

## **Deputy Minister Chang: Maintaining Peace in the Taiwan Strait is an Important Cornerstone for Ensuring Regional Security**

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Deputy Minister of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Chang Tien-chin (November 14, 2016, London Time) presented a keynote speech entitled "Peace in the Taiwan Strait is an Important Cornerstone of Regional Security" at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies. Deputy Minister Chang stated that cross-Strait relations play a vital role in building regional peace and collective security. Since May 20, the government of the Republic of China (ROC) has been dedicated to building consistent, predictable and sustainable cross-Strait relations and endeavored to the fullest to maintain regional peace and security.

In the speech, Deputy Minister Chang elaborated how the evolving situation internationally and in the Asia Pacific region underscores the importance of international cooperation and maintaining peace. He also emphasized that Taiwan occupies a strategic hub location at the intersection of Eurasia and the Pacific and has long been committed to playing the role of a staunch peacekeeper. Taiwan's universal values and soft power can bring positive energy to cross-Strait and regional development. It is also hoped that the international community will squarely face and support Taiwan's role in maintaining peace and work with Taiwan to create conditions favorable to promoting regional peace and prosperity.

Deputy Minister Chang further emphasized that mutually beneficial cross-Strait relations align with the common interests of both sides and regional parties. Since President Tsai took office on May 20 this year, the ROC government has adhered to a cross-Strait policy view and stance of maintaining the status quo of peaceful cross-Strait relations. It has also shown the utmost flexibility and acted pragmatically. The ROC government further believes that mutual understanding, respect, and constructive, benign and unconditional communication and dialogue between the two sides is the most important key to solving problems and building mutual trust. Both sides should set aside their historical

baggage and mutually respect each other's different historical development experience, distinct political systems and social functioning, calmly and rationally deal with current cross-Strait problems to create a win-win cross-Strait relationship.

Deputy Minister Chang also stated that in the face of new cross-Strait and regional developments, the government will proactively develop Taiwan's geostrategic role and value. It is hoped that all parties can support Taiwan's continued promotion of the positive development of cross-Strait relations based on deepening democracy mechanisms.

Participants eagerly asked questions after Deputy Minister Chang's speech on issues such as Taiwan's position on the South China Sea arbitration case and the future prospects of cross-Strait relations. Deputy Minister Chang told the participants that, since taking office, the president has repeatedly stressed that she respects the historical fact of the talks between the SEF and the ARATS in 1992. Moreover, on the South China Sea sovereignty issue, the government has insisted on the ROC's sovereignty, called for the shelving of disputes, and demanded that Taiwan be included in multilateral consultation mechanism to promote joint development in the South China Sea. Deputy Minister Chang also emphasized that the government will continue to adhere to freedom, democracy, human rights and other universal values to maintain the status quo of cross-Strait peace and stability and serve as a stabilizing force for peace in the region.

Political and economic academics and students from Taiwan and the U.K. participated in enthusiastic exchanges during the event. While in the U.K., Deputy Minister Chang plans to call on important think tanks, scholars, and experts to explain the policies and measures of the ROC government to promote the development of cross-Strait relations.