

**Track Two Dialogue on
EU-China-Relations and the Taiwan Question
Shanghai, 5-6 June 2010**

A workshop jointly organised by German Institute for International and Security Affairs / Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Berlin and Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai, with the friendly support of the Robert Bosch Foundation, Stuttgart.

Discussion Paper
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**Brief recapitulation from memory of extemporaneous comments offered in
Sunday's closing "Policy Recommendations" session**

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I will use the time allotted me not to make any policy recommendations as such but to share with you, very briefly, two or three reflections I have made—and until now mainly kept to myself or communicated privately to my colleagues—in the course of this series of fascinating conferences, of which this is the seventh and may possibly be my last.

Though billed as a 'track two dialogue' they have been increasingly ambitious conferences characterized by off the record but—on the Chinese side—highly authoritative exposés and explications of China's steadily evolving official policy vis-à-vis Taiwan (though the fact that it is in fact a continually evolving policy has not as a rule been stressed.)

On the European side the presence of Franz Jessen has injected a similarly off the record, but in a sense similarly authoritative, frank, and highly valued explication of how China's policies vis-à-vis Taiwan are viewed in EU circles. Such remarks, and the responses they have at times elicited, have been highly valued by me anyway, because except to a few privileged full time specialists, the formation and formulation of EU policies is almost as opaque a process as that of Zhongnanhai. And then of course there are the contributions of the true Taiwanese experts among my colleagues, which I trust are as enlightening to you as they are to me.

What I have wished these exchanges would provide more of, however—and I believe it was Gudrun Wacker who expressed a similar wish yesterday—would be clearer insight into the policy debate on the Mainland. Though you may not have the same kind of open, contentious debates that we are accustomed to in the West, we can of course see changes that can only have resulted from a de facto policy debate that not only produces, but also carefully criticizes, evaluates and even questions hitherto accepted precepts in the policy creation process. It has been increasingly possible to catch sight of examples of what one might call loyal dissent in China's policy-making processes—an example is Prof Huang Jiashu's article questioning the wisdom and utility of adhering to the principle of 'chopping off the ROC head' that appeared just last month in the *China Digest* and was promptly picked up by the Taiwanese press. How interesting and enlightening it would have been to have been allowed to hear something of the arguments for and against this idea, whether or not it eventually meets with the approval of the highest authorities.

It would be useful, and for us 'normal behavior', to conduct such debates in the open, so that foreign observers, the 'experts' you would like to influence, might better understand the policy process and the reasoning and judgments that give rise to its results.

Secondly, and very briefly, a comment on an impression I for one will be taking away from this conference. Namely that the very considerable progress that has

been made in the past two years in terms of practical advances in improving and normalizing cross-Strait economic ties and facilitating practical people-to-people contacts may in fact jeopardize the achievement of what I would have hoped was the practical medium term goal of the *détente* proposed by Hu Jintao in 2007 and signed on to by Ma Ying-jeou, namely a stable cross-Strait *modus vivendi*.

Not only the practical effects of developments to date and of how matters like the ECFA play out in coming months, but also the degree of flexibility and sensitivity to Taiwanese needs shown by spokesmen for the mainland will be vital factors in determining Ma Ying-jeou's popularity and political future, which everyone agrees are important to achieving the desired results. But what exactly *are* these desired results? unification, as some have stated? or a *modus vivendi* based on a long-range premise of a One China in some not yet agreed upon form or sense?

It seems to me that the necessary degree of sensitivity and flexibility are only very slowly emerging on the mainland side. Allow me to point out that many, if not all, of your great leader Deng Xiaoping's contributions to the development of modern China following the end of the Mao period are regarded as brilliant and decisive and continue to be adhered to. But surely Deng's genius lay not only in being right about what course China should shift onto, but also in recognizing when policies heretofore regarded as sacrosanct needed amending. I personally don't admire every decision Deng made and possibly some of you in this room don't either, but on many issues he was right. Deng pursued his convictions with determination, and many of his policies continue to be adhered to today. But on some issues, including the cross-Strait issue, Deng showed much flexibility.

China under Hu Jintao's leadership has made vital corrections in the growth-at-any-cost policies of the 1990s, and Hu managed to put China's policy vis-à-vis Taiwan on a much more productive track after the second DPP victory in 2004 by reaching out to the KMT and proposing a win-win, shelve-our-most-troublesome-differences approach in 2007. But doctrinal correctness and infallibility remain characteristic of the way Chinese authorities traditionally present the country's policies, while its greatest advances have, to my mind, been made when leaders have recognized that policies and goals sometimes need adjusting or rethinking. Deng Xiaoping not only coined the 'One China, two systems' formula; he also said that China could, if necessary, "wait one hundred years" for Taiwan's return. That remark was made precisely to point out the wisdom of exercising flexibility and sensitivity. These qualities are increasingly evident when it comes to what you term "the Taiwanese authorities'" need for domestic political legitimacy; they are still lacking, in my estimation, in the way their desire and need for 'international space' is treated.