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Discussion Paper

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**Peaceful Development of Cross-straits Relations and Expansion of  
Taiwan's International Space**

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## Peaceful Development of Cross-straits Relations Provides More Possibilities

When meeting with Lien Chan for the second time, President Hu Jintao proposed that the theme of cross-straits relations is peaceful development. Since then, the cross-straits relationship has stepped into a new stage of peaceful development. When the KMT, represented by Ma Ying-jeou, returned to power, cross-straits relations have entered into a new stage of peaceful development in the real sense.

The peaceful development of cross-straits relations bears rich contents and offers more possibilities to expand Taiwan's international space. During the eight-year administration headed by Chen Shui-bian, the Taiwan authorities had never stopped to advocate "one country each side", "drawing up constitutions", "referendums", in an attempt to expand the international space for "Taiwan independence". They were not only opposed by Mainland, but also boycotted by the neighbouring countries in the region and by big powers. Now the situation has changed. In his speech at the Symposium marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the mainland's "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan" on 31 December 2008, President Hu Jintao stated, "We understand the feelings of our compatriots in Taiwan to participate in international issues and attach great importance to resolve the related issues." President Hu Jintao made specific proposals as following. First, Chinese embassies and consulates assist our Taiwan compatriots. Second, the two sides should avoid internal frictions on foreign issues. That is the so-called "diplomatic truce" on the Taiwan side. Third, further consultation should be made on the prospects of economic and cultural exchanges between Taiwan and other countries at the non-governmental levels. Fourth, on the premise of not creating the scenario of "two Chinas", "one China, one Taiwan", the two sides should make pragmatic arrangements for Taiwan to take part in the activities of international organisations. Fifth, when establishing mechanisms for economic cooperation, the two sides should discuss feasible approaches for connecting the Mainland China and Taiwan with Asia-Pacific region. Every aspect mentioned above could be further explored.

## Efforts and Achievements of Expanding Taiwan's International Space in the Last Two Years

Although the agreements achieved by Mainland and Taiwan are to start from easy to difficult, from economy to politics, expanding Taiwan's international space is an extremely sensitive political issue, which has not been shelved. Both sides have made efforts and reached achievements after mutual consultations.



1. Chinese embassies, consulates and peace-keeping forces offer assistance to our Taiwan compatriots. When Haiti was hit by the earthquake, China's peacekeeping force provided assistances to our Taiwan compatriots. When China sent Navy forces to combat pirates in the Gulf of Aden, Taiwanese ships were escorted. Whenever natural disasters occur, the Chinese embassies not only looked after Mainland compatriots, but also helped our Taiwan compatriots, assisted them to evacuate by sending planes and ships.
2. Avoiding internal frictions related to foreign affairs. Taiwan has 23 "countries with formal diplomatic relations". There are quite a lot of them requesting the establishment of diplomatic relations with Mainland China. Yet, Mainland China freezes the contact and maintains the status quo. Both sides reach an understanding that they will not set up one another by promising money and assistances. Consequently, this will lead to better impressions internationally.
3. Elevating the level of the existed international participation for Taiwan. In the past, only former officials responsible for economic affairs could take part in the APEC Summit. Now, Lien Chan, a former "vice president" and "premier", Vicent Siew, a "the former premier" and "the vice president—incumbent", as well as Frederick Qian Fu, a former "speaker of National Assembly" all attended the Boao Forum for Asia in turns.
4. Taiwan becomes an observing member of the World Health Organisation. Taiwan became an observer for the World Health Organisation in 2009. This is unprecedented and provides a reference for both sides to consult on Taiwan's participation in other international organisations.
5. Taiwan's participation in the Shanghai World Expo 2010. The World Exposition is an event of governments. With the Chinese government's smart arrangements, Taiwan takes part in the event by establishing an independent pavilion for the first time in 40 years. In addition to the "Taiwan Pavilion", the "Taipei Case Pavilion in Best Urban Practices Area" and the "Aurora Pavilion" (Corporate Expo Pavilion), many Taiwan enterprises have become sponsors and received licenses in food and so on. Among those, the name and arrangement of location of "Taiwan Pavilion" are unique and make both sides satisfied.

### Proposals of Taiwan's Participation in Regional Cooperation after ECFA is Signed

This year (2010), the Mainland and Taiwan will sign ECFA, symbolizing normalization, convenience and institutionalization of cross-straits economic



cooperation. At the same time, how to link cross-straits economic cooperation to Asia-Pacific regional cooperation is also on the agenda.

What Taiwanese experts and scholars are most concerned about is whether Taiwan could sign the FTA with countries in the Asia Pacific region, for example with Singapore first, then with Japan, the US etc. In fact, the issue is not simple. There are two ways for Taiwan to get access to East Asian cooperation. One is to get access through China-ASEAN free trade area, which is relatively convenient. Yet, Taiwan would have political concerns. The other is to make negotiations with countries in North-East and South East Asia separately. Apart from Singapore, negotiations with the rest will be hard and a long process. However, Taiwan would feel more “independent”. As far as Taiwan’s negotiations with ASEAN are concerned, it is not possible. This is due to the fact that the ASEAN is neither a non-intra-governmental organization nor a WTO member.

There is another possibility. Joining in the cooperative mechanism of East Asia for experts and officials of Taiwan could either start with the urgent aspects first, like the Chiang Mai Initiative, or begin with low-level cooperation. After accumulating more experience, it could be lifted to the next level step by step.

Whatever measures are adopted, the mainland and Taiwan should negotiate and reach consensus, and let Taiwan take part in appropriate names.

### Approaches of Expanding Taiwan’s International Space

To expand Taiwan’s international space, we should firstly oppose “Taiwan independence” and not creating the scenario of “two Chinas” and “one China, one Taiwan”. The “1992 Consensus” is the basis for the current cross-straits communications. That is “one China, own statement”. Since Ma Ying-jeou came into power, Taiwan stopped to the proposal of joining in the United Nations pursued for over a decade and the majority of Taiwan people have come to accept the thought of substantial participation, but not pursuing the participation name. This has provided a better condition for Taiwan’s international engagement. Why to uphold “one China” and oppose “Taiwan independence”? Theoretically, cross-straits international space is the space under the sovereignty of “one China”. People on both sides enjoy the international space of the sovereignty of “one China”. Although the Taiwan Strait has not been unified, the two sides still share the international space under the sovereignty of “one China”. “Taiwan independence” does not recognize “one China”, which means that it will lose the legitimacy of holding and sharing the international space of “China” sovereignty together.

Since the Taiwan Strait has not been unified, both sides must reach consensus on expanding Taiwan’s international space through consultations.



Moreover, it is basic that the People's Republic of China represents "one China" internationally. Therefore, the PRC (Mainland China) will have to negotiate and reach consensus with international organisations and their members, so as to expand Taiwan's international space.

Internationally, on the basis of UN resolutions and international agreements, Taiwan is not a state of sovereignty. Therefore, expanding Taiwan's international participation must be in an appropriate name, like "China Taipei".

"From easy to difficult, from economy, society, culture to politics", are also applicable to expand Taiwan's international space. This could also start from bilateral and regional, finally to global international organisations. Bilaterally, consensus is continually to be reached so as to maintain "the countries with formal diplomatic relations" with Taiwan. Among those countries without formal diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the two sides could pursue cooperation in areas like how to safeguard the interests of compatriots and promote economic and cultural exchanges etc. Taiwan's involvement in international activities and international organizations, which are less sensitive, functional, as well as those economic, social and cultural activities and organisations urgently needed by the people of Taiwan, could be selected first. Based on that, more could be added step by step. After more mutual trust is accumulated, the more sensitive areas, including politics and security can be explored.