

Public Opinion in Taiwan does not Identify with Mainland China's Unilaterally Established Political Obstacles and Belittling of Taiwan

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) today (June 8, 2017) announced the results of a routine public opinion survey. The survey results showed that over 70% of the public do not identify with the political precondition emphasized by mainland China that "the two sides belong to one China" and the practices of belittling Taiwan as a local government (73.4%). More than 80% of the public think that mainland China's continued suppression of Taiwan's international space has harmed Taiwan's due rights and interests (83.9%), and believe that mainland China should face up to the fact of the existence of the Republic of China (R.O.C.) (80.5%).

The MAC stressed that maintaining peaceful and stable development across the Taiwan Strait is the joint responsibility of both sides. It is also in the interests of both sides. The survey found that nearly 90% of public support the government's position that the two sides should respect each other, resolve differences through communication and dialogue, and maintain the status quo of cross-Strait peace and stability (89.4%). More than 80% of the public agree that mainland China should respect the democratic system and public opinion in Taiwan and that this would be beneficial to the long-term development of cross-Strait relations (85.9%). A similar majority also think that both sides should put the rights, interests and well-being of the people on both sides first and promote positive interaction, exchanges, and cooperation between the two sides (86.3%).

Nearly 70% of the people think the Mainland's failure to date to announce specific evidence, officially notify Taiwan, and agree to family visits in relation to its arrest of Li Ming-che has harmed the rights and interests of the Taiwanese people (68.1%). Regarding other cross-Strait issues long observed by the MAC, the MAC indicated that the great majority of the public continue to advocate "maintaining the status quo defined in a broader sense" (80.9%), continuing a long-term stable trend. As for views on the current pace of cross-Strait exchanges, 31.3% of the public believe it to be "just right," followed by the percentages believing the pace to be "too fast" and "too slow" at 6.7% and 45.0%, respectively. The increase in the percentage of the public believing the pace of exchanges is too slow may be related to the recent overall cross-Strait situation and measures by mainland China to limit and tighten personnel exchanges with Taiwan. Follow-up development of public opinion on this point remains to be seen.

The MAC indicated that mainland China has time and again unilaterally placed political obstacles to cross-Strait interactions and Taiwan's international participation. It also continues to suppress Taiwan's international space, hinder the healthy development of cross-Strait relations, and avoid communication and dialogue with Taiwan. This has indeed harmed the vital rights, interests and well-being of the people of Taiwan, and gradually built up a negative perception of unfriendliness by mainland China. It is feared that this will become a disadvantageous factor in the development of cross-Strait relations. The MAC stressed that "respect and understanding" are the keys to advancing the development of cross-Strait relations. The other side should properly understand and seriously respond to public opinion in Taiwan. It should also treat the "interests and well-being of the public" as the starting point for

improving cross-Strait relations. At present, the Mainland needs to provide a reasonable and clear account of the Li Ming-che incident to the family and the R.O.C. government, truly implement civilized rule of law, and protect basic human rights.

The MAC commissioned the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University to conduct a telephone survey of adults aged 20 and over in Taiwan from June 2 to 6, 2017. A total of 1,076 valid samples were collected, with a sampling error of plus or minus 2.99% at a 95% level of confidence.