

Maintaining the Status Quo of Peace and Stability in the Taiwan Strait, Defending Taiwan's Interests and Values

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Deputy Minister of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Lin Cheng-yi presented a keynote address on "Maintaining the Status Quo of Peace and Stability in the Taiwan Strait, Defending Taiwan's Interests and Values" in Washington, D.C. on July 13, 2017 (US Eastern Standard Time). He emphasized the government's efforts and determination to maintain the status quo of cross-Strait peace and stability. He noted that this status quo is based on mutual benefit for both sides and permits cross-Strait relations to smoothly advance on the existing foundation and track. The development of cross-Strait relations is not a one-sided responsibility, but rather the shared responsibility of both sides. The government will also firmly defend Taiwan's interests and values.

Deputy Minister Lin indicated that the past year or so has been a time of complexity and change in cross-Strait relations and East Asia regional affairs and thorny geopolitical situation. The government of the Republic of China (ROC) has firmly promoted the development of cross-Strait relations and proposed pragmatic policy positions. Taiwan has set a key objective of "maintaining peace and stability," taking into account the responsibilities and duties of Taipei and Beijing as the two main stakeholders in the Taiwan Strait situation. New thinking and approaches are needed to change or adjust tensions in cross-Strait relations. It is also hoped that mainland China can move beyond zero-sum thinking and appreciate the need to expand dialogue and communication with Taiwan in order to meet each other halfway in cross-Strait relations.

The MAC stressed that, facing future developments, the ROC government will firmly defend Taiwan's interests and values and fulfill the responsibility to maintain regional peace in response to changes in the Asia-Pacific region. The MAC is willing to promote cross-Strait dialogue and communication at the earliest possible date without setting political preconditions or restrictions of form or location. At the policy level, it will promote the sound and orderly development of cross-Strait exchanges and strengthen management mechanisms, but will not adopt a confrontational mindset or deliberately set obstacles to exchanges. The MAC indicated that cross-Strait relations should be based on protecting the rights and well-being of the people. It called on Beijing authorities to promptly release improperly detained Taiwan national Mr. Li Ming-che, duly protect his rights and interests, and respect the expression of different opinions.

The MAC indicated that Deputy Minister Lin was invited by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to attend the international symposium on "Cross-Strait Relations Re-examined: Toward New Normal" jointly organized by the MAC, Institute of International Relations National Chengchi University, and CSIS. Deputy Minister Lin fully explained to the participants the important implications of the ROC's Mainland policy. He also thanked the United States for valuing and supporting Taiwan-US relations. He hoped that the US would continue to support Taiwan's cross-Strait policy position and to call on the Chinese authorities to show goodwill and respect public opinion in Taiwan.

After Deputy Minister Lin's speech, participants enthusiastically asked questions on topics including the ROC government's stance on the 1992 Talks, how to respond to mainland China's diplomatic pressure, and how the two sides can find common ground for dialogue and managing crises. Deputy Minister Lin told the participants that, facing the current complexities in cross-Strait relations, the two sides should resolve sensitive issues with wisdom and patience. The ROC government will maintain a non-provocative position on the historical fact of the cross-Strait talks in 1992 and existing political foundation. It also calls on the Mainland to engage with Taiwan in broad-based dialogue and exchange. The government has announced that it will strengthen Taiwan's alliances and right of international participation and safeguard overall national interests and the well-being of the people. The symposium attracted nearly 120 participants from government and academic sectors in Taiwan and US, scholars from mainland China, and persons in various other fields. Deputy Minister Lin plans to visit officials, important think tanks, scholars, and experts in Washington, D.C. and New York to explain the policies and actions of the ROC government in promoting the development of cross-Strait relations. The MAC stated that it has entrusted academic think tanks in Taiwan and the US to jointly hold the international symposium since 2010. Important US officials have spoken at each of the eight symposiums held over the years to convey support for the ROC government's cross-Strait policy and highlight the positive message of friendly Taiwan-US relations. Deputy Minister Lin's keynote address this time helped various parties to understand and support the policy positions of the ROC government and heighten attention in various circles to the importance of cross-Strait relations.