

Listening to Public Opinion: The 8th Round of Chiang-Chen Talks

The signing of cross-strait agreements is helpful to Taiwan's overall development

1. Introduction

At the 8th round of Chiang-Chen Talks, held in Taipei on August 9, 2012, the heads of the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) signed the Cross-Strait Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement and the Cross-Strait Customs Cooperation Agreement. Also, in connection with the investment protection agreement, the two sides announced the Consensus on the Protection of Personal Freedom and Safety. These latest attainments open another new phase for the steady steps along the long road of cross-strait institutionalized negotiations.

Public opinion surveys conducted after the Talks show a high level of public support for the government's ongoing efforts to address the issues of cross-strait intercourse through the institutionalized negotiation mechanism. Moreover, close to 60 percent of the people consider that the 18 agreements signed at the 8 rounds of Chiang-Chen Talks over the past 4-plus years are helpful to Taiwan's overall development.

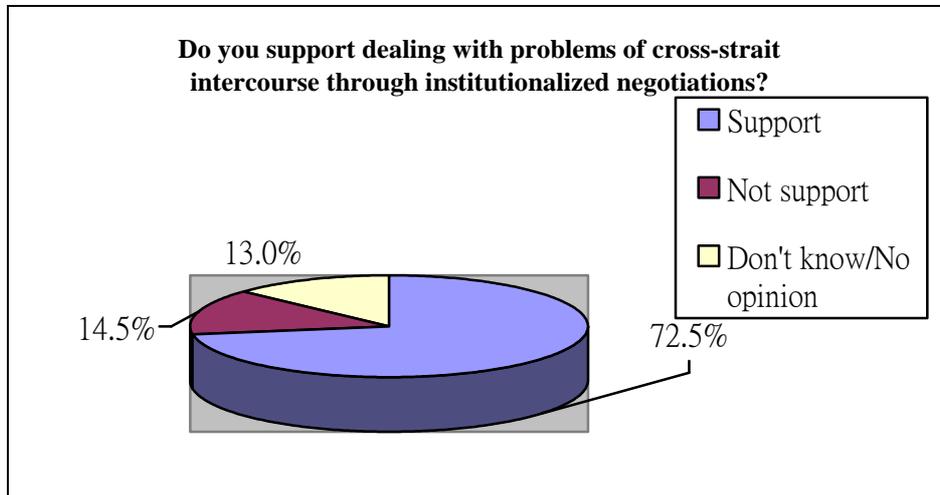


MAC minister Lai Shin-yuan presents the signed agreements to Premier Sean Chen (August 9, 2012)

2. Institutionalized cross-strait negotiations continue to gain high public opinion approval

In the 4-plus years since President Ma took office, the two sides of the Taiwan Strait have held 8 rounds of Chiang-Chen Talks, concluding the signing of 18 agreements and reaching 2 consensuses. Surveys show that more than 72 percent of Taiwan's people

support the continuation of institutionalized negotiations as a means for the two sides to solve problems stemming from cross-strait intercourse. This demonstrates that the government's steady and orderly management of the institutionalized cross-strait negotiation mechanism has won approval from the great majority of the people.



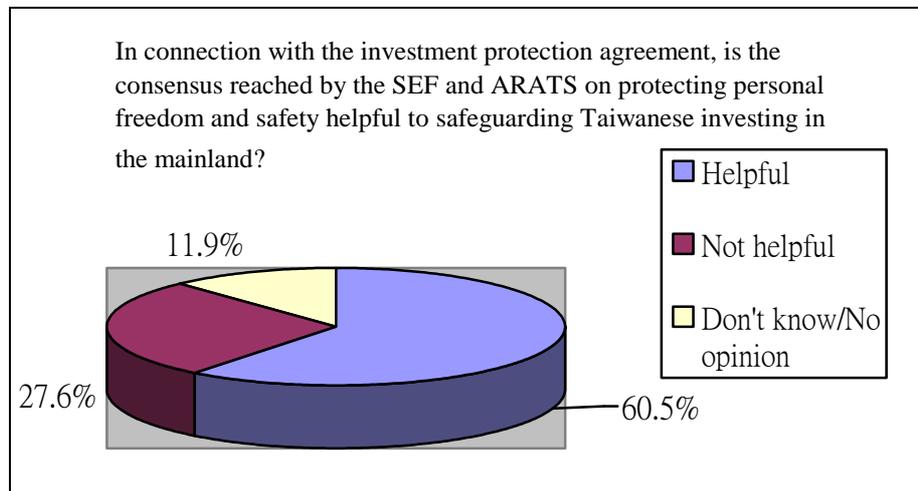
Source: Results of a public opinion survey commissioned by the MAC and conducted by National Chengchi University (NCCU) Election Study Center during August 16-19, 2012.

3. Signing the investment protection agreement to safeguard the investment rights and interests of Taiwanese business people

Because of the breadth and specialized nature of the matters concerned, as well as differences between the two sides' regulatory systems, negotiation on the issues of cross-strait investment protection took nearly two years. But after numerous communications and negotiations between the SEF and ARATS, the two sides were finally able to conclude the signing of the cross-strait investment protection agreement at the 8th round of Chiang-Chen Talks, to provide institutionalized protection for the rights and interests of Taiwanese business investors in mainland China.

Public opinion survey results show that more than 60 percent of the people believe the 24-hour notification mechanism in the consensus on the protection of personal freedom and safety, reached by the two sides in conjunction with the investment protection agreement, is helpful to safeguarding the personal safety of Taiwanese investing in the mainland. Since the signing of the cross-strait investment protection agreement constitutes an important foundation for the protection of Taiwanese business people, the government

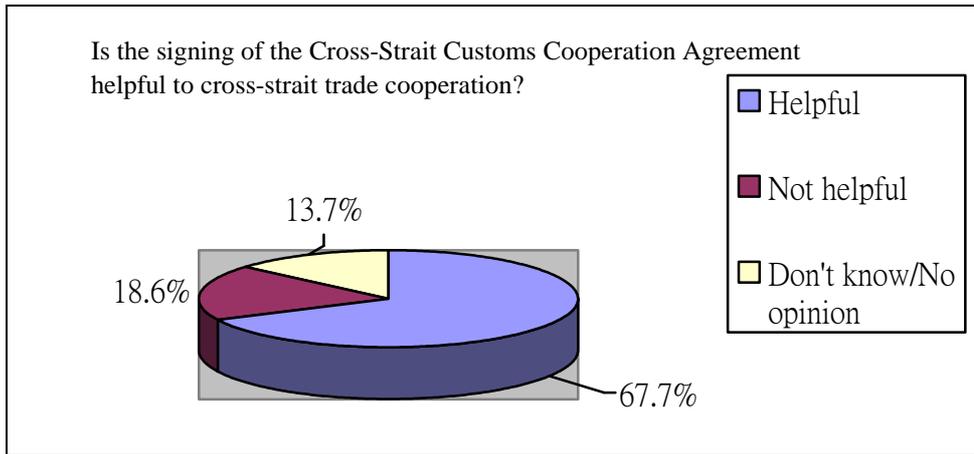
will follow up on the agreement by vigorously launching all related preparatory tasks to effectuate the 24-hour notification mechanism and ensure the full soundness of related reporting mechanisms, to safeguard the personal freedom and safety of Taiwanese business people and their employees and family members.



Source: Results of a public opinion survey commissioned by the MAC and conducted by NCCU Election Study Center during August 16-19, 2012.

4. Cross-strait customs cooperation, promoting cross-strait trade cooperation

More than 67 percent of the people consider that the signing of the Cross-Strait Customs Cooperation Agreement is beneficial to cross-strait trade cooperation. After the signing of the agreement, the two sides will be able to raise customs clearance efficiency, reduce business costs, and combat smuggling. This not only carries positive significance for the promotion of cross-strait trade, but also can further expand the benefits of the ECFA Early Harvest Program.

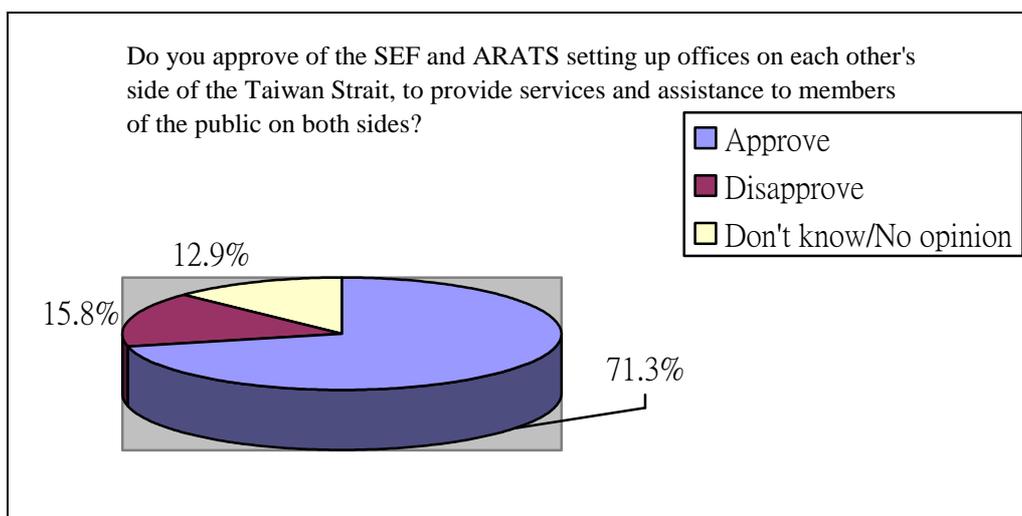


Source: Results of a public opinion survey commissioned by the MAC and conducted by NCCU Election Study Center during August 16-19, 2012.

5. The people support the mutual setting up of offices by the SEF and ARATS

During this round of talks, the two sides also exchanged opinions on the SEF and ARATS setting up offices on each other's side of the Taiwan Strait. Public opinion survey results show that 71 percent of the people approve of the mutual establishment of offices, to provide services and assistance for members of the public on either side of the Strait.

During the last 4-plus years, the growing intensity of cross-strait intercourse has raised the need for faster and more convenient means of dealing practically with various problems encountered by people on both sides. In the future, while maintaining insistence on the principle of "parity, dignity and reciprocity," and taking into consideration the overall cross-strait situation, the government will conduct assessment, study and deliberation on all matters pertinent to orderly and steady planning for the mutual setting up of offices by the SEF and ARATS, including the functions, status, organizational form, and regulation of such offices.



Source: Results of a public opinion survey commissioned by the MAC and conducted by NCCU Election Study Center during August 16-19, 2012.

6. Conclusion

During the past 4 years, acting under the framework of the ROC Constitution, upholding the Taiwan Strait status quo of “no unification, no independence, and no use of force,” and defending the sovereignty of the Republic of China, our government has steadily and soundly carried out cross-strait policy according to the guiding principle of “putting Taiwan first for the benefit of the people.” Through institutionalized cross-strait negotiations, we have worked to pragmatically solve problems stemming from cross-strait intercourse, and to expand bilateral exchanges and interactions in all spheres. Our efforts to build peaceful and stable cross-strait relations have received approval and support from all sections of our society and the international community alike.

Looking to the future, our government will pursue the vision of cross-strait peace unveiled in President Ma’s Golden Decade plan, striving for the general goals of “consolidating the sovereignty of the Republic of China, strengthening Taiwan’s power, leading the benign development of cross-strait relations, and building lasting peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.” Acting on the basis of “seeking prosperity, seeking security, and seeking dignity,” and with the overall strategy of “deeply cultivating Taiwan, connecting with the Asia-Pacific, and positioning globally,” we will pursue the peaceful, stable and benign development of cross-strait relations, to create a favorable environment

for Taiwan's economic development and global positioning.

Appendix: The views of the people on the 8th round of Chiang-Chen Talks

<p>1. Do you consider that the 8 rounds of Chiang-Chen Talks and the 18 agreements signed between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait in the last 4 years are helpful to Taiwan's overall development?</p>	<p>Helpful 58.4% Not helpful 27.8% Don't know/No opinion 13.8%</p>
<p>2. After the signing of the cross-strait investment protection agreement, if a Taiwanese business person or their employee or family member has their personal freedom restricted, their family can receive notification of this within 24 hours. Do you consider this helpful to the protection of Taiwanese who go to invest in the mainland?</p>	<p>Helpful 60.5% Not helpful 27.6% Don't know/No opinion 11.9%</p>
<p>3. The Cross-Strait Customs Cooperation Agreement is mainly concerned with reducing customs clearance procedures for goods traded across the Taiwan Strait, and strengthening cross-strait cooperation in tackling smuggling. Do you consider this to be helpful to cross-strait trade cooperation?</p>	<p>Helpful 67.7% Not helpful 18.6% Don't know/No opinion 13.7%</p>
<p>4. Given the intensity of cross-strait exchanges and dealings, do you approve of the SEF setting up an office in the mainland and ARATS setting up an office in Taiwan, to provide services and assistance to the general public on both sides of the Strait?</p>	<p>Approve 71.3% Not approve 15.8% Don't know/No opinion 12.9%</p>
<p>5. Do you support the two sides of the Strait continuing to deal with the problems of cross-strait intercourse through institutionalized negotiations?</p>	<p>Support 72.5% Not support 14.5% Don't know/No opinion 13%</p>

Date of survey: August 16-19, 2012

Respondents: Members of the general public aged 20 and over in the Taiwan area.

Sample number: 1,072

Commissioning agency: The Mainland Affairs Council, Executive Yuan

Sampling error: $\pm 2.99\%$

Survey conducted by: National Chengchi University (NCCU) Election Study Center