

Chronology of Events (December 15 – January 15)

December 2010

- 15** Taiwan and Singapore released a joint statement announcing that both sides will start formal talks on the signing of an economic partnership agreement. According to the statement, the official title of the trade pact would be “Agreement between Singapore and the Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu on Economic Partnership.”
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- 16** China, Japan and South Korea signed an agreement on the establishment of a cooperation secretariat in Seoul. The pact is the first international treaty signed between the three countries.
- 16** Japan’s Asahi Shimbun reported that China is expected to launch its first 50,000-60,000-ton diesel-powered aircraft carrier in 2014. The Varyag, an aircraft carrier that China purchased from Ukraine, is scheduled to be launched in 2012. China is also expected to complete a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in 2020.
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- 17** The Japanese cabinet approved the newly revised National Defense Program Outline and the Mid-term Defense Force Preparedness Plan, which for the first time called China’s military activities “matters of regional and international concern” and shifts the defense focus of Japan’s Self-Defense Forces to the country’s southwestern islands.
- 17** The Ministry of Economic Affairs’ Investment Commission approved AU Optronics’ application to build a 7.5-generation flat panel display plant in China with an investment amount totaling US\$3 billion.
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- 19** A poll conducted by the Japanese government showed that the number of Japanese who feel friendly toward China dropped to 20 percent, a record low since the survey began in 1978.
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- 20** The Cross-Strait Medical and Health Cooperation Agreement was signed by Taiwan’s Straits Exchange Foundation Chairman Chiang Pin-kung and China’s Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) Chairman Chen Yunlin during their sixth round of talks.
- 20** As the president’s special envoy, Premier Wu Den-yih led a delegation to Burkina Faso, Taiwan’s African diplomatic ally, to participate in President Blaise Compaore’s inauguration ceremony.
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- 21** According to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index 2010, Taiwan ranked 36th in the world in terms of its democracy, a three-place drop from 2008.

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Mainland Affairs Council Chairperson Lai Shinyuan met with ARATS Chairman Chen Yunlin and raised the issue of dismantling China's missiles targeted at Taiwan. Chen said that, as both sides do not have a concrete agreement to solve the state of hostility, they need to hold talks on how to handle this situation.

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A total of 128 professors signed a petition to oppose product placement in the media by the government and to demand genuine news stories, demonstrating journalism and communications academics' protest against the government's advertorials or paid advertisements masquerading as objective news stories.

22

A Gallup poll published by the Yomiuri Shimbun showed that 87 percent of Japanese and 65 percent of Americans do not trust China.

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The Legislative Yuan's Economic Affairs Committee passed a proposal put forth by Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) legislators to establish a task force to review documents concerning the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Committee and the Bilateral Investment Agreement, so as to substantially exercise parliamentary supervision over related matters.

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The National Communications Commission revoked the operational license of ERA TV's variety channel due to the broadcaster's violations of the Satellite Broadcasting Act.

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According to a survey on Taiwanese people's impression of South Korea published by Global Views Magazine, as high as 65.6 percent of Taiwanese people hold negative views of Koreans and over half of the respondents support boycotting Korean products.

23

The U.S. Senate approved the New Start treaty with Russia, which trimmed U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals to 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads, a cut of about 30 percent from a previous limit.

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The U.S. Navy deployed USS Ronald Reagan to the Western Pacific to join USS George Washington of Yokosuka, Japan and USS Carl Vinson of Guam in response to tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

23

South Korea launched major land, air and sea military exercises close to its border with North Korea.

25

Taiwan's five special municipalities began operations as the five mayors were sworn in simultaneously.

January 2011

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Taiwan's central bank raised its key interest rates by 0.125 percentage points and lifted the discount rate to 1.625 percent in its continued efforts to curb property speculation and the inflow of "hot money" driven by foreign investors' deposits.

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The Ministry of the Interior approved the New Taipei City Government's application to translate the city's name literally as "New Taipei City."

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Dilma Vana Rousseff was sworn in as Brazil's first female president. She was elected the country's president last October.

2

The 18 percent annual interest rate paid to retired public servants was to be regulated and institutionalized in the Civil Servant Retirement Act. The policy has been questioned as it may further widen the gap between the rich and the poor.

4

The legislature passed the third reading of a controversial amendment to the National Health Insurance Act. The new health insurance scheme contains a two-track premium calculation system. The DPP caucus refused to endorse the new scheme and Department of Health Minister Yaung Chih-liang resigned after the passage of the amendment.

5

The Executive Yuan's Referendum Review Committee for the fourth time turned down the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) referendum initiative proposed and led by the Taiwan Solidarity Union Chairman Huang Kun-huei.

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A U.S. Congressional Research Service report pointed out that the near-term focus of China's military modernization effort has been to develop military options for addressing the situation with Taiwan and that China wants its military capable of deterring or delaying the intervention of U.S. naval and air forces in a conflict involving Taiwan.

7

The legislature passed the third reading of an amendment to the Income Tax Act, according to which military personnel and some categories of teachers will see their salaries become taxable from 2012 and will have to start filing taxes in 2013. The amendment will affect 370,000 people.

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A survey published by the Mainland Affairs Council showed that 17.6 percent of respondents support "maintaining the status quo and becoming independent in the future," a record high over the past six years. As high as 87 percent support maintaining the status quo in its broader definition.

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Southern Sudan began a seven-day referendum to determine whether the region will become independent from Sudan. The results will be announced on February 1.

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Chinese Defense Minister Liang Guanglie met with U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates in Beijing and reiterated China's opposition to U.S.' arms sales to Taiwan.

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The EU visa-waiver program for Taiwanese nationals, which covers 35 European countries, took effect.

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The legislature passed the third reading of the additional Section 1 for Article 62 of the Budget Act, which banned government agencies, state enterprises, judicial persons that receive over 50 percent of their funds from the government, and enterprises that have over 50 percent of their capital from government reinvestment from placing embedded marketing in the media.

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The four co-chairs of the U.S. Congressional Taiwan Caucus in the House of Representatives sent a letter to President Barack Obama urging him to consider the security interests of the Republic of China during his meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

13

Freedom House released the Freedom in the World 2011 report, with Taiwan's ranking mostly the same with that of last year. The report, however, noted a decline in Taiwan's media environment.

14

Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan reshuffled his cabinet for a second time since coming to power, with eleven ministers staying, two appointed to new posts, and four new faces recruited to the team.
