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Peace and Stability in East Asia: Taiwan's Role

Tonight I want to share with you my thoughts about Taiwan's role in the stability and peace of East Asia, and in particular the situation across the Taiwan Strait. For a city like Los Angeles which has extensive contact with Asia, I'm sure every one of you is aware that in that part of the world there are two flash points—one is the Korean Peninsula and the other is the Taiwan Strait. Well, in the last six years, since the changeover of the government from the Kuomintang to the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the relationship across the Taiwan Strait moved from expectation to stagnation and into confrontation. On the one hand, ever since then the Chinese Mainland deployed hundreds of missiles targeted [toward] Taiwan. On the other hand, the Taiwanese government also took some actions that were perceived as provocative to the Chinese Mainland; for instance, the president denied existence of the so-called "1992 consensus," which I will explain later. In 2005, the Chinese Mainland adopted the anti-succession law, which is a piece of legislation that set criteria for using nonpeaceful means against Taiwan. The president of my country also resorted to a series of actions including the scraping of the National Unification Council, which was established 15 years ago as a symbol for the connection between Taiwan and the Chinese Mainland. This whole picture, on the political side, seems to be worrisome to people not only in Taiwan but also for people outside Taiwan.

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On the other hand, the picture on the economic side has an entirely different story. Two-way trade between Taiwan and the Mainland reached \$71 billion in 2005, and out of this Taiwan enjoys \$49.7 billion of trade surplus. That means that had Taiwan not traded with the Mainland, Taiwan would have a huge deficit because Taiwan's total trade surplus last year was only \$7 billion. Taiwan's investments on the Chinese Mainland are around \$100 billion made by roughly 100,000 companies, which also created a million jobs on the Chinese Mainland. Last year the Taiwanese made around four million trips to the Chinese mainland, whereas about 200,000 Mainland Chinese visited Taiwan. There are an estimated one million Taiwanese living, working and doing business on the Chinese Mainland. So, the economic relations are actually unprecedented in the history of Taiwan and Mainland China.

How are we going to reconcile the political and economic relations across the Taiwan Strait? Can we anticipate some kind of war or hostilities across the Taiwan Strait, or could peace be attained through some efforts?

Let's first look at what makes this situation what it is today. I think the number

one reason is lack of mutual trust. Taiwan and Mainland China perceive each other as potential enemies; hence, the behavior by each side.

Secondly, the lack of consensus on what constitutes the status quo. When one side, for instance, deploys missiles—which by now have reached more than 700 missiles against Taiwan—Taiwan took that as a sign of the intention to unilaterally change the status quo. So, they don't have a consensus on the definition of the status quo.

Number three, and the most important, is that they lack a common vision for the future—of what is going to be the future of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Well, I'm here as the Mayor and also the Chairman of the Chinese Nationalist Party in Taiwan. By the way, you can either address me as Mayor Ma, Dr. Ma or Chairman Ma, but if you choose Chairman Ma, please watch your pronunciation. If you call me Chairman Mao I'm going to be in trouble.

What should we do as an opposition party? We're not in power, we don't have all the vehicles of policy to make whatever we want happen, so all we can do is propose programs, formulas or projects that could defuse the tension and really attain peace. First of all we should really establish the common vision for the future. I think people on either side of the Taiwan Strait do not want to see hostilities or war and, therefore, peace should be the number one core

value. Following peace, I'm sure, prosperity is the name of the game, as you can see from the booming economic relationship across the Taiwan Strait. In addition to that, I think democracy is also an important core value because no democratic country fights wars with each other. So, if we can nurture democracies

modern industrial society. But deeper into the heartland of mainland China there is still poverty. More than 800 million people live in those areas and the gap between the poor and the rich is widening. That is why we stress equitable distribution of wealth, which will remove an important element of social instability.

public of China," which is the official name of Taiwan. There is a great difference, very divergent views, but nevertheless the two sides could reconcile their differences by accepting the One China in principle and interpreting it in a way that each side will not challenge or deny.



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So, if we have these four elements: peace, prosperity, democracy and equal distribution of wealth, I'm sure that could be an important objective for both sides of the Taiwan Strait to pursue in the future.

Now, here comes our proposal for bringing peace and prosperity in the initial stage and then democracy and equitable distribution of wealth across the Taiwan Strait. First of all, as a paramount principle governing relations across the Taiwan Strait we would resume negotiations with the Chinese Mainland on the basis of the 1992 Consensus.

What do we mean by the 1992 Consensus? That was a consensus reached by the representatives of Taiwan and the

Mainland after the meeting in Hong Kong in November 1992. The Consensus was reached not in a meeting but in the following correspondences between them. The [result was] "one China, different interpretations." To be more precise, it means that both sides accept the One China principle, but each side is free to interpret its contents. Obviously, for the Chinese Mainland, One China means "The People's Republic of China," but for Taiwan, One China means "The Re-

This is the formula with which we all agreed to disagree, and this is the only way to manage the most intractable issue across the Taiwan Strait, namely, the sovereignty issue. We'll never be able to solve that problem. The only thing we can do is just to manage it so that it won't erupt into a major crisis. If we can manage that issue we could move on to other more urgent issues that desperately need our attention. So the first thing to do is to resume the negotiations based on the 1992 Consensus.

Certainly we should not forget about the five "nos." I'm sure most of you have heard about the five "nos." They were assurances from our President Shui-bian Chen when he was inaugurated on May 20, 2000. The five "nos" were a pledge on the part of the president during his term of office. As long as the Chinese Mainland does not demonstrate an intention to invade Taiwan militarily then he would, first of all, not declare the independence of Taiwan; secondly, he would not change the title of the country and its national flag; three, he would not revise the constitution to accommodate the special state-to-state relationship theory; four, he would not conduct a referendum on the issue of independence or unification intended to unilaterally change the status quo; and five, there's no question of abolishing the National Unification Council and the unification guideline. The five "nos" in our view should be kept intact just in case our party comes back to power in the year 2008. We consider that as the cornerstone of the status quo, which should be respected and retained.

On the other hand, we need five

on the Chinese Mainland, I'm sure there will be an even more long-lasting peace across the Taiwan Strait.

Another element that I consider important is the equitable distribution of wealth. [Regarding] the Chinese Mainland, everybody is impressed by their very fast economic development. In less than two decades they have transformed the coastal area and major cities from a poor agricultural society to a relatively

“dos” in addition to the five “nos.” The five “dos” include, first of all the, resumption of the interrupted negotiations based on the 1992 Consensus. Secondly, Taiwan should negotiate a peace accord with the Mainland to formally terminate hostilities across the Taiwan Strait. The peace accord should last for 30 to 50 years and it should include a mechanism that

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would build mutual confidence. Number three; Taiwan should have a comprehensive economic agreement with the Mainland leading eventually to the formation of a common market.

Number four; Taiwan should negotiate with the Mainland to expand participation in international affairs. As you know, before Taiwan lost its representation in the United Nations in 1971, Taiwan had formal diplomatic relations with more than 60 countries in the world. After that the number dropped to the current 25 and it has become quite difficult for Taiwan to have access to international organizations such as the World Health Organization. So, when SARS broke out in Taiwan three years ago, in the initial stage we had to fight that very strange epidemic alone. And that is why we tried everything possible to get admitted to

the World Health Organization but in vain. We were even precluded from participating in the yearly World Health Assembly. This is something Taiwan considers very important not only as a matter of national dignity but also as a matter of practical means. So the first point is to build [international relations] on the basis of pragmatism and not as a zero-sum game. In our bilateral relations once a country decided to establish formal diplomatic ties with Mainland China suddenly they discontinued their relations with us—this is a zero-sum game and we hope the situation could be changed to something else, and that should be negotiated by the two sides.

Number five; I think we should promote an expanded program of cultural and educational changes across the Taiwan Strait. Currently there are 5,000 Taiwanese students studying in universities in Mainland China, but our government does not recognize the degrees that they earn. The president said he would not recognize those degrees because that could make our universities lose more students. I have to explain—there are 169 universities in Taiwan. When I was a high school graduate my chances for getting into college were about 27 percent; but these days for each high school graduate there is more than one space in our colleges. So it is extremely difficult for our high school graduates not to get into college. But on the Chinese Mainland, only 18 percent of the high school graduates can get into college. I think it might not be a bad idea to let them come to Taiwan and come to our colleges. I'm not trying to market our colleges and I don't mean to solve their problems of not getting enough students, but I think it's very important for the young people on either side of the Taiwan Strait to get to know each other at an early stage of their lives, to develop friendship and goodwill which will serve as a basis for long-

enduring friendships in the future. I'm sure that will also contribute to the stability across the Taiwan Strait.

So, five “nos” and five “dos.” What would that mean to the United States, which has security relations with Taiwan? I think, once we are able to achieve what we have described—a peace accord, a common market, frequent exchanges in the cultural and educational fields, and a more reasonable international status of Taiwan—I'm sure the security role of the United States in East Asia will be made much easier. We will continue to have very a close relationship with the United States and we hope to continue the current program on job planning and on arms purchase. We would like to sign a free trade agreement with the United States so as to promote more exports to Taiwan. It is estimated that if we have such an agreement that U.S. exports to Taiwan could increase by 16 percent, or roughly \$6.6 billion and I think California might be the biggest beneficiary of that program. In any case, we believe that U.S.-Taiwan relations not only will continue but be enhanced as a result of our policies, because the idea behind my proposal is that Taiwan should perceive itself as a responsible stake holder in the region. We should not rock the boat in regional waters. Taiwan should be a peacemaker, not a troublemaker.

Therefore, I think what I have suggested would bring peace, prosperity and hopefully democracy and equitable distribution of wealth in this part of the world. So, I hope that if we have a chance to come back to power in 2008 Taiwan will not be called a flashpoint again. Taiwan will become an even more constructive member of the international community and internal peace will become the name of the game.

Thank you very much.

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