

Restoring the Historical Truth of the 1992 Hong Kong Talks

In 1992, Beijing used the pretext of negotiations on cross-Strait document notarization to demand Taiwan to accept the position that "the two sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China," meaning the "one China principle." However, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has become the sole legitimate government representing "China" in the United Nations (UN) after the Republic of China (ROC) was forced to withdraw from the UN in 1971. Therefore, accepting this "China" means accepting the PRC's elimination of the ROC under international law and recognizing the PRC as the central government representing Taiwan externally.

In response to Beijing's demand, then Lee Teng-hui administration prepared two negotiation plans aiming to achieve the goal of "one China with respective interpretations." The initially proposed plan was to accept the "one China principle," but state that each side held a different understanding of the meaning of "China." Hence when signing the agreement for this plan, the Taiwan side recorded the date as "October 30th, 81st year of the ROC *Minguo* Calendar year," highlighting that the "China" recognized by Taiwan is the ROC. If Beijing accepted this, it would mean accepting that the "China" stated by the Taiwan side meant the "Republic of China," thus accomplishing the negotiation goal of "one China with respective interpretations." Beijing could not accept this, thus refused to sign the agreement, and immediately left the negotiation site in Hong Kong. The talks therefore collapsed.

After the negotiators of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) left Hong Kong, Taiwan promptly introduced a second plan, which was to orally state directly that the "China" advocated by Taiwan is the "Republic of China." The Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) conveyed this approach in a press release and in a letter to the ARATS, stated that the Taiwan side's statement would follow the meaning of "one China" approved by the National Unification Council (NUC) on August 1, 1992. The main connotation was that: both sides of the Taiwan Strait adhered to the "one China principle," but they differ from each other on the meaning of "one China." The CCP believes "one China" is the "People's Republic of China," while Taiwan believes "one China" should mean the ROC established in 1912 and hitherto exists.

Beijing did not accept this neither. Instead it merely recognized and accepted an oral representation of Taiwan's first proposed plan in order to avoid any written signature with the

date recorded according to the ROC *Minguo* Calendar. In turn, it proposed its own version of oral interpretation, which stated that "both sides of the Taiwan Strait adhere to the one-China principle and strive to achieve national unification. However, cross-Strait negotiations on general affairs will not involve the meaning of one China." The Taiwan side did not accept Beijing's proposal, therefore, the second round of negotiations through the exchange of correspondence also collapsed. Since then, there was no further communication or negotiations between the two sides and none was achieved.

Based on the historical process and facts mentioned above, we believe that the negotiations between the SEF and the ARATS in 1992 did not reach a consensus and thus there is no such thing as "1992 Consensus."

On December 26, 2018, Taiwan Affairs Office spokesperson once again stressed that "In November 1992, the ARATS and Taiwan's SEF were authorized to reach a consensus that each side would orally express that both sides of the Taiwan Strait adhere to the one-China principle," meaning the "1992 Consensus." This statement completely denies "one China with respective interpretations" and shows Beijing's unwillingness to face up to the reality of ROC's continued existence. If we accept "1992 Consensus," it means the acceptance of the "one China principle," which also means accepting that "there is only one China in the world, Taiwan is a part of China, and PRC is the sole legitimate government representing China." In other words, it would mean accepting Beijing's elimination of ROC and absorption of Taiwan as a part of PRC, resulting in a status similar to that of Hong Kong and Macao. Beijing has long resorted to all manner of sophistry to contrive a fiction that the two sides did reach the "1992 Consensus." Its core purpose in doing so is to eliminate ROC and to absorb Taiwan under its "one country, two systems" rule.

On January 2, 2019, PRC President Xi Jinping gave a speech commemorating the 40th anniversary of the so-called "Message to Compatriots in Taiwan." In his speech the "1992 Consensus" is further defined as "both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one China and work together to advance national unification," and "peaceful unification" and "one country, two systems" were also brought out. Furthermore, Xi proposed that "political parties and all sectors on both sides of the Taiwan Strait recommend representatives to conduct extensive and in-depth democratic consultations on cross-Strait relations and the future of the Chinese nation, as well as to make institutional arrangements to promote cross-Strait peaceful development." Xi also expressed the "willingness to carry out dialogue and communication with all parties, organizations and individuals on cross-Strait political issues

and topics related to advancing the peaceful reunification of China, to broadly exchange views, to seek social consensus, and to push forth political negotiations."

This, beyond all doubt, fully exposes Beijing's intention to eliminate ROC and unify Taiwan with the Mainland. President Tsai Ing-wen therefore immediately released a public statement indicating that: "I must emphasize that we have never accepted the '1992 Consensus.' The fundamental reason is because the Beijing authorities' definition of the '1992 Consensus' is 'one China' and 'one country, two systems.' The speech delivered by China's leader today has confirmed our misgivings. Here, I want to reiterate that Taiwan absolutely will not accept 'one country, two systems.' The vast majority of Taiwanese also resolutely oppose 'one country, two systems,' and this opposition is also a 'Taiwan consensus'."

This is the truth of the so-called "1992 Consensus" which Beijing has long insisted Taiwan to accept. The people of Taiwan must be alert and the world must be aware.