



**12th Annual Conference on  
“The Taiwan Issue in China-Europe Relations”**

Shanghai, China

September 21-22, 2015

*A workshop jointly organised by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs / Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Berlin and the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai. With friendly support of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Shanghai Office).*

Discussion Paper

Do not cite or quote without author's permission

**Peaceful Development of Cross-strait Relations and Consolidation  
and Replenishing of the One-China Framework**

XIU Chunping

Research Fellow of Taiwan Research Institute

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

## Peaceful Development of Cross-strait Relations and Consolidation and Replenishing of the One-China Framework

*Xiu Chunping*

The cross-strait relations, after isolation, confrontation, exchange, turmoil and tension for over half a century, finally came to the track of peaceful development in 2008, during the past years, the exchanges and cooperation across the strait became closer every day and kept on developing, and the situation in Taiwan Strait, full of sudden and perplexing changes for a period, became calm and mild. While harvesting the huge political and economic dividends brought about by the peaceful development of cross-strait relations, people are considering how to maintain the hard-earned peaceful development situation across the strait, and how to find out the regularities in it, so as to solidify the peaceful development process across the strait. This consideration has become more attractive when the 2016 Taiwan election for the top leader is approaching and the political situation in Taiwan may change.

Longitudinally, the peaceful development across the strait is a special historical period in the general process for China to achieve final unification, in this period, the positive interaction of both sides across the strait is based on the one-China principle. Both sides across the strait, with the “1992 Consensus” reached in 1993 as the basis, continually push forward and deepen the exchanges and cooperation in economy, society, culture and even politics, aiming at gradually achieving peaceful unification of China. Transversally, as both sides across the strait have been separated for many years, many accumulated structural contradictions need to be resolved step by step in this period, and there are also some new problems in the peaceful development for win-win mutual benefit of the sides that should be faced and solved. In the meantime, impact to the peaceful development across the strait due to changes of the international situation or the situation on the island should also be prevented. Such an inter-woven structure reflects to a considerable extent the complexity behind the prosperous peaceful development across the strait. To handle such complicated relations, a general framework is needed, which exists and is recognized in reality, and can define generally the peaceful development orientation of cross-strait relations and also flexibly handle historical differences and real problems, to guide and also continually extend the steady progress of peaceful development of cross-strait relations, like on tracks. Practice over the years has proved that the one-China framework, generally recognized by the international society over a long time, is just an important framework to define the development orientation for both sides across the strait, dissolve contradictions and differences of both sides, solve the real problems across the strait and push forward the peaceful development across the strait, especially at present when

there are more uncertainties in the political situation on the island, it is particularly important to make clear the internal relationship between the one-China framework and the peaceful development across the strait.

## I. Practice of one-China framework in handling foreign affairs across the strait

The one-China framework is the realistic embodiment and policy expression of the one-China principle, and the specific criterion and code of conduct in handling cross-strait relations, problems left over in history, actions of both sides across the strait on international venues at the present stage, and foreign affairs of Taiwan. For more than half a century, the various policy practice, especially practice in handling foreign affairs on both sides across the strait under the one-China framework, played an active role in many aspects. The one-China framework, while being consolidated for itself, is also being continually replenished, developed and completed in the practice of peaceful development across the strait.

**The first is adhering to the one-China principle, to ensure the state sovereignty and territorial integrity without secession.** In 1949, the Mainland and Taiwan were separated due to civil war and other causes, the Chinese government always adheres to the one-China principle, firmly opposes secession and works hard to realize the unification of the country, according to the situation across the strait and in the world. It creatively established the one-China framework internationally in handling the foreign affairs across the strait, thus effectively safeguarding state sovereignty and territorial integrity. In establishing the international framework of one-China, the core is adhering to the one-China principle. In the early days after the establishment of New China, China, then blocked by the western camp and in a severe international environment, adhered that “there is only one China in the world, the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government of China, and Taiwan is part of China”. It insisted that all countries must break off official relations with the Taiwan authorities when establishing diplomatic relations with New China and opposed “dual recognition”; and demanded that the UN restore the legal position of the People's Republic of China, repelled the Taiwan authorities and opposed the “dual representation”. The relevant policies and specific practice of the Chinese government in handling the foreign affairs of both sides across the strait with the one-China principle has built the one-China framework internationally. It must not be denied that, during the decades when Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo ruled Taiwan, although both sides across the strait fought quite intensely in the world, the nature of the struggle was who could represent China internationally. At that time, the Taiwan authorities also pursued the one-China policy, insisting that the government of the “Republic of China” represented China

and opposing secession of the country. Objectively, the formation of the early form of one-China framework was the result of joint efforts of both sides across the strait. For quite a long period of time, the Taiwan authorities opposed “two Chinas” and refused “dual recognition”, and implemented the policy “Han and thief are incompatible”, objectively ensuring that the international society only recognizes there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is part of China. Starting from the 1990s, changes took place in the political ecology on Taiwan Island, the “Taiwan independence” force came to power and implemented the “Taiwan independence” secession policy, with the attempt to make “two Chinas” and “one China, one Taiwan” internationally. Then the struggle between the two sides across the strait was changed to that of secession and anti-secession, “Taiwan independence” and anti-“Taiwan independence”. In this period, with the powerful safeguarding by the Chinese government, the international one-China framework already in place was further consolidated, instead of loosening, and became part of the fundamental cognition and current international order of the international society. The activity space of “Taiwan independence” has therefore been greatly reduced, and the state sovereignty and territorial integrity effectively safeguarded.

**The second is adopting a pragmatic attitude, taking care of the need of both sides to carry out foreign activities in the situation of separation of both sides across the strait.** In the situation that the two sides across the strait are still separated and China is not unified, the two sides unavoidably face the reality of respectively carrying out foreign activities. How to avoid formal, legal and even factual state secession by the respective foreign activities of both sides across the strait in the situation of peaceful development of cross-strait relations is a real issue that must be faced out of the need to safeguard the state sovereignty and territorial integrity and also taking into consideration the actual need of the people on the island for foreign exchange in the practical situation that the two sides across the strait are still separated. Facts have proved that the established one-China framework has provided quite extensive operation space in solving the historical leftover questions and currently derived issues across the strait, that is, within the one-China framework, both sides across the strait, through communication and consultation, can find out relatively proper solutions to relevant questions of international participation in the current international order, and can make pragmatic choices that both adhere to the principle and take care of the practice needs of the people of both sides. In the actual practice of the Chinese government handling the foreign affairs of Taiwan within the one-China framework, in the bilateral relations, the Mainland insists that “all countries in the world having established diplomatic relations with China shall, according to relevant international law and the one-China principle, conclude official agreement or understanding with the Chinese government on the question of Taiwan, and undertake not to establish any relation of official nature with Taiwan.

Taiwan, as part of China, has no right to represent China internationally, and cannot establish diplomatic relations or develop any relation of official nature with China. However, considering the need of economic development in Taiwan and the actual interests of Taiwan compatriots, the Chinese government does not object to civil economic and cultural exchanges between Taiwan and foreign countries”.<sup>1</sup> And China firmly opposes “dual recognition”. In international multilateral fields, China insists that Taiwan must not participate in any inter-governmental international organization participated by representatives of sovereign states. In the meantime, according to the nature, charter stipulations and actual conditions of relevant international organizations, issues for Taiwan to participate in some international organizations re handled in ways agreed and accepted by the Chinese government. Taiwan participating in Olympic Games in the name of “Chinese Taipei”, maintaining the membership in “Asian Development Bank” in the name of “Chinese Taipei”, joining the “Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Organization (APEC)” in the name of “Chinese Taipei” but its leaders not attending unofficial conferences of APEC leaders, and joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in the name of the “Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu”, are all pragmatic arrangement made within the one-China framework.

**The third is safeguarding the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation, which has received respect, cognition and support from the international society.** The Chinese government adheres to handling the foreign affairs across the strait in the one-China framework, ensuring the integrity of state territory and sovereignty and safeguarding the overall interests of the Chinese nation, while at the same time, the rational demands and interests of people on the island and of the Taiwan side have been properly taken care of. This basic attitude and pragmatic practice have received general understanding, respect and extensive support from the international society. Today, all countries having diplomatic relations with China have undertaken to uphold the one-China policy and only maintain non-official relations with Taiwan. All inter-governmental international organizations and their members also understand and respect the principle position and arrangement of the Chinese government on Taiwan participating in these organizations and their relevant activities. The international one-China framework, with extensive support from the international society, has now basically shaped a set of rules in international relations and intercourses. For decades of operation, this framework has effectively restricted the activities of “Taiwan independence” forces to secede the country in the world, and also met to a considerable extent the actual demand of Taiwan in economic and social development in foreign relations.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Question of Taiwan and Unification of China, People’s Daily, Sept. 1, 1993.

And because of this, the international one-China framework itself is becoming daily steady and complete.

## II. Important significance in consolidating and replenishing the one-China framework

Through the joint efforts by people of both sides across the strait for generations, the cross-strait relations finally came to the track of peaceful development in 2008, both sides across the strait established political mutual trust on the basis of “1992 Consensus” and opened unprecedented space of development. The cross-strait relations realized a historical leap-forward for several years. As mentioned above, the period of peaceful development of cross-strait relations is a transition period for China to march towards peaceful unification, and in this period, both sides across the strait need to accumulate mutual trust, increase common understanding, bridge gaps and dissolve contradictions in continual favorable interaction, and solve all kinds of existing and derivative problems, first superficial and easy ones, and then interior and difficult ones. First, in the cross-strait relations that have just stepped into the track of peaceful development, some existing structural contradictions still exist, and unavoidably, new conditions will be encountered and new problems found in the course of development. Therefore, gradually solving contradictions and problems hindering the consolidation and deepening of cross-strait relations is an unavoidable task in the peaceful development period of cross-strait relations. Second, the peaceful development of cross-strait relations is aimed at peaceful unification. However, given the complexity of the political development in Taiwan, and the difference between both sides across the strait in political system, social form and value, the peaceful development will not surely go towards peaceful unification. In addition to the need to remove various obstacles, it is also necessary to establish relevant mechanisms and institutional systems that help the interaction, connection and gradual merging of both sides across the strait, to continually consolidate the foundation of peaceful unification, and create conditions for realizing this goal. Third, in Taiwan, the Democratic Progressive Party, now with considerable public opinion support, has not given up its “Taiwan independence” position, and a small number of radical “Taiwan independence” political forces still have some political energy. These factors indicate that if any change takes place in the political situation on the island and a political force refusing to give up “Taiwan independence” comes to power, the possibility of its implementing the line and policies of state secession, including its attempted secession of state in a so-called “peaceful way”, cannot be excluded. And even the possibility of its making “Taiwan independence” provoke under specific time and space environment cannot be fully excluded. Therefore, for the peaceful development of cross-strait relations, it is necessary not only to enhance

the cross-strait economic and trade exchanges and cooperation, safeguard the stability of cross-strait relations, but also safeguard the one-China framework, consolidate and deepen the foundation for the peaceful development of cross-strait relations, and create conditions for the peaceful unification of China. Years of practice in developing cross-strait relations within the one-China framework has shown that further consolidating and replenishing the one-China framework can produce an effect at least in the following aspects to the cross-strait relations in the peaceful development period:

**First, it can ensure that cross-strait relations will not come off the track of peaceful development and that state secession will not occur.** The core of one-China framework is that both sides across the strait belong to one China, in practice, the limit is that it is not allowed to create “two Chinas” or “one China, one Taiwan”, and this complete connotation commands all aspects of cross-strait relations. It plays a ruling and formalizing role for the Taiwan authorities to handle affairs and foreign activities related to both sides, and for the international society to handle issues related to Taiwan, restricting in reality any secession attempt of political forces on the island to create “two Chinas” or “one China, one Taiwan”. The one-China framework also has the important function to re-enhance the state cognition of China of the people on the island. In the current phase when it is not possible to re-educate on national cognition in the island directly, the compulsory subconsciousness moulding that “both sides across the strait belong to one China” produced by the one-China framework can yet be regarded as a means to change the weakening China cognition of the people in Taiwan, and is an important supplement to the on-going efforts to draw both sides across the strait closer and foster the national cognition of the people in Taiwan through expanding exchanges, establishing closer ties and promoting merging.

**Second, it has opened a broader space to solve difficult issues which are slowing down the development of cross-strait relations.** The one-China framework, as the policy practice of the one-China principle, was first applied in handling foreign affairs across the strait, and its success in practice lies in its perfect combination of principle and flexibility, as it demonstrates strong pragmatic spirit in the height of principle. More importantly, in years of practice, the one-China framework has also been continually developed, replenished and extended, and today, this framework is not only limited to handling foreign affairs across the strait, and its function has been extended to all levels of cross-strait relations, especially after the cross-strait relations got on the track of peaceful development, with the expansion of exchange and cooperation scope of both sides across the strait. The range covered by the one-China framework has been expanded accordingly, and it has demonstrated great conclusiveness. It is this feature that has expanded the scope of application of the one-China framework in the cross-strait relations in the new period. So it is not difficult to deduce that the

one-China framework, being continually completed in practice, can and will certainly provide a bigger space to pragmatically and rationally solve existing contradictions hindering the in-depth development of cross-strait relations, and new problems that occur in the course of development.

After the cross-strait relations have come on the track of peaceful development, great progress has been made in many aspects of cross-strait relations. However, some contradictions at deep levels and of structural nature between the two sides have not yet solved. With the continuous progress of cross-strait relations these problems have gradually emerged, such as the different orientation of “one-China” and the political positioning of both sides. As there are serious differences between the two sides on these major political issues, there are great difficulties in reconciliation. In the early period of cross-strait relations development, some problems could be bypassed by temporary laying aside and fuzzy processing. However, with the continual progress of the cross-strait relations, solution to real issues can be directly affected without touching the political differences of both sides, for example, the issue of institutional contact and interaction of public power institutions of both sides, and relevant arrangements for Taiwan to participate in international activities. In fact, the peaceful development of cross-strait relations is a process of continually solving contradictions, gradually drawing the two sides closer and increasing common understanding. However, it has become more difficult to solve difficult political issues at the deep level with existing thinking patterns and traditional ways. Fortunately, the experience of both sides across the strait in successfully handling difficult and troublesome problems within the one-China framework for many years has provided a new way of thinking. The wide and extensive operation space, specific to the one-China framework, has provided new motivational force and possibility for both sides across the strait to make theoretical and practical innovations on cross-strait relations under the new historical conditions.

**Third, it has accumulated a foundation for the steady transition from peaceful development to peaceful unification.** An important content of the one-China framework is making transitional arrangements for the cross-strait relations and the foreign activities of Taiwan before the unification of the country, and have them institutional and legalized to ensure a steady, orderly and healthy development of cross-strait relations, and finally realize complete unification of the country. The policy arrangement of the one-China framework is quite flexible. However, this flexibility originates from its definite target orientation, that is, the various policy arrangements for the political relationship and mutual exchange between the two sides across the strait, and Taiwan’s participation in international activities within the one-China framework are all aimed at laying the foundation and creating conditions for the future peaceful unification. All policy arrangements under the one-China framework are made with the full consideration that the

country is not unified, although not seceded in the current phase. Therefore they have the pragmatic and pioneering features, not only taking sufficient care of the practical demand of Taiwan in social and economic development, but also considering the special status of cross-strait relations. The original intention of design is to be conducive to the peaceful development of cross-strait relations, and the ultimate goal is the peaceful unification of the country. The Mainland has never made this point ambiguous, and this is also the actual meaning of the one-China framework itself. It should be noted that, for all relevant policy arrangements within the one-China framework, either the ways of exchange and political relationship of both side, or the identity and method for Taiwan to carry out international activities, including participation in international organizations, the specific plans are not decided by the Mainland or Taiwan on one side, instead, they are made after agreement is reached by both sides through equal consultation, and finally relevant systems are formed and legal protections are provided. This is of vital importance to the steady and health development of cross-strait relations and continually advancing towards unification.

### III. One-China framework in the changing situation of cross-strait relations

Peaceful development of cross-strait relations conforms to the interests of compatriots across the strait, and is also the best way to the unification of the country. However, the complexity of cross-strait relations and the changing international situation also determine that the peaceful development of cross-strait relations is not only a long process, but also no plain sailing in the whole course. At present, the period of peaceful development of cross-strait relations is still short, institutional consultation in relevant areas has not yet been agreed, and some political bottlenecks have yet to be overcome. In this situation, if any change takes place in the political situation of the island, a party advocating “Taiwan independence” comes to power and starts pursuing a line of state secession, the possibility of havoc to the process of peaceful development of cross-strait relations cannot be excluded. In 2016, elections of the top leader and of “legislators” will be held in Taiwan, and in the present situation, there is a high probability that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) will take power again. As the DPP has not given up its “Taiwan independence” position, if it takes power again, there will surely be an impact to the present cross-strait relations. Although the policy propositions declared presently by Tsai Ing-wen, who is running for the top leader of Taiwan on behalf of the DPP, include such contents as “continually pushing ahead the peaceful development of cross-strait relations”, “establishing a consistent, predictable and sustainable cross-strait relations and maintaining the peace and stability of Taiwan Strait”, and “cherishing and maintaining the results

accumulated in the consultations and exchange interactions for over 20 years”<sup>2</sup>, the fact that she refuses to recognize the “1992 Consensus” and her evasive words on cross-strait policies have really made people worry about the future development of the cross-strait relations. The change of political situation of Taiwan and the resulting uncertainty has brought new variables to the future cross-strait relations. Under these circumstances, safeguarding the peaceful development of cross-strait relations so that it will not be interrupted or reversed due to such change has become an important subject to the people and political figures across the strait and all people caring about the situation of Taiwan Strait the world over.

With a series of changes and variables, the key in whether the cross-strait relations can continue to advance on the track of peaceful development is whether the political foundation for the peaceful development of cross-strait relations will be sabotaged, and whether the one-China framework maintaining and assuring the peaceful development of cross-strait relations will be impacted. Here, the “1992 Consensus” is the foundation for political mutual trust of both sides across the strait, and adherence to the one-China framework is the touchstone for maintaining or discarding the peaceful development of cross-strait relations. There are two points to be noted here:

**First, the peaceful development of cross-strait relations can only run within the one-China framework.** For more than 7 years of peaceful development of cross-strait relations, great progress has been made by both sides across the strait in economy, society, people-to-people exchange and international participation. The two sides not only signed 21 agreements including the “Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement” (ECFA), realized mutual visits by the responsible persons of departments of both sides in charge of across strait affairs, and these departments have established normalized contact and communication mechanism. The question of international participation of Taiwan has also been partly solved, such as Taiwan participating in the WHO, and Taiwan signing with foreign countries economic and cooperation agreements similar to free trade agreements. These results were obtained mainly because the Ma Ying-jeou Administration in power recognizes the “1992 Consensus” and opposes “Taiwan independence”, and both sides across the strait have established certain political mutual trust on this foundation, so that both sides across the strait were able to reach understanding on issues including Taiwan participating in international activities, and work out detailed plans acceptable to both sides through consultation. In the meantime, all agreements between both sides across the strait and arrangements on handling specific issues were concluded and made under the one-China framework, without causing “two Chinas” or “one China, one Taiwan”, without the hidden perils of possible state secession. Broadly speaking with this as

---

<sup>2</sup> Tsai Ing-wen: Push the Cross-strait Relations under the Constitutional System of the Republic of China, United Daily News, June 5, 2015.

the basic point, in the present situation in Taiwan, no matter which party is in power, if it is ready to observe the one-China framework, completely accept the relevant agreements and various arrangements already concluded by the Mainland and Taiwan, including the existing arrangement for participating in international activities, the development of cross-strait relations should still be on track and maintain steady continually.

**Second, if the one-China framework is offended, cross-strait relations cannot be developed peacefully, and even become tense again.** There is only one China in the world, and both the Mainland and Taiwan are parts of China. This is history as well as reality, and also the general cognition of the international society. Despite the actual fact, some people in Taiwan insist on turning their own “Taiwan independence” idea into actions to split the country, out of three reasons: first, their own political stubbornness, second, their misjudgment of the international situation, and third, their underestimation of the will of the Mainland to safeguard state sovereignty and the firmness of the one-China framework. That was why in those years, the Chen Shui-bian Administration unscrupulously adventured on “Taiwan independence”. Today, the mainstream public opinion on the island hopes that the peaceful development of cross-strait relations can be continued steadily for long time. Under this pressure, Tsai Ing-wen, the DPP candidate has to state that she will “continually push ahead the peaceful development of cross-strait relations”. However, given the fact that the DPP still refuses to give up its proposition of “Taiwan independence” and recognize the “1992 Consensus”, the reliability of Tsai Ing-wen’s statement on the election should be questioned.

As said above, the one-China framework has fundamentally defined the essence of the cross-strait relations. The daily consolidating one-China framework has not only provided a broad space of operation for the peaceful development of cross-strait relations, but also restricts to a certain extent the “Taiwan independence” illusion and “Taiwan independence” adventure impulse of the secession forces in the island of Taiwan. If the DPP wins the 2016 election and takes the power again, and it still refuses to recognize the “1992 Consensus”, both sides across the strait will lose the foundation of political mutual trust, it will become much more difficult to solve many presently pending questions, and the space will be quite limited for the cross-strait relations to go further forward. If it refuses to give up its proposition of “Taiwan independence” after taking power, and offends the one-China framework, cross-strait relations will surely be subjected to serious negative effects, and the present peaceful development will quite probably become a new struggle between secession and anti-secession.