

Summarized Results of Public Opinion Survey
(August 22 to 24, 2008)
"The Public's View on Current Cross-Strait Relations"

- Regarding today's cross-strait relations as compared to last year, 52.2 percent of the public believe that relations are "more relaxed." Moreover, 50.6 percent of the public express confidence in the government's ability to maintain cross-strait peace and stability.
- 51.8 percent of the public support the government's promotion of a more relaxed cross-strait economic and trade policy; and 65.5 percent of the public believe that the management of cross-strait economic and trade exchanges should be "slightly stricter."
- 67 percent of the public believe that both sides across the Strait should stop diplomatic competition and jointly participate in the international community; and 51 percent of the public believe that the development of cross-strait relations and the promotion of diplomatic relations with other countries are complementary.
- Regarding the prioritization of issues for future cross-strait negotiations, as high as 73 percent of the public agree that economic issues should be handled first and political issues should be discussed later. Only 15.8 percent of the public disagree.
- The vast majority of the public (82.6 percent) still advocate maintaining the status quo defined in a broader sense (including "maintaining the status quo and deciding on independence or unification later," "maintaining the status quo and unification later," "maintaining the status quo and independence later," and "maintaining the status quo indefinitely"). The results are consistent with the results in previous surveys.

I. Survey Background and Methods

In order to gain understanding of the public's views on related issues concerning cross-strait relations, the MAC commissioned the Election Study Center of National Chengchi University to conduct a telephone survey of adults aged 20 and over in the Taiwan Area from August 22 to 24, 2008. A total of 1,094 effective samples were collected, with a sampling error of about 2.96 percent based on a 95 percent confidence level.

II. Major Findings

(1) Views on overall cross-strait relations

Regarding today's overall cross-strait relations as compared to last year, 52.2 percent of the public believe that relations have become "more relaxed," 29.9 percent of the public believe relations are "unchanged," and only 9.8 percent of the public believe relations have become "more tense." Furthermore, 50.6 percent of the public are confident in the government's ability to maintain cross-strait peace and stability, while 37.3 percent of the public are not confident.

(2) Views on cross-strait economic and trade policy

51.8 percent of the public support the government's relaxation of cross-strait economic and trade policy, and 33.7 percent of the public do not support this policy. As for the management of cross-strait economic and trade exchanges, 65.5 percent of the public believe that such management should be "slightly stricter," and 20.9 percent of the public believe that management should be "slightly eased."

(3) Views on cross-strait relations and diplomatic relations with other countries

67 percent of the public believe that both sides across the Strait should stop diplomatic competition and jointly participate in the international community, while 21.6 percent of the public disagree with this view. In addition, 51 percent of the public believe that the development of cross-strait relations and the promotion of diplomatic relations with other countries are complementary, while 35.7 percent of the public disagree.

(4) Views on cross-strait negotiations

Regarding the prioritization of issues for future cross-strait negotiations, a high percentage (73 percent) of the public agree that economic issues should be handled first and that political issues should be discussed later, while only 15.8 percent of the public disagree. At the same time, 51.6 percent of the public believe that "parity and dignity" and "substantive benefits" are equally important in cross-strait negotiations. 22.9 percent of the public stress the importance of "parity and dignity," which is higher than those emphasizing "substantive benefits" (18 percent).

(5) Views on unification vs. independence

The vast majority of the public (82.6 percent) still advocate maintaining the status quo defined in a broader sense (including "maintaining the status quo and deciding on independence or unification later," "maintaining the status quo and unification later," "maintaining the status quo and independence later," and "maintaining the status quo indefinitely"). Of the six possible positions on this issue, the largest number (34.4 percent) support "maintaining the status quo and deciding on independence or unification later," while 22.4 percent support "maintaining the status quo indefinitely."

(6) Views on China's "one country, two systems" formula

Regarding mainland China's stance on developing cross-strait relations under the "one country, two systems" formula, the overwhelming majority of the public (81.8 percent) disapprove, while only 8.1 percent of the public approve.

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

Regarding the pace of the government's opening up of cross-strait civilian exchanges, 40.6 percent of the public believe the pace is "just right," 29.5 percent believe it is "too fast," and 17.5 percent believe it is "too slow." Compared to the results of the MAC's March 2008 survey, the percentage of people responding that the pace is "just right" remains basically unchanged; the percentage of people responding that the pace is "too fast" increases by about 10 percent (10.6 percent), and the percentage responding that the pace is "too slow" falls by about 17 percent (17.7 percent).

(8) Public perception of China's hostility toward Taiwan

53.1 percent of the public believe that the mainland Chinese authorities are unfriendly to the ROC government (including 21.3 percent responding "extremely unfriendly" and 31.8 percent responding "unfriendly"). In addition, 45.1 percent of the public believe the mainland Chinese authorities are unfriendly to the Taiwan people (including 17.3 percent responding "extremely unfriendly" and 27.8 percent responding "unfriendly"), representing a nearly 10 percent decrease compared to the figure in the March 2008 survey.