Taiwan needed to sign bilateral trade agreements with economic partners and join both the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). Moreover, he complained that Beijing was preventing Taiwan from asserting its own international identity by blocking its entry into international institutions and signing free-trade deals with its Asian neighbors: "It's not only a very unfortunate situation, it's also not a fair one. We should be able to participate in all these efforts."⁴⁵

Against this background, it is noteworthy that when he spoke of his agenda for talks with Zhang Zhijun in mid-February, Wang Yu-chi said they would discuss "both sides of the Strait jointly participating in regional economic integration" (兩岸共同參與區域經濟整合),⁴⁶ and MAC used similar words in summing up the meeting afterward.⁴⁷

But while one doesn't know what Wang specifically had in mind, clearly Taipei is not looking to directly partner with Beijing in such efforts or, as we have said, to operate under Beijing's aegis. Based on the precedent of other experiences relating to Taiwan's "international space," at a minimum Beijing will insist on consultation. But one hopes that Mainland officials recognize the sensitivities involved inside Taiwan. And, indeed, in private conversations PRC officials say they understand that any perception of Taipei seeking "permission" from Beijing is poisonous in Taiwan, and they deny that is their intent. Yet the fact is they insist on arrangements that strongly convey the impression that permission is necessary, so there will be some delicate maneuvering in the months ahead.

Regarding the long-pending reciprocal exchange of SEF and ARATS offices, during their meeting in Nanjing, Zhang Zhijun urged Wang to engage in joint efforts to reach a consensus.⁴⁸ But the most the MAC could offer after the conversation was that the two sides "agreed to more proactively discuss feasible measures and pragmatically handle issues related to the establishment of reciprocal institutions."⁴⁹ The TAO statement tracked that pretty closely, saying that the two sides would continue to consult on the matter, concretely and appropriately handling the remaining issues so as to realize the plan of establishing the reciprocal offices as soon as possible.⁵⁰

That after all of this time they could not come up with a mutually satisfactory solution to the one significant remaining question, that of SEF officials paying "humanitarian visits" to Taiwan citizens detained on the Mainland, speaks volumes about the gap in the approaches of the two sides, both how politically important the issue is in Taiwan and how sensitive the Mainland is to perceptions the SEF office would be functioning like a consulate.⁵¹ Failure to close that gap by the time Zhang visits Taiwan this spring could very well dampen any sense that qualitative advances in overall cross-Strait relations are feasible in the short run.

The use of “titles” was handled sufficiently well for both sides to come away satisfied, though clearly not all of Taipei’s druthers were fully met. Each principal used the other’s “ministerial” title in their face-to-face meetings. Even there, however, whereas Wang spelled out Zhang’s entire title as Director of the Taiwan Affairs Office Zhang (國臺辦張主任), Zhang merely referred to Wang “Minister Wang Yu-chi” (王郁琦主委). Wang took note of this in their meeting with cameras rolling, saying that he hoped the day would come when they could call each other by their official titles (互稱職銜).⁵²

At the same time, although the Mainland has now started to refer to the Mainland Affairs Council by its full name (大陸委員會), and Mainland media prominently reported on the meeting, those media reports, including the official announcement of Wang’s visit and discussions of it afterward, nonetheless abstained from using Wang’s ministerial title, only identifying him either as the “responsible person” (負責人)⁵³ or “head” of the MAC.

Pressed to explain this practice, the TAO spokeswoman explained that the matter of titles was handled in accordance with the “real situation” in cross-Strait relations. Zhang’s employment of Wang’s ministerial title in their talks, she said, was a “pragmatic arrangement” (務實安排) designed to deepen the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. The meetings between “those responsible for the departments handling cross-Strait issues on the two sides” (雙方兩岸事務主管部門負責人) were held “on a common political basis” (在共同政治基礎上) and “in the spirit of mutual respect, seeking common ground while putting aside differences and promoting positive interactions” (本着相互尊重、求同存異、良性互動的精神來進行). But the handling of politically sensitive issues (implicitly meaning use of titles beyond this very specific context) “should be resolved through political dialogue and negotiations” (應該通過政治對話和談判來解決), she said.

All this may seem arcane for most readers, but the fact that it is being so carefully orchestrated is testament to its significance.

In fact, this usage of Wang’s title was good enough to draw praise even from the DPP.⁵⁴ That said, however, the opposition criticized many other aspects of the trip, voicing suspicions ahead of time that Wang would make big concessions in secret negotiations in order to promote the possibility of a Ma-Xi meeting,⁵⁵ and charging afterward that Wang had made several “fatal mistakes”⁵⁶ and calling on him to provide a full accounting of his conversations.⁵⁷

A Ma-Xi meeting was broached in the final Zhang-Wang “tea” in Shanghai, when it was raised by the TAO head. Apparently each side merely stated its position (including Taiwan’s view that APEC would be the most appropriate venue because it would render moot the issue of using official titles) but no effort was made to discuss it further. The gap between the two sides was underscored by a TAO spokesperson shortly after, when she made an even more definitive statement than usual rejecting any international venue, including APEC.

This is all related, of course, to a fundamental difference over approaches to the “ROC.” One cannot refrain from inferring a connection between that difference and Zhang’s activity while Wang Yu-chi was paying homage to Sun Yat-sen at Sun’s mausoleum the day after the Nanjing meeting. Not only did Wang’s TAO escorts absent themselves during the mausoleum visit, but Zhang Zhijun took the occasion to pay a widely reported visit to the “Memorial Hall for Compatriots killed in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Forces of Aggression.” While there, Zhang called on Taiwan compatriots to “bear in mind national history and resolutely fight back against Japanese right-wing provocation.”⁵⁸ His moral was explicit: Although there are many differences and disagreements between the two sides, when confronting a challenge to the fundamental interests of the Chinese people, they must adopt a common position.

In light of the various constraints imposed on Wang’s visit, it would seem that its “larger” achievement, beyond the use of titles and agreement to enhance communication and conduct further visits, was simply that it took place. Wang termed it a “milestone” and Ma Ying-jeou said it signified a significant step in the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and normalization of bilateral interactions.⁵⁹ The TAO spokeswoman also hailed it as “an important step” for promoting comprehensive development of cross-Strait relations.⁶⁰

At the same time, reflecting a healthy sense of realism, both sides cautioned that the road ahead will be rough and further breakthroughs not easily come by.⁶¹

Still, and even if communication has not yet fully “institutionalized,” a pattern of exchanges seems to be emerging.⁶² What will happen in those exchanges, of course, is yet to be seen. But it is a notable first step toward consolidating more reliable communication.

—Prelude to a Summit?

In the context of the Wang-Zhang meeting, much attention has been focused again on the possibility of a Xi-Ma summit. Both sides are clearly interested, but, at least at this point, their visions of the “necessary conditions” needed to pull it off remain far apart.

On the Mainland side, when TAO Deputy Director Sun Yafu was asked in October about the prospect for such a meeting, he echoed the enthusiasm he had voiced earlier.⁶³ Sun said that holding leaders talks had been the Mainland’s policy for three decades and that Beijing would work to make it happen. After all, he argued, there were many issues that had not been resolved because the leaders of the two sides had not been able to meet to resolve them. As the atmospherics were now improving, the two sides could discuss conditions for holding a meeting. Rather optimistically, given how it has turned out so far, he added that direct contacts between officials dealing with cross-Strait affairs could create the necessary conditions for such a meeting.⁶⁴

At the same time as it voices support for a Xi-Ma meeting, as already noted, the TAO continues to rule out the possibility that such a meeting could take place either at APEC

or any other “international occasion.” This position was reiterated at the time Sun spoke,⁶⁵ and again in the wake of the Wang-Zhang meetings in February.⁶⁶

For his part, Ma has continued to make clear that he is quite open to the idea of a cross-Strait summit,⁶⁷ but he has also stood by his previous position that any such meeting would have to be supported by the people in Taiwan, serve Taiwan’s interests, and take place under circumstances that maintained the dignity of the nation, with equal status for both sides.⁶⁸ And as it had last summer, in response to Sun’s statement the MAC amplified the dignity point by saying that any meeting must “fully manifest” Ma’s capacity as president of the ROC.⁶⁹ Especially with the MAC’s focus on APEC as “the most appropriate venue,” however, no effort has been made by Taiwan to try to define further how that requirement could be met.⁷⁰

Unsurprisingly, although lambasting Xi Jinping for intensifying pressure on Taiwan to open political negotiations that it said were designed specifically to lead to unification under the “one China framework,” the DPP primarily focused its fire on the Ma administration for seizing every possible opportunity to promote a Xi-Ma summit at APEC. The party charged that, in effect, Ma was seeking to transform APEC, one of the few international and regional events in which Taiwan can actively participate, into merely an occasion for cross-Strait political dialogue. In so doing, it went on, the administration was turning Taiwan’s international relations into “cross-Strait affairs” and downgrading Taiwan’s international status, all in the service of promoting a cross-Strait summit and establishing Ma’s place in history.⁷¹

Despite these charges, the possibility of a summit-level meeting was in fact not raised at the APEC meeting in Bali when Xi and Vincent Siew met.⁷² And, as indicated earlier, it got the barest mention during the recent Wang-Zhang encounter.

Meanwhile, although there has been considerable speculation that, in his new responsibilities as Secretary General of the National Security Council, Taiwan’s outgoing representative to the United States, King Pu-tung, will really focus on year-end local elections,⁷³ more likely his main official tasks will extend outward. This will include managing Taiwan’s entry into regional economic organizations and promoting Taipei’s bilateral relationship with a variety of countries, not least among them the United States. King’s responsibilities will also, however, relate importantly to advancing cross-Strait relations, including the possibility of a Ma-Xi meeting.⁷⁴

Future Prospects

Whatever progress on political issues Xi hoped to stimulate with his comment to Vincent Siew it would seem that Taiwan’s realities will continue to impose significant limits. Track II political dialogue will certainly continue (and a second round of the “peace forum” is expected to take place in Taiwan in 2014), but the notion that common positions will emerge that might be the basis of rethinking at the governmental level seems premature at best.

This is not to say that Beijing will not continue to press for political dialogue. It will. But even though Xi's remarks have been echoed a number of times by senior PRC officials, and even though "reunification" seems to have become a more prominent feature of high-level statements, we have already seen signs that the Mainland is not going to find many allies among the Blue or Green camp in Taiwan in its efforts to press for formal agreements such as a peace accord, especially if they are premised on a "one China" foundation.

What is less clear is how far Taipei will go to cooperate with Beijing's desire to coordinate Taiwan's participation in the international community. As unlikely as it seems that the public in Taiwan would support working through the Mainland to achieve greater political or economic space, some level of cooperation is obviously needed or else Taiwan will be locked out. In the diplomacy that led to Taiwan's invitation by the International Civil Aviation Organization Council president to the organization's triennial meeting in Montreal last fall, it was very clear that the issue was not only that "one China, one Taiwan" or "two Chinas" be avoided, something that the government in Taipei certainly understands and does not seek to challenge. But, as Mainland officials consistently emphasized, consultation between the two sides is also necessary in order to come to "fair and reasonable arrangements."⁷⁵

The biggest question is how serious Beijing is about trying to press for serious political talks in the foreseeable future. It seems to this observer that, while the intention is quite serious, those guiding Taiwan policy in the Mainland realize the limits to what Ma Ying-jeou can do. As former TAO head (now foreign minister) Wang Yi used to say, "We won't ask Ma to do what he can't do." But assessment of what "can" and "can't" be done is a judgment call.

Beijing has broadly hinted that if Ma could do more on key issues such as establishing a cross-Strait military security mutual trust mechanism and negotiating a cross-Strait peace accord within a one China framework, then Beijing would be prepared to go quite far in agreeing to "fair and reasonable arrangements" for Taiwan's participation in a broad range of international activities and in the entire realm of future development of long-term cross-Strait relations.

As we have seen, however, while Taiwan indeed wants greater international space, especially but not only in the economic sphere, and while Ma has personally endorsed the concept of "one China" and a one China framework, formalizing such positions in cross-Strait relations is a matter of extreme political sensitivity on the island. Hence, my inclination is to agree with an experienced Mainland scholar who observed, "This year won't be suitable for Beijing to broach political negotiations because the Taiwanese public is not behind it. But Beijing has become more confident in dealing with Taiwan. So continuing to boost cultural and economic exchanges will pave the road for more sensitive discussions in the future."⁷⁶

The DPP Factor

One point to understand about the push by Xi and his colleagues is a continuing concern about what might happen if the DPP returns to office in the presidential elections in 2016. In my judgment, the idea that moving to formal “Taiwan independence” could become a goal of a future DPP administration is fanciful. And although this concern continues to animate PRC statements to a certain degree, I believe that informed Taiwan hands on the Mainland understand that is the case.

What is not fanciful is that, for all of its internal wrestling with the future of its cross-Strait policy, the party is unlikely to come up with a policy that is based on “one China.” Former Premier Frank Hsieh has tried to push the party somewhat in that direction. However, not only has he been rebuffed by the party, but he has had to make clear that he is not actually advocating “one China” and that he dropped an earlier formulation (“one China constitution”) because it was misconstrued and seen as leaning too far in that direction. So even he has his limits. Still, Hsieh believes the party has evaded the issue and he has explained that he is running for party chair in the May 2014 election in order to promote a “breakthrough” (突破) in the DPP’s cross-Strait policy.⁷⁷

The “report” of the DPP China Affairs Committee issued on January 9, 2014,⁷⁸ shunned not only Hsieh’s proposal but also one by the party’s LY whip, Ker Chieh-ming, to “freeze” the 1991 so-called “independence” party plank that calls for the establishment of a Republic of Taiwan. Party officials have long argued that the 1999 Kaohsiung Resolution on Taiwan’s Future superseded the earlier plank, but they have not, and apparently will not, either remove the earlier provision from the charter or even “freeze” it.⁷⁹

The Mainland has, of course, taken note of all of this and, having welcomed the proposal to “freeze” the 1991 plank as a “positive sign” (积极的信号),⁸⁰ it then sharply criticized the DPP for its inability to accept that proposal or in any other way to move away from its essential position on “one country on each side of the Strait.”

In his November speech, Sun Yafu observed that as long as the DPP continued to support Taiwan independence and did not abandon the party’s Taiwan independence party platform or its 2007 “normal state” resolution,⁸¹ Beijing would not have formal party-to-party relations with it.⁸² Following up on Sun’s remarks, the TAO briefer noted that instead of abandoning those positions, the DPP was trying to use some “vague concepts” (模糊的概念) to create a political foundation for interacting with the Mainland. She said “the Mainland cannot possibly accept this” and called on the DPP to face reality and with earnest resolve really abandon its unrealistic position of “Taiwan independence.”⁸³

Though not reflected in the official TAO briefing transcript, it was reported that this criticism was at least in part directed personally at DPP Chair Su Tseng-chang, who, the spokeswoman said, “has never given up advocacy of Taiwan independence.”⁸⁴ But the fact of the matter is that no DPP chair would seek to have the party embrace “one China,” and so if the DPP won in 2016, even if it dropped the 1991 plank, Beijing would have to

confront a difficult choice of how to deal with authorities who had not accepted the “required” framework for smooth cross-Strait relations.

So, in addition to trying to move the DPP off of its philosophical base, one presumes that some of the Mainland’s motivation for the seemingly more urgent push for political dialogue with the Ma administration is to try to lock in a relationship based on a “one China framework” that cannot be reversed after 2016, no matter who wins the Taiwan presidency. To succeed, of course, Beijing would have to convince the majority in Taiwan that such a relationship was in their interest.

In addition, we will also be interested to see how the DPP plans to gain the support of the crucial electoral center in circumstances when it is clear the PRC will not accept the party’s current approach as a basis for advancing relations.

Afterword

As this essay was heading to publication, Xi Jinping met with KMT honorary chairman and former Vice President Lien Chan.⁸⁵ Xi focused on the common weal and woe of the people on both sides of the Strait and the advantages that would come from striving together for their mutual benefit.

Xi did not reengage on the “generation to generation” point he had made to Vincent Siew last October, and he did not pick up on the “reunification” linkage other senior officials had recently made. But his basic theme regarding the importance of peaceful development under the “one China framework” and common identity was unchanged.

Xi appealed to a sense of “family” and cultural and historical affinity of people on both sides of the Strait as part of the Chinese nation. He said he fully understood the feelings of the people of Taiwan regarding their own experience and aspirations and fully respected their choices regarding their social system and way of life. People on both sides of the Strait would benefit from the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi said. The China dream is their common dream, and both should work to make it come true.

Some analysts have suggested that this “softer” line means Beijing will ease off on the push for political dialogue. But this seems doubtful. While Xi may have avoided some of the more “provocative” ideas he and others have voiced in recent months, it is unlikely that this signals an abandonment of the Mainland’s desire to pursue such a dialogue. Xi’s statement to Lien that he welcomed ideas from all elements of Taiwan society about how to help promote peaceful development of cross-Strait relations perhaps reflected a clearer understanding of the political realities in Taiwan than he showed in October and a greater willingness to accommodate them. But the thrust of his remarks remained focused on achieving that further development, including in the political realm, which clearly continues to be high on his agenda.

Notes

¹ “General Secretary Xi Jinping meets with Siew Wanchang and his party”

(习近平总书记会见萧万长一行), *Xinhua*, October 6, 2013,

http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201310/t20131007_4979072.htm].

The full paragraph of relevance reads:

习近平指出, 增进两岸政治互信, 夯实共同政治基础, 是确保两岸关系和平发展的关键。

着眼长远, 两岸长期存在的政治分歧问题终归要逐步解决, 总不能将这些问题一代一代传下去。

我们已经多次表示, 愿意在一个中国框架内就两岸政治问题同台湾方面进行平等协商,

作出合情合理安排。对两岸关系中需要处理的事务, 双方主管部门负责人也可以见面交换意见。

² An English-language version of Hu’s speech is at

http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/en/Special/Hu/201103/t20110322_1794707.htm; a Chinese-language version is at http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/zt/hu/201101/t20110125_1732427.htm.

³ Lawrence Chiu and Jay Chen, “Political differences cannot be put off forever: Chinese official,” *Central News Agency* (hereafter abbreviated CNA), October 11, 2013,

<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201310110030.aspx>. The Chinese text of Zhang’s speech is available at “Zhang Zhijun delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of the first session of the cross-Strait peace forum (full text)” (张志军在首届两岸和平论坛开幕式上的致辞[全文]), *China Taiwan Net*, October 11, 2013,

http://news.xinhuanet.com/tw/2013-10/11/c_125516515.htm.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Alan D. Romberg, “Settling in for the Long Haul: Stability with Chinese Characteristics,” *China Leadership Monitor*, no. 42, endnote 87.

⁶ Zhang said that continuing to push forward cross-Strait relations and peaceful development, to promote peaceful reunification of the two sides of the Strait, and to realize the great cause of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the common historical responsibility of compatriots on both sides of the Strait. (继续推动两岸关系 和平发展, 促进两岸和平统一, 实现中华民族伟大复兴, 是两岸同胞共同的历史责任). (“Zhang Zhijun delivers a speech at the opening ceremony.”)

⁷ “Symposium on the important thought and theory of peaceful development of cross-Strait relations opens in Beijing,” *Xinhuanet*, November 15, 2013,

http://www.taiwan.cn/xwzx/la/201311/t20131115_5211400.htm.

⁸ Lin Yan and Liao Zida, “Sun Yafu speaks at Hong Kong forum about cross-Strait relations and policy toward Taiwan” (孫亞夫在港縱論兩岸關係與對台政策), *China Review News*, November 26, 2013, <http://hk.crntt.com/crn-webapp/doc/docDetailCNML.jsp?coluid=7&kindid=0&docid=102886091>. Sun’s exact

words were, “推動兩岸關係和平發展是中華民族偉大復興的組成部份, 大陸和台灣統一是中華民族走向偉大復興的歷史必然。”

⁹ Zhang Zhijun, “Inherit the past, forge ahead into the future, and promote peaceful development of cross-Strait relations” (承前启后 继往开来 推进两岸关系和平发展),”

People’s Daily, December 31, 2013, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/n/2013/1231/c64102-23987194.html>.

¹⁰ 我们要全面贯彻党的十八大关于对台工作的总体要求, 始终不渝地执行中央对台工作大政方针, 坚定不移地走两岸关系和平发展的正确道路, 不断开创两岸关系和平发展新前景, 在实现中华民族伟大复兴进程中完成祖国统一大业。

- ¹¹ “Top political advisor urges stronger cross-Strait ties,” Xinhua, January 24, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-01/24/c_133072074.htm. The Xinhua Chinese-language summary posted on the TAO website reads a little differently, but makes essentially the same points, when it speaks of continuously consolidating and deepening the political, economic, cultural, and social foundation of peaceful development of cross-Strait relations in order to create even more favorable conditions for peaceful reunification (为实现和平统一创造更加有利的条件). (Chen Binhua, “Yu Zhengsheng attends 2014 Taiwan work conference and gives an important speech” [俞正声出席2014年对台工作会议并作重要讲话], Xinhuanet, January 24, 2014, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201401/t20140124_5587997.htm.)
- ¹² “ROC leader’s representative Vincent Siew urges at ‘Siew-Xi meeting’ for two sides to strengthen mutual trust and create a sustainable and people-centered vision for cross-Strait relations,” MAC, Press Release No. 76, October 6, 2013, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=106512&ctNode=6337&mp=3>.
- ¹³ Yang Yi and Lien Chuan-wei, “Xi: Don’t pass political differences down from generation to generation” (習：政治分歧 別代代相傳), *China Times*, October 7, 2013, <http://news.chinatimes.com/focus/11050105/112013100700077.html>.
- ¹⁴ As Zhang Zhijun identified the other three points of focus they were: political relations (政治关系), foreign affairs matters (涉外事务), and security mutual trust (安全互信). (“Zhang Zhijun delivers a speech at the opening ceremony,” see endnote 3.)
- ¹⁵ Chiu Kuo-chiang and Y.L. Kao, “Scholars heatedly debate proposed cross-Strait peace pact,” CNA, October 12, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201310120023.aspx>.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Chang Ya-yun, “A war of attack and defense over Republic of China” (中華民國政防戰), *Wang Pao*, October 13, 2013, <http://news.chinatimes.com/mainland/11050501/112013101300161.html>.
- ¹⁸ Chiou Kuo-ch’iang, “Peace forum closes; differences of opinion between the two sides of the Strait are great” (和平論壇落幕 兩岸歧見大), CNA, October 12, 2013, <http://www.cna.com.tw/News/aCN/201310120251-1.aspx>.
- ¹⁹ “Cross-Strait forum makes proposals on political relations,” Xinhua, October 12, 2013, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-10/12/c_132793688.htm.
- ²⁰ Wang Ming-yih, “Beijing Observer: Political wrangling over ‘common recommendations’” (北京觀察—《共同建議》的政治角力), *China Times*, October 28, 2013, <http://news.chinatimes.com/mainland/11050506/112013102800158.html>.
- ²¹ “Chairman Wu Poh-hsiung: Continue to promote peaceful cross-Strait relations from generation to generation” (吳榮譽主席：一代接一代 繼續推動兩岸和平關係), KMT Culture Communication Committee, Press release 295, October 25, 2013, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/page.aspx?id=32&aid=18150>). *Liberty Times* reported that, for his part, in a closed door conversation after dinner Yu sought to keep the focus on political relations, expressing the hope that political trust between the two sides could be strengthened “to allow a breakthrough in political relations” (讓兩岸「政治關係」有所突破; P’eng Hsien-chun, “KMT-CCP forum opens today, the two parties engage in mutual political propaganda” [國共論壇今登場 兩黨相互政治喊話], *Liberty Times*, October 26, 2013, <http://www.libertytimes.com.tw/2013/new/oct/26/today-p2.htm>).

²² Tony Liao, Lee Shu-hua, and Sofia Wu, “Taiwan has not sidestepped cross-Strait political issues: Ma,” CNA, October 25, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201310250017.aspx>. The full transcript of Ma’s interview with the *Washington Post*, which was the subject of this article, is available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/full-transcript-interview-with-taiwanese-president-ma-ying-jeou/2013/10/24/e430ceb0-3ce0-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story.html.

²³ Kelven Huang and Sofia Wu, “President expounds vision on APEC leaders’ meeting,” CNA, December 25, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201312250039.aspx>. The full text of Ma’s interview with *Asia Weekly* (亞洲週刊), on which this article is based, is available in Chinese at <http://www.president.gov.tw/Default.aspx?tabid=131&itemid=31510&rmid=514>.

²⁴ James Lee, “No need to discuss peace pact with China: Ma,” CNA, November 22, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201311220012.aspx>.

²⁵ “Wang Yu-chi: It’s still a little too early for cross-Strait political issues,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), October 8, 2013, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=13554>.

²⁶ “MAC Chairman: Concluding cross-Strait peace agreement not an urgent issue,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), October 25, 2013, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=13631>.

²⁷ Jay Chou and Jay Chen, “MAC foresees regular contacts with Chinese counterpart,” CNA, October 7, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201310070027.aspx>.

²⁸ The implications of the use of titles set off something of a controversy. On the Taiwan side, beyond characterizing the fact that the use of titles demonstrates mutual respect and pragmatism, signifying a deepening of mutual trust, the Mainland Affairs Council cited the use of titles as evidence of Beijing’s acceptance of Ma’s formulation regarding “mutual non-denial of jurisdiction.” (“MAC Minister Wang and TAO Director Zhang address each other by official titles, substantively realizing ‘mutual non-denial’ and setting a good start for the normalization of official interactions across the Strait,” MAC, Press Release No. 77, October 6, 2013, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=106510&ctNode=6337&mp=3>.) President Ma Ying-jeou reportedly shared this assessment. (Jay Chou and Sofia Wu, “Wang-Zhang meetings embodies mutual non-denial: Ma,” CNA, October 6, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201310060024.aspx>.) The Taiwan Affairs Office in Beijing rejoined that Taipei was revealing an “overactive imagination” (聯想過於豐富), observing that use of titles would be confined to the cross-Strait (MAC-TAO) context. (Chang K’ai-sheng, “Mutual non-denial of jurisdiction? TAO: Overactive-imagination” [治權互不否認? 國台辦: 聯想過豐], *Want Daily*, October 7, 2013, <http://www.want-daily.com/portal.php?mod=view&aid=89622>.) Wang responded that the TAO spokesman’s remarks were “unbecoming” and said he would convey his opinion on this to Zhang when he saw him next time. (Scarlett Chai and Y.F. Low, “Plan to visit China under evaluation: MAC head,” CNA, October 16, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201310160012.aspx>.)

Nonetheless, despite the TAO dismissal, there has been some discussion in unofficial exchanges of using titles in encounters between officials of the two sides in “non-political” areas (culture, education, environment, etc). (Private conversations) In this regard, Taiwan’s culture minister, Lung Ying-tai, said that to accept the Mainland’s

invitation that she visit, she would need to do so in an “appropriate status.” (Cheng Ching-wei, “Lung Ying-tai: to visit the Mainland requires that she have an appropriate status” [龍應台：訪陸要有適當身分], *Want Daily*, January 15, 2014, <http://www.want-daily.com/portal.php?mod=view&aid=99691>.)

On a related matter, although the TAO said that the new direct communication links between TAO and MAC would not lead to a change in communication links between other departments (Lawrence Chiu and Jay Chen, “TAO, MAC’s direct link won’t apply to other agencies: China,” CNA, February 17, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201402170010.aspx>), the fact is that direct telephone links are commonplace between working levels of agencies across the Strait other than those concerned with foreign policy or security matters.

²⁹ “Zhang Zhijun welcomes a visit to the Mainland by the responsible person in charge of the Taiwan side’s department handling Mainland affairs” (张志军欢迎台湾方面大陆事务主管部门负责人参访大陆), *Xinhua*, October 6, 2014, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201310/t20131007_4979070.htm.

³⁰ Chen Wei-ting, Chou Hui-ying, Wen Kuei-hsiang, and Y.F. Low, “MAC chief tight-lipped on planned meeting with Chinese counterpart,” CNA, January 10, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201401100018.aspx>.

³¹ Katherine Wei, “Beijing says MAC chief to visit Mainland in Feb.,” *China Post*, January 29, 2014.

³² Wen Kuei-hsiang and Elizabeth Hsu, “Legislature imposes constraints on MAC head ahead of China trip,” CNA, January 14, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201401130010.aspx>.

³³ Lai Chin-hung, “At the Wang Yu-chi–Zhang Zhijun meeting there are three topics that may not be discussed” (王郁琦，張志軍會面 3個不能說), *United Daily News* (hereafter abbreviated UDN), January 27, 2014, <http://udn.com/NEWS/MAINLAND/MAI1/8452250.shtml>.

³⁴ Chris Wang and Stacy Hsu, “Jiang says no ‘three noes’ set for Wang-Zhang talks,” *Taipei Times*, January 28, 2014, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2014/01/28/2003582310>.

³⁵ Lai Chin-hung, “Wang-Zhang meeting takes place tomorrow, Beijing advocates signing a memorandum of understanding on the consensus reached” (王張會明登場 北京主張簽共識備忘錄), UDN, February 10, 2014, <http://udn.com/NEWS/MAINLAND/MAI1/8474623.shtml>.

³⁶ Lan Hsiao-wei, “No joint statement will be issued after next Tuesday’s Wang-Zhang meeting” (下周二王張會 不發共同聲明), *China Times*, February 8, 2014, <http://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20140208000967-260108>. Nonetheless, as we note later, at the conclusion of the visit, a TAO spokesman read aloud a document that he labeled as a “consensus” emerging from the talks. (Lin Yan and Hwang Boning, “Ma Xiaoguang reads aloud the consensus of the Zhang-Wang meeting, major decisions” (馬曉光宣讀張王會共識重大舉措), *China Review News*, February 12, 2014, <http://hk.crntt.com/crn-webapp/doc/docDetailCNML.jsp?coluid=7&kindid=0&docid=103017269>.)

- ³⁷ Mo Yan-chih and Chris Wang, “MAC head promises no political talks on agenda,” *Taipei Times*, January 29, 2014, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2014/01/29/2003582386>.
- ³⁸ Scarlett Chai and Y.F. Low, “MAC chief vows to uphold Taiwan’s position during China visit,” CNA, January 13, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201401130010.aspx>.
- ³⁹ Ti Ssu-chia, “Wang Yu-chi: No plan to talk about political issues when visiting the Mainland” (王郁琦：訪陸未預設談政治議題), CNA, January 28, 2013, <http://www.cna.com.tw/news/aip/201401280142-1.aspx>.
- ⁴⁰ Eva Feng, Scarlett Chai, and Lilian Wu, “Taiwan’s top China policy planner speaks in China about ROC,” CNA, February 12, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201402120034.aspx>. Some Mainland media carried the reference to “facing reality,” but coverage of reference to “the ROC” was rare. One outlet that did so, however, was *Global Times*. (Wu Wei and Zhang Yiwei, “‘Rare progress’ in cross-Straits ties,” *Global Times*, February 13, 2014, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/842185.shtml>.)
- ⁴¹ Lee Hsin-yin, “China rejects Ma-Xi meeting at APEC forum: MAC minister,” CNA, February 14, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201402140037.aspx>.
- ⁴² “MAC & TAO heads meet in Nanjing,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), February 12, 2014, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=14104>.
- ⁴³ “Heads of Competent Authorities for Cross-Strait Affairs Successfully Hold First Meeting, Setting an Important Milestone for the Benign Development, Pragmatism and Progress of Cross-Strait Relations,” Mainland Affairs Council Press Release No. 15, February 11, 2014, <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=107565&ctNode=6337&mp=3>. The Chinese-language text of this press release is at <http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=107563&ctNode=5649&mp=1>.
- ⁴⁴ Y.F. Low, “Economy Daily News: Barrier to joining regional trade blocs,” CNA Editorial Abstract, February 14, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201402140013.aspx>.
- ⁴⁵ Ben Fox Rubin, “Taiwan not ready for political dialogue with Beijing, official says,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 19, 2013, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304439804579208481108071534>.
- ⁴⁶ Zhou Yi-ling, “Wang-Zhang meeting to talk about establishing a mechanism for communication between officials of the two sides” (王張會 溝通兩岸官方聯繫機制), CNA, January 28, 2014, <http://www.cna.com.tw/news/aip/201401280171-1.aspx>.
- ⁴⁷ “Heads of Competent Authorities for Cross-Strait Affairs Successfully Hold First Meeting.”
- ⁴⁸ “Mainland seeks joint efforts with Taiwan on detainees,” Xinhua, February 14, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-02/12/c_126117489.htm.
- ⁴⁹ “Heads of Competent Authorities for Cross-Strait Affairs Successfully Hold First Meeting.”
- ⁵⁰ “Transcript of TAO press briefing,” February 17, 2014, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwf/bh/201402/t20140217_5686051.htm.
- ⁵¹ The TAO spokesman cited Zhang Zhijun as saying that the question is not whether there can or cannot be visits, but rather how to arrange matters so that they respect the

regulations of both sides and accord with the proper role of each office, as well as constitute fair and reasonable arrangements that serve to protect the rights and interests of the people concerned and their families. (Lin Yan and Hwang Boning, “Ma Xiaoguang reads aloud the consensus of the Zhang-Wang meeting, major decisions” (馬曉光宣讀張王會共識 重大舉措), *China Review News*, February 12, 2014, <http://hk.crntt.com/crn-webapp/doc/docDetailCNML.jsp?coluid=7&kindid=0&docid=103017269>.)

⁵² “MAC minister notes importance of his visit to China,” Formosa Television News, February 12, 2014, <http://englishnews.ftv.com.tw/read.aspx?sno=F10A9073C8BD0E24624FFC6FDC31125F>.

⁵³ Zhao Bo, “The responsible person of the Taiwan side’s Mainland Affairs Council Wang Yu-chi will lead a delegation to visit,” (台湾方面大陆委员会负责人王郁琦将率团来访) Xinhuanet, January 28, 2014, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201401/t20140128_5606552.htm.

⁵⁴ Justin Su and Elizabeth Hsu, “DPP head praises title-use in Wang-Zhang meeting,” CNA, February 11, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip/201402110056.aspx>.

⁵⁵ “Press release: Chair Su meets with former Pacific Commander Admiral Willard” (蘇主席接見美軍前太平洋司令魏勒上將新聞稿), DPP, February 11, 2014, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=6977.

⁵⁶ Chris Wang, “Wang, Ma administration made mistakes: opposition,” *Taipei Times*, February 14, 2014, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2014/02/15/2003583542>.

⁵⁷ “DPP: Results of initial Wang-Zhang talks ‘disappointing,’” *Taiwan News Online*, February 12, 2014, http://www.taiwannews.com.tw/etn/news_content.php?id=2411196.

⁵⁸ Zhan Peng and Qi Xianghui, “Zhang Zhijun calls on compatriots on both sides of the Strait to keep in mind the history of national suffering and firmly fight back against of the Japanese right-wing provocative behavior” (张志军呼吁两岸同胞牢记民族苦难史, 坚决回击日本右翼挑衅行为), Xinhuanet, February 12, 2014, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/wyly/201402/t20140212_5659816.htm.

⁵⁹ “MAC-TAO heads meet in mainland China,” *Taiwan Today*, February 12, 2014, <http://www.taiwantoday.tw/ct.asp?xItem=214278&ctNode=445>.

⁶⁰ “Mainland underlines new cross-Strait communication mechanism,” Xinhua, February 17, 2014, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-02/17/c_133120827.htm.

⁶¹ Scarlett Chai and Aileen Chuang, “Slow process expected in further cross-Strait breakthrough,” CNA, February 17, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201402170016.aspx>; “Transcript of TAO press briefing,” February 17, 2014, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwfbh/201402/t20140217_5686051.htm.

⁶² Even assuming the MAC-TAO channel is “regularized,” however, it will not displace the SEF-ARATS channel as some have speculated, at least in the short run. The TAO and MAC are policy organizations, not negotiating entities, and as affirmed by both sides following the Wang-Zhang talks, they will not seek to take over the process of “normal” negotiations.

⁶³ “Sun Yafu: I hope Ma-Xi meeting takes place sooner rather than later,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), October 11, 2013, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=13565>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Lawrence Chiu and Sofia Wu, “China rules out APEC as venue for cross-Strait leaders meeting,” CNA, October 16, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201310160029.aspx>. The transcript of the TAO press briefing at which these points were made is at http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwfbh/201310/t20131016_5042316.htm.

⁶⁶ “Transcript of TAO press briefing,” February 17, 2014, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwfbh/201402/t20140217_5686051.htm.

⁶⁷ Kelven Huang and Sofia Wu, “President expounds vision on APEC leaders’ meeting,” see endnote 23.

⁶⁸ “Full transcript: Interview with Taiwanese president Ma Ying-jeou,” *Washington Post*, October 24, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/full-transcript-interview-with-taiwanese-president-ma-ying-jeou/2013/10/24/e430ceb0-3ce0-11e3-b6a9-da62c264f40e_story.html.

⁶⁹ “MAC: Ma-Xi meeting must be able to fully manifest existence of ROC,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), October 18, 2013, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=13599>.

⁷⁰ One presumes that Ma has two goals here. First, as long as his preconditions are met, he likely sees a meeting with Xi as a way of consolidating stability in the cross-Strait relationship. Moreover, in so doing, he would go far toward creating a lasting legacy. Assuming this were all in the service of forging a stronger cross-Strait bond on the basis of a “one China framework,” Beijing would likely have no problem with this.

Second, however, Ma likely has in mind an objective that animates Beijing’s rejection of the APEC suggestion, that is, he would create an opportunity to promote Taiwan’s international personality even if only on a de facto as opposed to de jure basis. Although Ma’s motive is not to challenge the PRC in the same way Chen Shui-bian sought to do, in Beijing’s eyes the opportunity for Ma to hobnob with world leaders at APEC or any other international event would create a situation very much akin to what Chen sought, and is simply not acceptable in a circumstance where a “one China framework” has not been consolidated.

⁷¹ “Press release on reaction to the ‘Siew-Xi meeting’” (對「蕭習會」之回應新聞稿), DPP, October 8, 2013, http://www.dpp.org.tw/news_content.php?sn=6814.

⁷² Lee Shu-hua, Scarlett Chai, and Y.F. Low, “Possibility of Ma-Xi meeting not raised at APEC: Envoy,” CNA, October 11, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201310110019.aspx>.

⁷³ “King Pu-tsung denies any role in year-end elections,” *Taipei Times*, February 9, 2014, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2014/02/09/2003583080>.

⁷⁴ Yang Yi, “Unsheathing the dagger again, arranging a ‘Ma-Xi’ meeting,” *China Times*, February 6, 2014, <http://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20140206000370-260102>.

⁷⁵ Private conversations.

⁷⁶ Lawrence Chung, Teddy Ng, and Adrian Wan, “Yu Zhengsheng seeks ‘civilian-level dialogue’ to broach political discussions with Taiwan,” *South China Morning Post*, January 25, 2014, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/1412892/yu-zhengsheng-seeks-civilian-level-dialogue-broach-political-discussions>, quoting Professor Liu Guoshen, head of Xiamen University’s Taiwan Research Institute.

In line with this, it was made known that at the 10th round of SEF-ARATS talks to be held at the end of February, in addition to trying to advance the post-ECFA agreements in commodities trade and dispute resolution, agreements on earthquake-monitoring cooperation and meteorological monitoring will be signed. An agreement to avoid double taxation and foster taxation cooperation that has been under negotiation for four years has been put off, reportedly due to concerns on the part of Taiwan enterprises and opposition parties that firms could be subjected to an overall tax inspection by authorities on both sides. (Luo Yin-ch'ung, "Tax agreement will not be signed at 10th high-level cross-Strait meeting" [兩岸高層10次會 不簽租稅協議], *China Times*, February 8, 2014, <http://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20140208001021-260301>.)

⁷⁷ Lin Ch'ing-pin, "Frank Hsieh runs for DPP chairman, says if elected he is willing to visit the Mainland" (谢长廷参选民进党主席 表示若当选愿访大陆), *Phoenix Satellite TV*, February 8, 2014, http://news.ifeng.com/taiwan/3/detail_2014_02/08/33598705_0.shtml.

⁷⁸ Chinese and English texts available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/198143800/DPP-2014-China-Policy-Review-Summary-Report>. English text starts on p. 17.

⁷⁹ As stated, the party's position is that the 1999 Resolution on Taiwan's Future is the basic statement regarding the DPP's position on Taiwan's status, and according to party rules, it has superseded the 1991 "independence" plank. That said, undoubtedly taking into account the complex politics within the DPP, party chair Su Tseng-chang has made known that he has no intention to revise, much less remove, the 1991 plank, and that he intends to focus instead on winning the trust of more people in Taiwan. (Jennifer Huang and Christie Chen, "Taiwan-China relations important, complicated: DPP chair," CNA, January 24, 2014, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/acs/201401250018.aspx>.)

⁸⁰ Justin Su, Chou Hui-ying, and Y.F. Low, "DPP head rejects call to 'freeze' independence platform," CNA, December 27, 2013, <http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aip1/201312270016.aspx>.

⁸¹ In 2007, the party's national congress adopted "by applause" a resolution that called for the "rectification" of the name "Taiwan" as soon as possible and the writing of a new constitution. It also called for holding a referendum "at an appropriate time" to "emphasize Taiwan's independent statehood." Although the congress rejected a more strident proposal that said, "Our nation should write a new constitution and correct its official title to 'Taiwan,'" this "Normal Country Resolution," as it came to be called, was seen by many as, at least in spirit, returning the party to the position laid out in the 1991 Taiwan independence plank. (Flora Wang, "DPP passes 'normal country' resolution," *Taipei Times*, October 1, 2007, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2007/10/01/2003381145>.)

⁸² Lin Yan and Liao Zida, "Sun Yafu speaks at Hong Kong forum." See endnote 8. Sun's full riff on the DPP was as follows:

在這裡, 我還想談一下關於民進黨的問題. 2012年以來, 民進黨內要求正視大陸崛起, 與大陸往來, 調整對大陸政策的呼聲較之以往任何時候都大. 但是, 民進黨沒有放棄“台獨”立場, 迴避廢除“台獨黨綱”, “正常國家決議文”的問題, 繼續阻撓兩岸關係法發展, 我們決定對台灣各政黨的態度, 是看他們怎麼認定兩岸關係的性質, 發展基礎及其前途. 以往, 今天, 將來都是這樣, 我們對民進黨的要求說到底就是一條——放棄“態度”立場和“一邊一國”主張, 如果他們這樣做了,

我們願作出正面回應。台灣各黨派之間的事情，只要不屬於涉及中國領土和主權的問題，不屬於兩岸關係發展及其前途的問題，由他們之間去處理，去解決。

Informal translation:

Here I also want to talk a bit about the question of the DPP. Since 2012, calls inside the DPP to face up to the rise of the Mainland, to have exchanges with the Mainland, and to adjust policy toward the Mainland have been greater than at any time in the past. But the DPP has not abandoned its “Taiwan independence” position, it has dodged the question of repealing the “Taiwan independence party plank” and the “normal country resolution” and it continues to obstruct the development of a cross-Strait relations law. In determining our attitude toward all Taiwan political parties we look at the way they define the character, evolution of the foundation, and future of cross-Strait relations. In the past, today, and in the future alike, we fundamentally have one consistent demand, that they abandon their “attitude” and stance and their advocacy of “one country on each side.” If they were to do this, we would respond positively. Regarding the matters among political factions, as long as they don’t touch on questions of China’s territory and sovereignty, and don’t touch on questions of the development and future of cross-Strait relations, we leave it to them to manage and resolve these among themselves.

⁸³ “Transcript of TAO press briefing,” November 27, 2013, http://www.gwytb.gov.cn/xwfbh/201311/t20131127_5274787.htm. The portion on the DPP read in full:

民进党与大陆交往的根本障碍是其仍坚持“台独”立场。从民进党举办的几场“华山会议”情况看，民进党还没能真正认清问题本质之所在，企图在不放弃“台独”立场和“一边一国”主张前提下，用一些模糊的概念作为与大陆交往的政治基础。大陆不可能接受。民进党应认清现实，痛下决心，真正放弃不切实际的“台独”主张。

⁸⁴ “Mainland’s TAO lashes out at DPP’s Su over Taiwan independence stance,” KMT News Network (from Taipei papers), November 28, 2013, <http://www.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=13779>.

⁸⁵ “Realize the China dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation,” (共圆中华民族伟大复兴的中国梦), full text of Xi Jinping’s remarks to Lien Chan, February 18, 2014, <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2014-02-19/012229502958.shtml?wbf=more>.