

Speech by Minister Wang
at the SEF 20th Anniversary of the "1992 Consensus"

November 9, 2012

The significance and practice of the "1992 Consensus of one China with
respective interpretations"

Secretary-General to the President Yang, National Security Council
Secretary-General Yuan, Former Secretary-General Hu, SEF Chairman
Lin, Vice Chairman Kao, Distinguished Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning.

It is my great honor to participate in this significant seminar, which
gives us the opportunity to jointly look back on the history of the "1992
Consensus" and to review the fruitful results achieved on this foundation.

In the few short years since President Ma took office on May 20,
2008, the situation in the Taiwan Strait has gone from the past tension
and confrontation to moderation and goodwill, ushering in a new era of
people-to-people contacts, exchanges and cooperation between the two
sides. I think, undeniably, this has been the most peaceful and stable
period in the Taiwan Strait in over 60 years. Yet this golden period in
cross-strait relations was not pulled out of thin air, rather it is an
achievement that has been steadily created on the premise of interactions
rooted in the "1992 Consensus of one China with respective
interpretations" established between the two sides 20 years ago, and has
provided the necessary basis for the two sides to set aside existing
disputes and contradictions, prioritize people's well-being, and
pragmatically handle affairs related to cross-strait contacts.

The objective fact that the two sides of the Strait reached a consensus
in 1992 can not be denied.

In July 1987, the ROC government announced the lifting of martial law and adopted a proactive, positive and pragmatic attitude in the Mainland policy. The government promoted cross-strait exchanges, ushering the development of cross-strait relations into a new phase of private exchanges and interactions. In order to respond to issues arising from the cross-strait developments, exchanges, and interactions between the people on both sides, the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) and the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) successively began formal operations in 1991.

In October 1992, the SEF and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) met in Hong Kong to discuss the verification of cross-strait documents, during which the two sides were unable to reach a concrete conclusion of agreement due to the "one China" issue proposed by the Mainland side, whereby the Taiwan side suggested on November 3 for both sides to conclude the issue through respective verbal declarations. According to the National Unification Council presided by former President Lee Teng-Hui on August 1, 1992 and its resolution of the "meaning of one China," our side proposed that ". . . Even though both sides insist on the 'one China' principle, they have different understandings regarding the meaning of 'one China'". The Mainland side later replied that it "fully respects and accepts" this proposal. This is the Consensus reached by the two sides in 1992 which brought about the signing of four important agreements at the 1993 "Koo-Wang Talks" in Singapore.

The term "1992 Consensus" is now widely referenced by all parties, including the Mainland leader Hu Jintao, Jia Qinglin and officials of the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office. For example, in the written version of the Mainland leader's speech presented at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China yesterday, there was mentioning of "adherence to the common ground of the 1992 Consensus",

while at the same time, the term has also been used by former U.S. President George Bush and U.S. State Department officials. Cross-strait relations are highly sensitive and complex, and it is the wise and creative formulation of the "1992 Consensus of one China with respective interpretations" that enables the two sides to make respective interpretations, shelve disputes, and finally break deadlock. The major implication of the "1992 Consensus", for the ROC government, is certain in that the Republic of China is a sovereign and independent country, and that under the framework of the ROC Constitution, "one China" automatically means the Republic of China. The abovesaid statement is also the greatest consensus, domestically, for the development of cross-strait relations.

In just over four years, the two sides have held eight rounds of high-level talks and hundreds of discussions on operational issues, signed 18 agreements, and reached two consensuses. These achievements have provided solid guarantees for the livelihood of the people, and also for economic and trade exchanges and cooperation between the two sides. They have also thoroughly realized the principle of "putting Taiwan first for the benefit of the people" and earned strong support from the people. Through pragmatic negotiations between the SEF and ARATS, practical benefits for the economy and security, and the order of cross-strait exchanges are gradually being implemented into peoples' daily lives, further advancing harmony and stability of cross-strait relation while the international community also enjoys the spillover effect of peaceful interactions across the Strait.

There is an even deeper significance to the experience accumulated through institutionalized cross-strait negotiations, which is the thorough realization of the "1992 Consensus" spirit, to shelve disputes and pursue win-win solution through negotiations of agreements and through subsequent contacts and implementation of agreements signed. The

essence of the Consensus, "mutual non-recognition of sovereignty and mutual non-denial of authority to govern", practiced by both sides has steadied and solidified every step of development for peaceful, stable, and prosperous cross-strait relations.

Mainland China represents both opportunity and challenge for Taiwan; however, we should not succumb to hazy worries or fears, and cannot mire in complacency or return to the former closed door policy. It is most crucial, while interacting with the other side, to gather wisdoms and opinions, and to build common consensus among parties and sectors within Taiwan.

Former Chairman of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Frank Hsieh, visited the Mainland and held dialogues with the Mainland side recently, an act highly significant in terms of DPP's future direction in dealing with the Mainland. The government believes it is a foresighted and courageous approach that is beneficial to building mutual understanding between the two sides and therefore views the act in a very positive and optimistic light. We also believe that enhanced exchanges and interactions with the Mainland by both ruling and opposition will enable all parties and sectors in Taiwan to view more pragmatically and rationally the development of cross-strait relations, and to also judge more objectively the government's efforts in promoting Mainland policy, providing at the same time as an important aiding force to the government.

I would like to emphasize that, in the process of interacting with the Mainland, the "1992 Consensus of one China with respective interpretations" has enabled us to highlight the fact that the sovereignty of ROC exists, and that the government's promotion of the Mainland policy accords with the ROC Constitution framework. They have long been the greatest common denominator among the ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan, created solid foundation, helped accumulated benign experiences,

and undergone the public's examination. They are also the most effective and pragmatic measures for establishing institutionalized interactions and deepening mutual trust between the two sides. Mr. Frank Hsieh's proposal of "constitutional consensus" and "respective interpretations of the Constitution", compared to the long-held position of the DPP, have already leaned closer towards the government's position of the "1992 Consensus of one China with respective interpretations" and narrowed the gap between the ruling and opposition parties in terms of Mainland policies. For that, we should give affirmation. Unfortunately, consensus has yet to be reached on Mr. Hsieh's proposals within the DPP, and there will also be difficulties for them to reach consensus with the Mainland in the future; therefore, such proposals do not seem feasible at the current time being.

Taiwan cannot afford futile wheel spinning and internal friction. To ensure Taiwan's overall interests and enhance national competitiveness, it is vital that the ruling and opposition parties regard the ROC Constitution as the highest common factor and acknowledge the "1992 Consensus of one China with respective interpretations" as an important premise for institutionalizing cross-strait exchanges. For Taiwan to stand firm in the face of international politics and fluctuant economy, ruling and opposition parties must join efforts to enhance national development and improve the well-being of the people.

The Mainland side convened yesterday the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, while capturing the world's attention it currently also faces many internal and external challenges. It is hoped that the Mainland side will smoothly and pragmatically carry out reforms in various fields and steadily complete the transfer of power. As for cross-strait relations, we stress that peace in the Strait must be maintained through efforts from both sides. We also believe that maintaining stable development of cross-strait relations is in the common interests of both

sides and the achievements made over the past more than four years should be cherished by both sides. In the future, the two sides should continue to uphold the spirit of the "1992 Consensus" to shelve disputes and show mutual respect in order to pragmatically promote mutually beneficial cross-strait relations, deepen mutual trust, and continue dedications for peaceful and stable development across the Taiwan Strait and for the happiness of the people.

In order to further improve cross-strait development, we have the responsibility to take a more active attitude in promoting measures related to Mainland policy on the foundation and the achievements of the "1992 Consensus of one China with respective interpretations". The government will prioritize three major focal areas; to "expand and deepen cross-strait exchanges on various levels," "promote the establishment of reciprocal offices between the SEF and ARATS," and "comprehensively review and amend the Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area". The aim of these efforts is to establish sound and orderly cross-strait exchanges that abide to the rule of law and build institutionalized relations that accord with human rights so as to cope with cross-strait developments and fulfill people's needs, and therefore sustain peace, stability and prosperity in the Strait.

Through discussions among all participants here today, this seminar will provide the broader society with more profound knowledge and deeper understanding of the importance of the "1992 Consensus" and the future outlook for cross-strait relations. It is our hope that you will unstintingly share your critical opinions and advice on the government's Mainland policy. We will humbly listen to your feedback and include it as a reference in the promotion of our Mainland policy. Finally, I sincerely wish the seminar a full success and good health and luck to all distinguished participants. Thank you!