

Summarized Results of Public Opinion Survey (October 10 to 12, 2008) "Mainland Policy and Cross-Strait Negotiations"

- 59.85 percent of the public believe that the resumption of regular cross-strait negotiations between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) is conducive to peaceful and stable cross-strait relations; and 58.19 percent of the public believe that the signing of the two cross-strait agreements on "weekend charter flights" and "Mainland tourist visits to Taiwan" will have a positive impact on cross-strait relations.
- 64.29 percent of the public support the holding of high-level talks between the SEF and the ARATS (the Chiang-Chen Talks); and 55.51 percent of the public believe that Chen Yunlin's visit to Taiwan will not harm the national dignity and interests of the ROC. However, 52.36 percent of the public believe that mainland China should apologize for the contaminated milk powder incident before Chen Yunlin visits Taiwan.
- With regard to this round of SEF-ARATS negotiations, 79.37 percent of the public approve of including in the negotiation agenda the issue of the safety of food imported from mainland China to Taiwan. In addition, 57.08 percent of the public believe that if both sides reach agreements on expanding passenger charter flights and direct shipping links, then this would be beneficial to Taiwan.
- The vast majority of the public (78.63 percent) still advocate maintaining the status quo defined in a broader sense (including "maintaining the status quo and unification later," "maintaining the status quo and independence later," "maintaining the status quo and deciding on independence or unification later," and "maintaining the status quo indefinitely").

I. Survey Background and Methods

In order to gain understanding of the public's views on related issues concerning Mainland policy and cross-strait negotiations, the MAC commissioned the China Credit Information Service (CCIS) to conduct a telephone survey of adults aged 20 and over in the Taiwan Area from October 10 to 12, 2008. A total of 1,081 effective samples were collected, with a sampling error of about 2.98 percent based on a 95 percent confidence level.

II. Major Findings

(1) Views on resuming regular cross-strait negotiations

59.85 percent of the public believe the resumption of regular cross-strait negotiations between the SEF and the ARATS in June this year is "extremely conducive" or "conductive" to cross-strait relations, while 29.97 percent of the public believe it is "unconductive" or "extremely unconductive."

(2) Views on the second Chiang-Chen Talks

64.29 percent of the public approve the holding of high-level SEF-ARATS talks in Taipei (the Second Chiang-Chen Talks), and 24.52 percent of the public disapprove. 55.51 percent of the public believe that ARATS Chairman Chen Yunlin's visit to Taiwan will not harm the national dignity and interests of Taiwan, while 32.2 percent of the public believe it will have an impact. Moreover, 52.36 percent of the public believe that mainland China should apologize for the contaminated milk powder incident before Chen Yunlin visits Taiwan, while 37.84 percent of the public disagree with this view.

(3) Views on issues to be discussed during SEF-ARATS negotiations

A high percentage (79.37 percent) of the public approve of including in this round of SEF-ARATS negotiations the issue of the safety of food imported from mainland China to Taiwan. With regard to reaching cross-strait agreements on further facilitating passenger charter flights (including extending the four-day flight period to daily flights, increasing the number of flights, opening up more Mainland airports, and arranging ways to shorten the flight distance between the two sides) as well as direct shipping links, 57.08 percent of the public believe this would be beneficial to Taiwan and 25.35 percent believe it would be detrimental to Taiwan. An equal percentage (57.08 percent) of the public believe that if both sides reach an agreement on direct sea shipping links, then this would be beneficial to Taiwan, while 27.29 percent believe it would be detrimental to Taiwan.

(4) Views on the coming of Mainland pandas to Taiwan

65.22 percent of the public agree that Mainland pandas should be allowed to come to Taiwan if this issue is handled consistent with ROC laws and regulations and the requirements set forth in international wildlife conservation agreements, while 30.53 percent of the public express disagreement.

(5) Views on unification vs. independence

The vast majority of the public (78.63 percent) still advocate maintaining the status quo defined in a broader sense (including "maintaining the status quo and unification later," "maintaining the status quo and independence later," "maintaining the status quo and deciding on independence or unification later," and "maintaining the status quo indefinitely"). Of the six possible positions on this issue, the largest number (36.17 percent) support "maintaining the status

quo and deciding on independence or unification later."

(6) Views on the pace of cross-strait exchanges

Regarding the pace of the government's opening up of cross-strait civilian exchanges, 38.58 percent of the public believe the pace is "just right," 30.06 percent believe it is "too fast," and 20.54 percent believe it is "too slow."

(7) Public perception of mainland China's hostility toward Taiwan

64.85 percent of the public believe that the mainland Chinese authorities are unfriendly to the ROC government (including 41.26 percent responding "extremely unfriendly" and 23.59 percent responding "unfriendly"); while 24.89 percent of the public believe the mainland Chinese authorities are friendly to the ROC government (including 0.93 percent responding "friendly" and 23.96 percent responding "extremely friendly"). In addition, 45.98 percent of the public believe the mainland Chinese authorities are unfriendly to the Taiwan people (including 12.4 percent responding "extremely unfriendly" and 33.58 percent responding "unfriendly"); while 39.6 percent of the public believe the mainland Chinese authorities are friendly to the Taiwan people (including 36.73 percent responding "friendly" and 2.87 percent responding "extremely friendly"). The ratio of the public believing that the mainland Chinese authorities are unfriendly to the ROC government represents an increase of about 10 percent (11.75 percent) compared to the figure in the August survey.