

The Government Has Secured Taiwan's Rights and Interests through Cross-Strait M503 Air Route Consultations and Respected Congressional Oversight

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1. The M503 air route established by the Mainland does not encroach on Taiwan's airspace. The two sides have communicated and reached preliminary results on the M503 issue; Taiwan's sovereignty has not been harmed. The M503 route crosses the high seas outside the airspace of the Mainland and Taiwan where, according to international practices, the establishment of new air routes must adhere to International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) regulations, thus, this air route establishment does not involve sovereignty. The M503 route is an international civil aviation route located within the jurisdiction of the Mainland's Shanghai Flight Information Region (FIR) thus Taiwan's consent was not required for its establishment. However, the route originally registered by the Mainland with the ICAO was only 4.2 nautical miles (NM) away from Taiwan's Taipei FIR, therefore, due to flight safety concerns, the government demanded cross-strait consultations, in accordance to ICAO regulations, after the Mainland informed Taiwan of the routes' establishment in mid December of 2014. In the handling of this issue, the ROC government has adhered to the principles of "safety and dignity" in pragmatic consultations with the Mainland; no harm has come to Taiwan's sovereignty. The government has further solemnly expressed its position and pressed the Mainland to squarely face public opinion and demands in Taiwan and to ensure Taiwan's due rights through peaceful means. The government's actions have gained international affirmation, including from the US State Department spokesperson and the European Union, who view this case as a model of two sides resolving disputes through negotiations, and also

expressed their positive attitude towards development in the Taiwan Strait.

2. The government must establish "comprehensive grasp" of and "effective response measures" for all Mainland aircrafts upon the M503 route implementation. After the Mainland established the M503 route, Taiwan's armed forces will continue conducting aviation security missions in the existing airspace, no changes will be made due to the Mainland's establishment, announcement or implementation of the M503 route. Surveillance and reconnaissance units will have comprehensive grasp of all aircraft and vessel activity near the Taiwan Strait, effectively monitor related movements, and prepare response measures to ensure the security of Taiwan's territorial, airspace, and territorial waters.

3. Following cross-strait consultations, the distance of the M503 route from Taiwan's FIR was increased from 4.2 NM to 10.2 NM. Furthermore, the M503 route is established as an international civil aviation route that will not be used by Mainland military jets, which in turn creates larger air defense buffer for Taiwan. According to a public statement by the National Security Bureau and Ministry of National Defense, the scope of Mainland fighter patrols has expanded from 10 NM off the Mainland's southeast coast and reached in to the west of the Strait median line since July 15 of 1999, yet with the established M503 route being an international civil aviation route, the patrol range of Mainland military jets will be restricted, which adds comparatively more depth to Taiwan's air defense early warning system. Moreover, during consultations between the cross-strait civil aviation authorities on March 2 this year (2015), the Mainland also agreed to the M503 route as an international civil aviation route and will not be used by military jets. In addition, spokesperson for the Mainland's Ministry of National Defense stated on March 27 that the related military activities by the Mainland and Taiwan

must be kept in safe distance from this route to ensure its smooth operations. However, Taiwan will still closely monitor and comprehensively grasp the Mainland flight situation under the current air security and flight safety mechanism to ensure Taiwan's air defense security. Overall, from air defense security perspective, the M503 route implementation is conducive to maintaining stability in the Strait airspace.

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4. Cross-Strait consultations did not evade congressional oversight:

1) The cross-strait civil aviation authorities have, in accordance with Article 12 of the Supplementary Agreement on Cross-Strait Air Transport, held five rounds of talks to discuss issues related to this case whereby the Civil Aeronautics Administration under the Ministry of Transportation and Communications (MOTC) immediately issued a immediate press release on the results of the consultations. The MOTC and the MAC also reported results to the Legislative Yuan's Internal Administration Committee and Transportation Committee on March 9 and 11, respectively, receiving due congressional oversight.

2) The M503 route is set within the Shanghai FIR and under the supervision of the Mainland's civil aviation authorities (not in Taiwan's Taipei FIR). The M503 route is not a cross-strait air route but an international civil air route, neither have civil aviation authorities on both sides of the Strait signed any instruments or documents concerning the matter. Thus, minutes of consultations held across the Strait are not required, as some have proposed, to be submitted to the Legislative Yuan for review.

5. Taiwan has pro-actively sought out its due rights and interests on this matter, whereby the Mainland has made substantive adjustments to

conduct test flights and launch officially the route only under the premise of ensured flight security. In the future, relevant government departments will remain "vigilant" and "respond pro-actively." Related government authorities have evaluated and confirmed the results of cross-strait consultations and the Mainland's adjustment measures, Taiwan is certain in its capacity to manage all air security and flight safety risks, and has already established comprehensive response and handling measures for special circumstances to ensure flight safety and air defense security. The relevant authorities will continue to watch the dynamics of relevant route implementation to ensure Taiwan's air defense security and the Taiwanese people's safety and well-being. The MAC will also, in conjunction with the MOTC, continue to consult with the Mainland and deal with relevant issues in an appropriate manner.