



Development of Cross-Strait Relations from Building the Peace Agreement

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Abstract

The cross-strait relations are an important factor of influencing cross-strait economic development and social progress. To build peaceful and stable cross-strait relations is the expectations of both sides as well as an important work for both governments. The cross-strait peace agreement is very critical in the process of the development of cross-strait relations. The two sides are to start negotiations and signing of peace agreement, which is not only beneficial to the two sides, but also helpful to regional and world peace. This essay is some thinking about the development of cross-strait relations based on cross-strait peace agreement.

Key words: Peace agreement; Cross-strait Relations; Chinese Communist Party; Chinese Kuomintang (KMT)

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In April 2005, Hu Jintao, the General Secretary of Chinese Communist Party and Lien Chan, the Chairmen of Chinese Kuomintang held a historic meeting in Beijing. After the meeting, the two parties issued a press release of the leaders of both parties which reached five-point cross-strait relations as a shared vision. In July 2005, Ma Ying-jeou replied to follow the five concepts to promote cross-strait peace and stability. In 2008, as Ma Ying-jeou was elected as the leader of Taiwan, the KMT regained power

and made resumption of cross-strait talks, which achieved a series of peace agreements on cross-strait relations. The whole signing of the cross-strait peace agreement was fruitful. However, because of the overly conservativeness and the complex environment, cross-strait relations in some areas have come to very slow progress or even a halt. The cross-strait peace agreement entered into a deadlock in the face of some sensitive issues in cross-strait exchanges.

On October 9, 2011, Hu Jintao put forward “Ending cross-strait confrontation and healing historical wounds” in his speech at 100 anniversaries of the revolution of 1911. Ma Ying-jeou declared, in the last chapter of his ten-year political programs, the thinking of signing the cross-strait peace agreement with the Chinese mainland. It is considered as another heating-up of cross-strait agreement. In February to July of 2012, I was exchanged to study in the research institute of Zhongshan Chinese mainland, Chinese Culture University (Taipei), during which I studied the course “lectures of the cross-strait peace agreement Interpretation by Chen Daoyuan” opened by Professor Shao the Shizong, the director of the Institute. This course concentrated on the cross-strait peace agreement and invited many notable experts and scholars of cross-strait relations to develop a series of lectures. By connecting the course and the necessity and complicity of cross-strait peace agreement construction, there are some interpretations and thinking as follows:

1. THE NECESSITY OF BUILDING CROSS-STRAIT PEACE AGREEMENT

The two sides have the same root, and the relations are the world concerns. Cross-strait relations is an important factor to influence the development of cross-strait economic and social progress and to build peaceful and stable cross-strait relations is the expectations of both sides as well as an important work for both governments. As Professor Shao Zonghai pointed out, “Taiwan

Area and the Mainland Area have close connections in political and economic issues as well as in history and culture, which has become the focus of Chinese people around the world.” Chang Hsien-yao, deputy director of Taiwan’s “Mainland Affairs Council”, thinks that “peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait is the core of the Asia-Pacific stability and the peace agreement is an important mechanism for cross-strait stability without any doubt.” Professor Zhu Yunhan in the lecture has clearly pointed out: “The peace agreement is helpful to the institutionalization and immobilization of cross-strait relations.” Therefore, the agreement building is of big significance for cross-strait exchanges.

2. THE COMPLICACY OF BUILDING CROSS-STRAIT PEACE AGREEMENT

However, the cross-strait peace agreement is a complicated issue. The building process will be difficult, the main reasons of which are as follows.

2.1 Historical Memory Is Difficult to Remove

As we all know, the cross-strait relations have gone through decades of ups and downs and pains and sorrows. The cross-strait differences caused by the historical gap together with the impact of long-term ideology contributed to the historical memory. The reality is the accumulation of history, which cannot be resolved overnight and is difficult to conclude with a peace agreement. The historical memory is difficult to remove in a short term. Yet it is a key to open the cross-strait relations, without which, the problem cannot resolve.

2.2 Complicated Interests Conflicts

The peace agreement is not only to resolve the problems of two sides, but also involves the interests of many parties. First, it is from international factors and international forces; secondly, the two sides within the society exist interests’ conflicts⁷. These complicated interests conflicts are a stumbling block to the development of cross-strait relations. If we cannot face these interests’ conflicts, it is difficult to create a new situation in cross-strait relations.

2.3 The Taiwan Society Is Difficult to Reach a Consensus

The Taiwan society has developed different groups in the long-term process of development as well as phenomenon of some ethnic antagonism. Meanwhile, there are many political parties in Taiwan, the cross-strait relations development target of which has almost no consistency. In the treatment of cross-strait issues, there are only Blue and Green rather than Black and White with very little consensus and the parties restrain each other and even attack mutually, which is not only difficult to reach a consensus, but can also lead to the lack of systematicness, long-term efficiency and consistency of Taiwan authorities to build a peace agreement.

2.4 The Continuous Improvement of Cross-Strait Relations

After the peace agreement issues is put forward, there are some changes between two sides, the most obvious of which is the increasingly frequent communications and exchanges between two sides, the improvement of relations, and the normalization of various cooperation. With the growing of cross-strait exchanges, the two sides have processed the communications and interactions through a variety of channels. Both governments and the community has genuinely felt the reality of peace and stability that whether to further process the difficult agreement is a question, which has made the peace agreement in danger of being forgotten or ignored.

2.5 The Technical Problems Is Difficult to Overcome

There are still many technical problems in the signing of the peace agreement, which are difficult to overcome. For example, who is the signing body and supervision of the agreement, as well as how to locate itself? Is it reliable? Is there the third party for the agreement and the supervision party? How to grasp the build routes of the agreement? How to deal with the controversy? Is there the patience to maintain it and how to maintain it after signing? How to build the approval of the agreement, the execution and the termination procedures? These challenges are difficult to overcome.

In addition, in different periods of the government, political parties will play different roles, as well as that there is no similar successful experiences of the peace agreement between the two sides for reference, like crossing the river by feeling the stones. Cross-strait relations are important, but the agreement cannot be built on empty talk. We have to face some practical problems which are very sensitive and difficult to resolve. The above reasons result in the cross-strait peace agreement hovering in the history and the present, between the ideality and the reality which is fuzzy and difficult to success, as well as having doubts and speculation. As Professor Zhao Chunshan said, “there is no timetable for the signing of the peace agreement.” In other words, the advent and success of the peace agreement is distant and remote.

3. SOME THINKING ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

Base on the cruel reality that the peace agreement is not only important but also difficult to reach, I think we should treat the peace agreement to improve the cross-strait relations from the following aspects.

3.1 Both Sides Should Continue to Increase the Opening up and Enhance Mutual Understanding and Trust

As the increasing globalization and rationality today, to continue the opening up between the two sides of the same root is the trend of the times that is unstoppable. In the future, the two sides should further increase the cross-strait exchanges and enhance mutual understanding and trust on basis of enlarging opening up.

3.2 Cross-Strait Peace Is the Ultimate Target and the Benefit of People Ranks First

In the building process of peace agreement, the two sides should make the cross-strait peace as the ultimate target and the benefit of people as the first consideration, in the face of the multiple objectives, interests and demands.

3.3 The Peace Agreement Should Be Abstract Rather than Specific Which Can Be a Development Direction

No agreement can cover all the cross-strait issues and moreover, the background to build the agreement is changing. It is difficult for the agreement to settle the comprehensive and permanent peace of two sides. Therefore, the abstract and conceptual agreement is more conducive to resolving the cross-strait issues.

3.4 The Building of the Agreement and the Pace of Improving Cross-Strait Relations Need Patience and Wisdom of Two Sides

The future cross-strait relations will face an objective fact of "pluralistic participation", which requires integration of goals and opinions. This requires patience and perseverance. Therefore, to grasp the rhythm while maintaining stability is a kind of path. There are too many gaps between the two sides, so how to achieve an acceptance of each other's rational idealized state? Can it be done? How long? This is a test of the wisdom of the leaders on both sides and the public.

3.5 The Young Generation Should Have the Courage to Undertake the Responsibility as the Future Host to the Cross-Strait Peace

Young people on both sides are the force in future improvement of cross-strait relations. In the face of historical mission, young people should be brave to continue to strengthen the communications and exchanges on the basis of mutual respect and to develop cross-strait relations and create a bright future.

In short, in the cross-strait exchanges to build the agreement, the two sides should respect each other and have confidence to face reality and mutual understanding which is the key to cross-strait peace with stability and common development as well as the public benefit as the ultimate goal. Difficulties can not stump the brave people on both sides of wisdom, and the friendly exchanges of the two sides are the trend. As long as we work hard together, we will have a better tomorrow.

NOTES

<http://epaper.pccu.edu.tw/newsDetail.asp?NewsNo=12993>

Recording excerpts of the speech from Zhang Xianyao in symposium of "cross-strait relations and management" (held by social science department of Chinese Cultural University, June 1st, 2012)

Professor Shao Zonghai has pointed out in early 2011 that there are "Two big difficulties" in the peace agreement: for Beijing, one difficulty is that both national parties agreed to the referendum procedures before the consultation of peace agreement. Once the issue could not be supported by the majority, it will fail the motion. Then what angle of "interpretation" will the Beijing hold? Another difficulty is that for Taipei, how to move the first step, in case that the "peace agreement" reaches internal consensus and passes referendum by national parties insist on basis of the maintenance of "sovereignty" premise? (See Lianhe Zaobao, Ma Ying-jeou put forward the follow-up of the peace agreement: Dilemma. http://www.zaobao.com/special/forum/pages8/forum_zp111026.shtml)

International factors have been affecting both sides and the roles of the international forces played in two sides are very important. The agreement affects the interests of the international community led by the United States. In Chen Daoyuan lecture series, Professor Zhang Yazhong thinks that the United States has not give up interfering in the situation in the Taiwan Strait and with the return of the United States to the Asia-Pacific area, the future of cross-strait relations will be more complex; Professor Ming Juzheng thinks that Taiwan exists in the interactions of big countries and the two sides been affected by the impact of the international frameworks and international relations; Professor Zhang Wuyue thinks that the United States and Japan are unwilling to see the cross-strait peace negotiations.

The social internal diversification between the two sides is a trend and a reality that different interest groups have different interests. In Taiwan, for example, the trend of Taiwan's diversification is obvious, which has caused different interests and needs as well as disputes and a lot of interventions. Too much involvement will lead to questions and an exclamations at any time so that the situation is complicated, and sometimes it is difficult to sort out the situation

For example, there are sayings like mainlanders, indigenous people, original people, Hakka, the northern and southern person. Speculations of ethnics never ceased within society in Taiwan.

In Chen Daoyuan lecture series, Professor Bao Zonghe thinks that there are three communication channels of government, think tanks and civil between two sides of Taiwan Strait; Professor Zhang Wuyue pointed out that cross-strait dialogue platform includes three elite levels of politics, economy,

culture, and a grass-roots level, with the elite levels of the political level, such as two sessions, talks, cultural dimensions, such as cross-strait cultural forum, economic level, such as the Boao Forum. Grassroots level, such as grassroots forums and people-to-people contacts. Professor Cai Zhengwen thinks that in all channels of communication, government contacts and exchanges between each other are the most difficult, especially the Taiwan government that will have more restraints from public opinions, political parties, legal constraints.

The change of the peace agreement background makes the attitude between people and government that it is good to not sign the agreement. Many people think that the building and signing of an agreement is troublesome, and is also a waste of energy. To face the reality of cross-strait relations is better than painstakingly building the agreement.

At present, both sides have great divergence to recognize the legitimacy of their respective governments. In the mainland, the two governments is not a peer-to-peer relationship. Is it to be signed by the main party or government? In Taiwan, the political parties take powers in turn. There exists turnover problem of parties and the governments facing equality issues

The fact that cross-strait peace agreement is an internal affair of China cannot be changed and it is impossible to allow third-party intervention

There are many points to explore about the peace agreement that is to achieve by one step or accumulated confidence, to dismembered or overall spread.

Both sides have the common pursuit of peace on the issue of agreement, but the target is difficult to be consistent. For example, in the lecture series, Professor Shao Zonghai pointed out in his report that the creation of a peaceful environment in the peace agreement is consistent, but the Beijing government aims to accelerate the peaceful reunification while the Taipei government aims to maintain the present solid situation. Professor Cai Zhengwen thinks that Beijing's consideration of interests is to end hostilities and to achieve lasting peace by agreement in order to create a stable environment for internal development and foreign-led Asia-Pacific affairs, and the right to speak while Taipei intends to maintain the status quo, and get peace in the Taiwan Strait to internal development and popular support, greater external international space and market. The United States hopes Taiwan not to stimulate the continent, for their own interests. Professor Zhu Yunhan thinks that the continent's consideration is to reach a framework to create the new situation of cross-strait while Taiwan lies to improve the activity space, and pay attention to the rise of mainland. The inconsistencies of targets will cause different interests considerations. The controversy has always existed and will continue to exist. On controversial issue, many sensitive issues cannot be talked about. Once being talked about, there will be controversies that cannot be shelved.

It is certainly a very difficult technical strategy.

Now the entrance and exit of peace agreement have not been built well, which will absolutely affect the specific operations of peace agreement.

Is there any examples like cross-strait peace agreement for reference in world history? It is difficult to find in the present situation, even if there are some similar practices, such as many cross-strait scholars think that we can learn from the East and West Germany or EC mode to resolve cross-strait issues, and I think it is not practical because the objective environment is inconsistent and we cannot copy. The success cannot be copied.

The speech recording of Professor Zhao Chunshan in Chen Daoyuan lectures Series.

In the understanding and mutual trust, understanding is more important. Understandings include understanding ourselves and understanding each other. Through half a year of learning and living in Taiwan, I found the two extremes of Taiwan society, few people really understand and know much about the mainland while the most majority of people still do not understand the mainland. So is the mainland. Before we come to Taiwan, Taiwan was just a treasure island in our textbooks without any other concept. After we come to Taiwan, we found another Taiwan. However, only few people on the mainland can come to Taiwan to study and live. Taiwan is just a treasure island in history textbooks to most of mainland people and is to be emphasized to be an inalienable part of China. Therefore, both sides should set up each other's courses and subjects to understand each other. To understand is in order to bridge the gap. The elimination of estrangement is beneficial to the peace and stability.

Can a piece of paper resolve all the cross-strait issues? Peace agreement should be concrete or abstract? I think that the cross-strait peace agreement can be seen as an abstract concept and bucketful, even as the direction of cross-strait efforts. This abstract agreement covers all the peace agreements. In fact, many concepts are built by people. Various concepts in different periods and different people will have a different interpretation. Cross-strait peace agreement is also true. We can make the differences and divergences become the commons in the process of building and the interpretation of peace agreement. The two sides especially DPP should treat the exchanges and cooperation of two sides with a positive vision and broader perspective avoiding too much radical imagination. I believe that the peace agreement between the two sides can be seen as a tree fruit. It requires the seed to get harvest. This seed is peace, and then we water the seed with faith as fertilization. In the process of growing, both sides should take good care of it and the expecting fruit is the peace agreement, the result of which will be that the two sides jointly wait for the mature to taste the joy of the harvest

The multivariate realities include both external multivariate realities and internal multivariate realities.

The former is for the international community, such as East Asia, Japan and other countries as well as the United States who will try to influence cross-strait relations. The latter is relative to the societies on both sides of the Straits. On both sides of the mainland government of society, along with the deepening of reform and opening up, the diversification of the continent's society becomes obvious with different interest groups and interests. The internal diversity of Taiwan society is an objective fact

that any political party is difficult easily makes a decision.

As Professor Su Qi said in the lecture, the cross-strait exchanges should process step by step and hold the pace. "The fast is the slow and the slow is the fast". I believe this statement is applicable to the cross-strait peace agreement. One important reason that the series of policies of Ma Ying-jeou government have caused great criticism and complaints is that he did not control the pace well.