



# New Perspectives on the Chinese Mainland's Policy Toward Taiwan

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## Abstract

*As affirmed in this article, the basis of the mainland's policy toward Taiwan is the one-China policy spelled out in President Jiang Zemin's "Eight-Point Program" of 1995 and President Hu Jintao's program of 2005 entitled "The Four Nevers": (1) Never swing from the one-China principle. (2) Never give up efforts for a peaceful solution of the issue. (3) Never change the policy of pinning hope on Taiwanese compatriots. (4) Never compromise in the struggle against secessionist forces in Taiwan. This article is an interpretation of "The Four Nevers."*

## Introduction

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The basis on which the Chinese mainland builds its Taiwan policy is the one-China principle, that is, there is only one China in the world, both the mainland and Taiwan belong to one and the same China, and China's sovereignty and territorial integrity are inseparable. The key policy toward Taiwan is "peaceful reunification and one country, two systems." It was so in the past, and so will it remain in the future.

In implementing the policy, mainland leaders have given timely elaborations of it or have advanced concrete proposals according to the circumstances. The most important policy statement made by Mr. Jiang Zemin when he was the president was his "Eight-Point Program" of 1995. The most recent and most authoritative elaboration of the mainland's Taiwan policy

was made by President Hu Jintao on March 4, 2005, when he participated in a joint panel discussion with the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which represents the Taiwan region. It was summed up as "The Four Nevers": Never swing from the one-China principle; never give up efforts for a peaceful solution of the Taiwan issue; never change the policy of pinning hope on Taiwanese compatriots; and never compromise in the struggle against secessionist forces in Taiwan.

The following is my personal interpretation of the "The Four Nevers."

First, since the summer of 2004, the mainland has made it clear that the priority of its Taiwan policy for the foreseeable future is to oppose the secession of Taiwan from the country in the name of "Taiwan independence." On different occasions mainland leaders have said that the mainland's patience will enable it to achieve the final goal of reunification. President Hu Jintao, while using the most clear-cut language to express mainland determination not to allow the secessionist forces to make Taiwan secede from China under any name or by any means, affirmed the mainland's utmost sincerity in settling the Taiwan issue peacefully. He solemnly stated: "As long as there is still a ray of hope for peaceful reunification, we'll do our utmost to achieve it." Furthermore, he emphasized that "peaceful reunification does not mean that one side 'swallows' the other but that the two sides confer on reunification through consultation on an equal footing"—that is, the mainland will not only strive with patience for

a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue but will not impose a unilateral solution. The reunification of Taiwan with the mainland can be accomplished only through the joint efforts of compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Straits.

Second, President Hu Jintao pointed out: "Although the mainland and Taiwan are not yet reunified, the fact that the two sides belong to one and the same China has remained unchanged since 1949. This is the status quo of Cross-Straits relations. It is not only our position; it is also manifested in Taiwan's existing regulations and documents." It is the secessionist forces in Taiwan that seek to change the status quo across the Taiwan Straits. This is the root cause of the tension. If the Taiwanese secessionist forces ceased to attempt to change the legal status of Taiwan as part of China, in other words, ceased to attempt the "de jure independence of Taiwan," the mainland would be only too willing to talk patiently with Taiwan's authorities about all the issues across the Straits. If that happened, the tension that now exists across the Straits would surely relax and Cross-Straits relations would definitely stabilize and improve.

Third, what the mainland insists on is the one-China principle. It has no intention whatsoever of "isolating" any particular party in Taiwan. As President Hu said: "We welcome the efforts made by any individual or any political party in Taiwan toward the direction of recognizing the one-China principle. No matter who he is and which political party it is, and no matter what they said and did in the past, we are willing to talk with them on issues of developing Cross-Straits relations and promoting peaceful reunification as long as they recognize the one-China principle and the '1992 Consensus.'" The mainland has no preference for any political party in Taiwan. It has no intention of meddling in party politics in Taiwan. What it cares about is the one-China principle. The one-China principle is the sole basis on which the mainland deals with political parties in Taiwan.

Fourth, President Hu said: "We will spare no effort in doing things that are conducive to

our compatriots in Taiwan, to promoting Cross-Straits exchanges, to safeguarding peace in the Taiwan Straits area, to the peaceful reunification of the motherland. And we will do them well. This is our solemn commitment to the broad mass of our compatriots in Taiwan." The mainland is fulfilling this solemn commitment. Since the beginning of this year, the mainland has taken a series of concrete actions in this regard, including the Spring Festival chartered flights, the exemption of custom duties on imported fruit from Taiwan, arranging for mainland tourists to visit Taiwan, allowing Taiwan's civil aircraft to fly over the mainland, setting up a fund of RMB 30 billion to provide financial support for Taiwan investors in the mainland, offering scholarships to Taiwanese students in mainland schools, and selecting a pair of pandas to be presented to compatriots in Taiwan and so on. The mainland will continue to take concrete action to fulfill its commitment in the months to come.

President Hu's new initiatives have contributed to a marked improvement and stabilization of Cross-Straits relations. Yet, as he put it, "the struggle against the 'Taiwan independence' secessionist forces and their activities remains stark and complex." The main danger at present is still the attempt on the part of Taiwan secessionists to attain the "de jure independence of Taiwan." They have by no means given up their fond dream. If they continue to ignore repeated warnings by the mainland and the international community and take adventurous actions, the mainland would have no other choice but to react in accordance with the Antisecession Law. The mainland is on guard. The year 2006 may be a crucial one.

### ***About the Author***

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