

## *The Difference Between the 1992 Consensus and the Taiwan Consensus*

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Tsai Ing-wen, presidential candidate of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), claims in her cross-strait policy platform that the 1992 Consensus does not exist. The DPP hopes to use democratic procedures such as lawmaking or a referendum to first forge domestic consensus in Taiwan before using this consensus as basis for negotiations with the People's Republic of China. This is the so-called "Taiwan Consensus." Since Tsai proposed this political view it has drawn widespread attention and been interpreted by various sides. It has also become the focus of current clashes between the ruling Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the DPP.

In reality the "1992 Consensus" is the biggest fraud in Taiwan's political history. At the Hong Kong talks of Koo Chen-fu and Wang Daohan back in 1992 there was no mention of a 1992 Consensus. Only in April 2000, shortly before the DPP took power, (then Mainland Affairs Council Chairman) Su Chi suddenly invented this term. Not only Lee Teng-hui, then still president, said that the 1992 Consensus does not exist, but even Koo, the late chairman of Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF), once publicly stated: "t here is no 1992 Consensus." In fact, the fictitious 1992 Consensus built by the KMT and the Communist Party of China (CPC) was written in black and white for the first time in 2005, after China proclaimed the "Anti-Secession Law." It appeared in the Lien-Hu communique which was published after KMT Chairman Lien Chan, whose party has always lived in fear of the Communists, visited China for conciliatory party-to-party talks. After becoming party chairman Ma Ying-jeou had the consensus written into the KMT party program. The Ma government keeps claiming that the so-

called "1992 Consensus" is defined as "one China with individual interpretations," and that both sides accept this definition. But in fact China's Taiwan Affairs Office refuted the Ma government's take on the 1992 Consensus in an official statement in June 2008 titled "Summary of the ARATS-SEF Dialogue and Negotiation Situation." It clearly pointed out that the two sides had not reached a consensus to have their "individual interpretations" or to "tell their own stories" (as to what constitutes the political meaning of one China). The document said China fears that "one China with individual interpretations" may leave room for arbitrary interpretation, and that Taiwanese separatists could exploit all means to inject separatist ideas into "different interpretations." And as a confidential cable of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) exposed by WikiLeaks shows, Ma said in a meeting with AIT Director Stephen Young during the presidential campaign in 2007 that he was aware of the difference between his own advocacy of "one China with individual interpretations" and Beijing's emphasis of the "1992 Consensus." The cable also states that the AIT was told that Ma is deliberately mixing the two terms in public statements in an effort to blur the difference and provide a bridge for practical dialogue with China. According to the leaked cable Ma's aide Su Chi, who was also present in the talks, noted that "he and Ma believe that Beijing may be so eager for dialogue and to get the Taiwan independence issue off the table that it will accept this obfuscation."

In other words, the so-called "1992 Consensus" and "one China, different interpretations," are nothing else but a blatant lie fabricated by Ma.

Moreover, in United Nations General Assembly

Resolution 2758 of 1971 the international community clearly recognized the representatives of the government of the People's Republic of China as the "only lawful representatives" of China to the world body. Against this backdrop there is no room for a Republic of China, be it under the term "one China with individual interpretations," or "different interpretations of one China." Neither China nor the international community recognizes the existence of two Chinas. Clear evidence of this can be found in a confidential memo on "Standard Operating Procedures for Implementation of the International Health Regulations in the Taiwan Province of China" that World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Margaret Chan sent to WHO members in September last year, which labeled Taiwan as "Taiwan, China" turning it into a province of China. Regarding the WHO's belittling of Taiwan's status, the Ma government submitted a letter of protest in pretended seriousness when attending the World Health Assembly (WHA) in May this year. In mid-June the European Parliament-Taiwan Friendship Group also sent a letter of protest to the WHO on behalf of Taiwan, but in a written response to the friendship group on July 4 the WHO stated even more bluntly: "The fundamental statement of WHO's policy is found in World Health Assembly Resolution 25.1, which states that the People's Republic of China is the "only legitimate representative of China to the World Health Organization."

Since that resolution was adopted, the consistent practice of WHO has been to conduct itself, with respect to Taiwan, China, on the basis that it is not a separate entity but a part of China. The United Nations and other specialized agencies have adopted very similar decisions and follow the same practice." Facing such a public slap in the face the Ma government can only swallow the insult as it

has no other resort.

Therefore, in what seems absurd and bewildering, over the past three years a non-existent concept that humiliates the nation and undermines sovereignty has turned into the Ma government's yardstick for China policy. It simply pushes the Taiwanese people into a "China trap" and serves as a pretext for massive opening first to Chinese package tourists and then to individual travelers. Chinese students, Chinese party cadres and Chinese government officials are coming to Taiwan. In addition the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) has created 15 agreements that make Taiwan solely dependent on the Chinese economy. We could also say that the Ma government uses a 1992 Consensus that has not gone through democratic procedures such as parliamentary approval or passage of a referendum and has not been dealt with in a transparent way as fetters to restrain the government and the people. It should not come as a surprise that the legitimacy of its rule is strongly called into question.

Frankly speaking the so-called Taiwan Consensus is a procedure that emphasizes substantive concepts. Tsai made this point unmistakably clear in her statements. What has also transpired in connection with this topic is that the DPP is forced to deny the 1992 Consensus in order to protect Taiwan's sovereignty. But when it comes to proposing a concrete basis for exchanges (with China), we can't control whether China will deem it acceptable. There is a high risk that the DPP's capability to maintain normal cross-strait exchanges will be called into question. Therefore addressing this problem by upholding legitimate democratic procedures should be the best solution, given that presently there seems to be no alternative. **BT**