



Cross-Strait Relations Trilateral Conference By Stephen M. Young

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Introduction

The June 28-29 Cross-Taiwan Strait trilateral conference sponsored by the National Committee on American Foreign Policy (NCAFP) came at a particularly useful time, offering scholars from the PRC, Taiwan and the U.S. the opportunity to explore ways to contribute to more productive cross-Strait exchanges in the wake of Taiwan's recent change of government. Particularly in the absence of formal cross-Strait contacts, cut off by Beijing in response to President Tsai Ing-wen's May 20 inauguration speech, the participants agreed on the need for continuing dialogue across the Strait, with the support of American friends. The participants commended the National Committee for its continuing commitment to such dialogue, including this coming December, when the NCAFP will lead a delegation to the region.

Summary

The conference participants acknowledged the challenges currently affecting cross-Strait relations in the wake of DPP's landslide electoral victory in January and Tsai Ing-wen's inauguration as President in May. The PRC's response to President Tsai's inaugural address, giving her an "incomplete" grade and insisting that she embrace the "1992 Consensus" as a prerequisite for continued cross-Strait dialogue, was criticized by both Taiwan and American participants during the conference.

Their view was that dialogue of some sort should be continued, without preconditions, even if low-key and informal. A few speakers suggested that quiet contacts were continuing, although no one offered any concrete examples of this. Some speakers felt there would be a fairly narrow window of opportunity for progress to be made in cross-Strait ties, before domestic politics forced President Tsai to turn her attention to local and presidential elections in 2019 and 2020.

Several speakers searched for ways to bridge the current gap between Beijing and Taipei, suggesting various formulas for addressing the current impasse. If the 1992 Consensus was too difficult for President Tsai to accept, could there be other formulations she could offer that might enable renewed dialogue? President Tsai's recent avoidance of any discussion of Taiwan independence, for example, should be welcomed by Beijing. Her use during a visit in June to Panama of the expression "Taiwan (ROC)"—since it seemed to tacitly recognize that Taiwan and the Republic of China were one and the same—was seen by some as a step in the right direction, though some Chinese participants were critical of this formulation.

President Tsai faces a multitude of domestic challenges that will absorb much of her attention in the early phase of her presidency. Public opinion seems strongly supportive of some reduction in Taiwan's economic dependence on cross-Strait trade, hence the new leader's announcement of a "Go South" trade policy, emphasizing stronger economic ties with ASEAN and South Asia. This was not to say that cross-Strait trade would end, but the focus would be shifted somewhat. Reviving the economy and addressing domestic social and political issues would also take up much of President Tsai and her administration's early attention.

American electoral politics were also a concern, with uncertainty over who would be elected in November and whether in particular the Republican presidential candidate would embrace positive policies toward China and Taiwan, should he be elected. Meanwhile, China is facing a decline in economic growth and growing social tensions that pose a challenge to President Xi Jinping at home.

The conference produced a number of proposals aimed at improving cross-Strait relations in the months ahead. Many speakers stressed the need to find some formula that would allow cross-Strait dialogue to resume. American and Taiwan speakers urged greater recognition by Beijing of President Tsai's domestic challenges and her early efforts to address cross-Strait ties. These participants also suggested that an active campaign by China to strip Taiwan's few remaining diplomatic partners away could prove counterproductive.

There was general agreement that this channel of trilateral discussion continues to play a valuable part in promoting cross-Strait understanding, and should be continued.

Session I: Current State of Cross-Strait Relations: Challenges and Opportunities

Several Mainland speakers highlighted Beijing's disappointment over President Tsai Ing-wen's failure to embrace the 1992 Consensus in her inaugural address and other early statements. This had resulted in the Mainland's public rebuke, grading early comments on cross-Strait ties as "incomplete" and suggesting the cross-Strait climate was "cold" (or comprising a "cold peace") so far under her. The Mainland delegation sought to place the onus on President Tsai to move in Beijing's direction.

A number of Taiwan and U.S. speakers argued that the PRC has given insufficient credit to the new Taiwan leader. First, she faces major domestic policy challenges, including reviving the economy and addressing labor issues. Second, the mood of the Taiwan electorate toward President Ma's cross-Strait policies was decidedly negative, especially among young people. So Tsai's early focus on domestic issues was understandable. She faces popular concern over food safety issues, unemployment, pension reform and other domestic issues that have great political salience in Taiwan today. These were the topics that dominated the presidential election campaign last fall, and they stand high on the new Taiwan leader's agenda. Therefore China should not be so impatient.

Several participants discussed the new Taiwan leader's ambitious domestic agenda, as well as her desire to ease back from the economy's perceived overdependence on trade with the Mainland by focusing on the "Go South" business concept. This reflected both the political reality of the DPP's overwhelming victory in last January's elections, and the repudiation by Taiwan's voters of former President Ma Ying-jeou's emphasis on closer ties with China. Taiwan's new Foreign Minister is also focusing his early efforts on practical matters in expanding the island's international space, for example by seeking membership in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), but not pushing for UN membership.

When discussion centered on the 1992 Consensus, and President Tsai's failure to directly echo her predecessor's embrace of it, many opinions surfaced. For most of the Mainland speakers, this was the primary obstacle to resuming cross-Strait contacts. For most other participants, the Chinese side has boxed itself into a corner. Some noted that President Tsai's writing "President of Taiwan (ROC)" at an event in Panama during her recent visit had been ignored, when this was an acknowledgement of a concept that accepts the idea of a greater China, and steers clear of talk about Taiwan independence. In this context, others thought Beijing's focus on the 1992 Consensus was misplaced, given the ambiguity of the concept, when what China really seeks is Taiwan's embrace of "one-China."

A Taiwan participant indicated that the hidden significance of this term was really seeing Taiwan as an independent country. This speaker said his children had even less affinity with one-China than the older generation of people like him. So he believed the trends were not favorable for any early resolution of the cross-Strait question.

Hong Kong figured in this discussion, including one participant's suggestion that the "one country, two systems" concept championed over three decades ago by Deng Xiaoping had lost any appeal to Taiwan, if it ever enjoyed such. This was, in the view of several Taiwan and American speakers, in no small part because of the perception in Taiwan that Hong Kong was being bullied into a more subordinate role by Beijing, despite the earlier pledge Deng had made for the former colony to enjoy fifty years of broad autonomy. One speaker suggested that Beijing stop citing "one country, two systems," since it had little appeal to the people of Taiwan.

An American speaker wondered whether there could be a "Nixon to China" moment for President Tsai, given her strong base among Taiwanese voters, with the new leader embarking on some dramatic step to improve cross-Strait relations. But others thought this unlikely, especially given China's hostile reception of the new Taiwan leader and its apparent lack of flexibility in dealing with her. Some wondered if this might change in 2017, with the Party Congress in Beijing offering President Xi Jinping and his top advisors an opportunity to show greater creativity on the cross-Strait problem.

Some Mainland speakers spoke of the impatience of the Chinese people toward Taiwan's politics, as most of them would like to see reunification occur soon. One Chinese academic suggested that Beijing had already shown flexibility, despite its strong suspicion of Tsai Ing-wen's real political agenda. He argued that it is the new Taiwan leader's change in policy that has created the problem. He made mention of Taiwan's "so-called democracy," which elicited a spirited response from a Taiwan speaker, who indicated there is nothing "so-called" about the enthusiasm for democracy reflected by the people of the island.

Taiwan speakers responded that reunification is increasingly unpopular among people there, particularly younger citizens of the island. While they might welcome good economic ties across the Strait, Taiwan's youth are even less interested in reunification than their parents are.

Several Taiwan and American speakers noted that, while the vast majority of Taiwan citizens oppose reunification, this did not translate into enthusiasm for independence. One speaker suggested the only way greater calls for independence would emerge would be if China used excessively harsh tactics toward the island, especially any decision to use force to resolve the cross-Strait question.

Session II: The View from DC

An American speaker described the high-level U.S. delegation to President Tsai's inauguration as a reflection of Washington's continuing support for the island and its democratic traditions. Interest in the U.S. Congress remains high, with a major Congressional Delegation having just visited Taipei as we were meeting. President Tsai would be transiting the U.S. twice on her way to Latin America at the end of June, and would be well received in stops both in Miami and Los Angeles. The United States' continuing interest in Taiwan reflected our significant economic and trade relations, as well as the broad ties between our two peoples.

Washington hopes to see solid cross-Strait ties continue. The U.S. continues to steer clear of playing any direct role in cross-Strait relations, viewing that as more appropriate for the two sides to manage for themselves. But security ties with Taiwan will continue, governed by the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) and attentive to the island's legitimate defensive needs.

Washington values open lines of cross-Strait communication, and so was disappointed by Beijing's unilateral decision to sever talks between the Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) and the Association of Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS). There was discussion of who might be appointed by President Tsai to lead SEF. This would be an important indication on her part of where she wants cross-Strait ties to go.

Another American participant noted Beijing's apparent impatience to resolve the cross-Strait issue, and counseled more patience. He criticized President Xi Jinping for discouraging more open debate on the Mainland on such issues.

The question of Taiwan's potential entry into the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was raised. An American speaker suggested that Taiwan might be a good candidate for consideration in the second tranche of members, though domestic American politics might slow this process down. The basic precondition for consideration has been membership in good standing in APEC, which Taiwan certainly has demonstrated over the years. But working out bilateral U.S.-Taiwan problems on beef, pork and pharmaceuticals remains a problem the new government in Taipei needs to address in a positive manner.

A Mainland scholar suggested that more was going on quietly between Taipei and Beijing than either side was acknowledging since the Tsai Government took office, which is a good sign. At the same time, President Tsai's announcement of her "Go South" policy in trade and economics signaled a desire to pull away from what many perceived as former President Ma's excessive focus on cross-Strait trade relations.

A Mainland academic acknowledged that Beijing continues to watch closely what is being said in Taiwan. There had been much focus on what the DPP said following Tsai's election in January, and at her inauguration four months later. A next important date would be October 10th, "Double Ten" the Republic of China's National Day. An American speaker stressed that, consistent with the 1982 assurances offered by then President Reagan, Washington would not pressure Taiwan to negotiate with the Mainland. He also indicated that Washington does quietly draw Beijing's attention to what is being said by key interlocutors in Taiwan on cross-Strait ties.

In a brief exchange on the South China Sea situation, an American speaker said Washington opposed any actions that could raise tensions there. Therefore, Washington had been critical of then-President Ma Ying-jeou's decision to visit Taiping Island, in the disputed waters. Speakers acknowledged the pending decision by the Hague Tribunal on the Philippines' case was going to be closely watched by all sides.

Session III: Perspectives from the KMT, DPP, U.S. and the Mainland

A KMT speaker believed the Mainland's reaction to President Tsai's May 20 inauguration speech had been quite mild. This was despite the sense that both sides of the Taiwan Strait seemed far apart, yet confident of their respective positions. He listed three future signs of potential trouble. The first was the lack of dialogue between Beijing and Taipei. The second was public opinion in the PRC, which had lost its positive tenor following the change in governments on Taiwan. The third factor was tensions in the international sphere, which included strained Sino-Japanese relations and the South China Sea disputes.

A DPP speaker was less pessimistic, but acknowledged that President Tsai needs to find some way to move forward that could be acceptable both to her own citizens and to Beijing. This was being hampered by the lack of trust between the two sides. So the new Taiwan leader needs to find ways to enhance trust with Beijing, while preventing any further downturn in relations. One idea is to seek some creative new channel for informal dialogue, perhaps in a step-by-step manner.

An American speaker was critical of the Obama Administration in its last year in office for its alleged lack of a grand strategy for U.S.-Taiwan relations. He also felt the PRC faces pressing security problems in the South China Sea and on the Korean peninsula, as well as with Taiwan. He believed that if Hillary Clinton were elected she would bring much experience in dealing with the PRC to the job, but would be tough on Beijing. Meanwhile President Tsai faced many domestic challenges that might distract her from focusing on the cross-Strait problem in the early going.

Mainland interlocutors showed some anxiety over U.S. presidential politics, wondering if one of the candidates would be less committed to working with China, and might accordingly present some unpleasant policies toward Taiwan. The fact is, American speakers stated, that candidate Trump's views on China are not well known, whereas Hillary Clinton has a track record of working with the PRC as Secretary of State. Another U.S. speaker with experience on the Hill made the point that Congress has frequently played a leading role in addressing Taiwan's arms sales, something unlikely to change in the coming years.

A Mainland speaker justified the PRC's tough stance on the new Taiwan leader with reflections on the lack of trust and China's longtime focus on building on the 1992 Consensus. He was skeptical that Tsai could manage her internal challenges, especially the economy, without addressing cross-Straits matters. Economic ties with China need to be maintained if the Taiwan economy is to prosper. He worried that failure to preserve cross-Straits ties could lead the DPP back into fundamentalist positions that would further damage cross-Straits relations. An American speaker observed that Tsai's early appointments to cover cross-Straits relations in the Presidential office and Mainland Affairs Council were experienced and able people. There were different views on these appointments expressed by other participants.

A Mainland scholar suggested President Tsai might take the Japanese position on the Senkaku/Diaoyu island dispute, clearly something that Beijing would not welcome. An American scholar on Japan agreed that Tsai has shown a desire to improve relations with Tokyo, placing this as a higher priority even than her "Go South" policy. A Pan-Blue Taiwan speaker echoed this sense that the new Taiwan leader was going to place greater emphasis on relations with Japan than President Ma had. A Mainland scholar worried that this would suggest less interest in working to maintain cross-Straits dialogue, though others—including supporters of Tsai—did not believe this was an either/or choice.

Some American speakers with experience in the matter reminded the session that the PRC's highly negative response sixteen years ago to Chen Shui-bian's election had in effect become self-fulfilling. Beijing's refusal to deal with President Chen in the early going pushed the Taiwan leader toward more provocative policies on cross-Straits relations. These speakers urged the PRC not to repeat this mistake by failing to engage with President Tsai early on. A Pan-Green academic believed both sides of the strait had shown caution in working out Taiwan's delegation this May to the World Health Assembly (WHA), suggesting this is a useful example of how to avoid unnecessary friction in the early going.

Two Chinese scholars made fairly strong statements suggesting Beijing would place pressure on President Tsai to display greater clarity on cross-Straits ties, or face a downward turn in relations with the Mainland. One stated that failure by President Tsai to embrace "one country, two systems" would make Beijing more concerned that her real goal was "peaceful separation." Therefore, he believed Tsai would have to find a way to accept that Taiwan belongs to one-China fairly soon, or face a very strong Chinese reaction, which he warned would not display flexibility.

An American with considerable experience working with both the PRC and Taiwan felt that Taiwan could not pull Japan away from its focus on improving ties with Beijing. He also made the point that maintaining good U.S.-China relations during the coming political transition in Washington would make handling both Taiwan and Japan easier. Conversely, another U.S. scholar added, poor U.S.-China relations could well push Taiwan and Japan closer.

Session IV: Policy Recommendations

A former U.S. diplomat, now academic, eschewed formal recommendations, but offered some thoughts on the way forward. The Taiwan people cherish their democracy and want to continue to develop an open electoral system. Beijing's threats to use force had only made any form of closer ties less attractive to the people of Taiwan. If Beijing pushes harder, it will only increase support within Taiwan for independence. This analyst doubted that the current regime on the Mainland could change.

Therefore, he suggested a fifty-year moratorium to allow current tensions to cool off, with no reunification and no independence to be pursued during this period. In the meantime, the PRC would find its message more attractive if it shifted to soft power in approaching Taiwan. He suggested the decision to allow Taiwan to participate in APEC was an example of how this would work. The same could be applied to Taiwan's role in WTO and ICAO. In short, the challenge is how to break out of the current impasse driven by distrust.

The second speaker was a DPP member. He suggested Beijing replace coercion with efforts to build trust across the strait. He encouraged efforts—which he felt already existed—to talk indirectly in an effort to improve attitudes toward one another. The U.S. could quietly encourage such efforts, including possible steps to allow President Tsai and President Xi to move toward one another's positions. The speaker argued that, despite some progress on cross-Strait ties under President Ma, the people of Taiwan do not believe that economic ties with the Mainland are having produced tangible returns. This had contributed to the current anti-trade sentiment in Taiwan, in this speaker's view.

He proposed two principles to define a new process: first, more balance in cross-Strait exchanges; and second, encouraging three-way efforts by Beijing, Taipei and Washington to promote dialogue. Taiwan also needs to pursue trade diversification to lower its current reliance on a single market (China). This strategy could promote Taiwan's pursuit of domestic structural economic reform. There should also be greater global cooperation in trade within the Asia-Pacific region. Greater trust between the PRC and Taiwan was more important than pursuing the 1992 Consensus, this speaker concluded.

The third presenter from the PRC began by suggesting Beijing had no flexibility to make concessions beyond the 1992 Consensus. If Tsai failed to agree to this, it would force a return to the one-China principle. Perhaps one could consider a “constitutional one-China.” Looking for other ideas, the speaker suggested Taiwan might offer some negative assurances to clarify the status quo. For example, the DPP could freeze its party charter, which contains language about Taiwan’s status that is unacceptable to the PRC.

This speaker felt it would be difficult to break the current deadlock, but pointed to U.S.-Soviet dialogue during the Cold War as a positive example of pursuing talks, despite the two sides’ deep differences. Even during the Chen Shui-bian era there had been low-level contacts. Maybe the sides could begin with Track II dialogue. He worried that the window for resolving these issues might end after Taiwan’s October 10 celebration this fall, which other speakers had suggested was a last opportunity to break the current deadlock.

The U.S. could play a positive role in encouraging the sides to talk, he continued. Perhaps Washington could help the Tsai government agree to some sort of assurance not to pursue Taiwan independence. At the same time, Washington should be careful not to pursue arms sales to Taiwan, the PRC speaker suggested. Beijing and Washington should work together to move things forward, or at least prevent a crisis over Taiwan independence. This speaker believed Beijing’s policy would be rational, but had doubts that Taiwan could prevent another Sunflower Movement.

The fourth speaker, a KMT member, saw President Tsai as understanding she could not satisfy Beijing without going against public opinion on the island. The disarray within the KMT worked to President Tsai’s advantage, but she still faces a challenge from the New Power Party on her left. Since President Tsai’s top priority, in this speaker’s view, is reelection in 2020, she would be very cautious on cross-Strait matters. She has to deal with increased Taiwan identity, economic inertia, and social inequality, as well as any loss of patience on the part of the PRC.

President Tsai faces the challenge of developing the Taiwan economy without placing poor bets on new industries, for example biotech. She needed to avoid alienating state-run corporations as well as labor unions and worker groups. She needs to strengthen the educational system. The new president also would be trying to promote free trade agreements, both bilateral and multilateral (like seeking consideration in the second tranche of TPP). These issues, if not carefully managed, would open the door to a revival of the KMT. Thus this speaker believed President Tsai would need to be patient in rebalancing trade with China.

Some PRC participants urged the U.S. to put pressure on the new Taiwan government to elicit greater flexibility on issues of importance to Beijing. One Mainland scholar urged the DPP to change its party platform in the interest of stability. An American asked whether the PRC would take steps to undermine President Tsai’s political standing. Another U.S. speaker questioned whether the KMT could recover to play a significant role in Taiwan politics, following its very poor showing in last January’s elections.

A common theme from Mainland speakers was that the ball is in President Tsai's court to adjust her approach to cross-Strait relations. Several American speakers warned against the Mainland repeating its mistakes during the Chen Shui-bian administration, when Beijing refused to respond to his early attempts at injecting some flexibility into cross-Strait ties. This had led President Chen to take provocative stands on issues of concern to Beijing in the later stages of his tenure.

A KMT speaker claimed that the DPP had avoided opportunities to find ways to work within the framework of the 1992 Consensus, to the detriment of cross-Strait relations. He felt somehow the DPP needs to come to grips with the one-China concept. A Mainland scholar, noting President Tsai's association with the controversial 1999 "state-to-state theory" put forward by then President Lee Teng-hui, claimed she had negative baggage with the PRC. He used this to explain the high level of distrust toward her now that she was Taiwan's leader.

An American scholar pointed to the PRC decision to allow a Taiwan delegation to attend this spring's WHA gathering in Europe, urging Beijing to continue to think creatively in that manner. He suggested the Mainland not seek to reduce Taiwan's small cluster of diplomatic partners, following the shift of the Gambia back to recognition of the PRC. Such restraint would make it easier for the Tsai Administration to find ways to work with the Mainland.

Another American speaker pointed to the sharp difference in political systems, with a democratic Taiwan facing an authoritarian PRC. In the longer run, he suggested, progress in opening up the PRC's political system would make it easier for Taiwan to deal with the Mainland.

Session V: Conclusions

Three speakers offered their views on the way forward in this final session. An American participant began by noting the danger of advising Chinese friends on how to solve their own issues. But with that in mind, he offered a few ideas:

First, former President Ma had worked through recognition of the 1992 Consensus to generate some stability in cross-Strait relations over the previous eight years. Now the baton has shifted to President Tsai. She deserves more credit than Beijing has thus far been willing to offer, in quickly giving her an "incomplete" grade. Tsai's balance of clarity and ambiguity had been undercut by China's harsh reaction. The PRC should show greater understanding. One suggestion would be for Beijing to revisit its earlier conditions for the use of force to limit the conditions under which this might be raised. It would be in everyone's interest for Beijing to resume cross-Strait contacts.

Turning to Taipei, the speaker urged the Tsai government to choose its words carefully in order not to upset the status quo. But it is clear that the new government has dropped advocacy of independence from its policy, something Beijing should value. The DPP might revisit its 1999 reference to independence in its party documents, while remaining open to exploring other ways to encourage resumed dialogue across the strait. The speaker suggested the two sides could seek creative ways to find a “2016 consensus” that reflects the realities of the current situation, and allows engagement to build a new sense of mutual trust.

A Mainland speaker began by saying Beijing’s current focus on maintaining economic growth and implementing reforms makes pushing for reunification less of a priority for the foreseeable future. He viewed the anti-secession law of 2005 as the de facto new one-China policy. Thus there was no urgency to change this current status quo.

While Taiwan must focus on reviving its economic growth, President Tsai must accept that her ambiguity on key issues has fostered distrust across the Strait. Thus the DPP should find ways to restore momentum in cross-Strait relations. The speaker sought to put the onus on the Tsai government. If the 1992 Consensus is too hard for her, let her come up with another formulation. If she cannot do this, then she must prepare for a rocky road in cross-Strait relations.

In the absence of cross-Strait dialogue, trilateral gatherings such as the National Committee’s sessions took on added importance. Noting tension in U.S.-China relations over the South China Sea, trade and other issues, the speaker was pleased that currently there was no friction between Beijing and Washington on cross-Strait relations. He ended by stressing the importance of focusing on peaceful development by all sides.

The third speaker, representing a Taiwan Pan-Blue perspective, began by dividing the next four years into three stages. First would be the next 6-12 months, into mid-2017. In this period, President Tsai needs to address a number of domestic and economic issues, so cross-Strait relations could not be her only focus. Beijing ought to be patient, though the speaker did anticipate the loss of some of Taiwan’s diplomatic partners during this period.

The second period would be from mid-2017 to mid-2018; this would offer the best opportunity for progress on cross-Strait relations. After the initial period of “cold peace” and reduced contact, both Taipei and Beijing should try to identify ways to revive contacts across the Strait. By mid-2018, local and then national elections in Taiwan would dominate the Tsai government’s attention, making creative moves on cross-Strait ties before 2020 more difficult.

This speaker then offered some recommendations. Both sides need to exercise self-restraint, and respect the other side’s bottom-line positions. President Tsai needs to identify something she could do to satisfy Beijing’s minimum requirements without using the term one-China. He asked what Beijing might be willing to offer if President Tsai offers a more satisfying formula. The Mainland needs to come up with a grand strategy.

Turning to Taiwan, he asked what the Tsai Administration might be willing to do to encourage Beijing to offer up creative new ideas. One area to address was how to sustain cross-Strait economic relations. Taipei should be practical, asking if any agreement might offer benefits to the island. In the end, both sides needed to seek value in any new approach to cross-Strait relations.

The speaker concluded by highlighting the importance of trilateral contacts. Each party should try to put themselves in the other side's shoes, he concluded, invoking the influence of the late Professor Bob Scalapino on this process over the years.

One American participant noted that President Tsai's long experience as a trade negotiator made it difficult for her to make concessions. This prompted another American to offer his sense that President Tsai had been quite creative in her inaugural speech, implicitly accepting the ROC Constitution as a one-China constitution. She did this despite recognizing that it would alienate some of her deep green supporters. So she has shown creativity already, even given her background as a trade negotiator.

Postscript

All sides found the two days of trilateral exchanges useful, particularly given the freeze in cross-Strait dialogue announced by Beijing following its harsh analysis of President Tsai's inaugural address. All conference participants hoped that the PRC and Taiwan would find a face-saving way to resume direct dialogue in the near future, despite the current pall that has descended over the Taiwan Strait.

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CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS TRILATERAL CONFERENCE

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