

Confidence-Building Measures. Successful Cases and Implications for the Taiwan Strait

An international conference hosted by New Taiwanese Cultural Foundation (NTF) in cooperation with Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Taipei, 16 – 17 January 2008

The New Taiwanese Cultural Foundation was established by Ma Ying-Jeou (elected President of the Republic of China in March 2008) in 1999. For the conference the foundation had teamed up with the renowned Scandinavian institute to discuss experiences with confidence-building and to examine their possible relevance to Cross-Strait relations. This cooperation was a highly successful one. At the beginning all papers were available in a bound volume which greatly helped to follow proceedings of the conference and facilitated discussions.

Speakers of the conference came from Asia, Europe and the United States. Those from Taiwan were mainly from prestigious institutions such as National Taiwan University, the Academia Sinica, National Chengchi and Tamkang University. The conference started with a keynote speech by Ma Ying-Jeou and was arranged into five sessions. On the third day participants went to Jin Men (Quemoy), a group of islands off the coast of Fujian province; a trip which showed impressively opportunities and challenges of closer contacts between Taiwan and China through the so called “three links”. Dr. Ma, whose party, the Guomindang, a few days earlier, had achieved an almost two thirds majority in parliamentary elections, described this victory as a great responsibility to unite society on Taiwan. He explained his approach for improving relations with China through a policy of “three no”: no unification talks, no Taiwan independence, and no use of force.

In the first session confidence-building in general and European experiences were analyzed (Werner Pfennig, Zdislaw Lachowski), their relevance to cross Taiwan-Strait relations was scrutinized by Lin Cheng-Yi and Francis Yi-hua Kan. Dr. Kan called on the European Union to be more active. “As a rising global actor, the EU should exercise its ‘civilian power’ role by committing itself to regional security before it has to be asked to bring its military into play. The Taiwan Strait is *the* case with the greatest possibility of a local conflict escalation involving big powers, and therefore, it is an area worthy of the EU’s consideration in putting more resources and attention into the resolution of the potential conflict.”

The second session broadened the Asian perspective further. Moon Chung-in from Seoul’s Yonsei University, who had participated in the two inter Korean summit meetings, talked about the Korean security dilemma and confidence-building measures. Experiences from India were presented by Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Vasantha R. Raghavan who, throughout the conference, provided clarification with his penetrating questions and elucidative comments. The position of Japan was described by Philip Y. M. Yang while Fu-kuo Liu talked about confidence-building measures in the South China Sea and their possible implications for Taiwan. He saw

positive developments: “The South China Sea over the years has been transformed from the sea of disputes to the sea of cooperation between China and ASEAN.”

The third session addressed a wide range of threats like climate change (Kensuke Ebata) but also discussed practical measures of maritime confidence-building (Vijay Skhuja from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore on the Straits of Malacca and Chungly Lee on technical collaboration for human security at sea.) As always Dr. Lee had enriched her paper with telling tables and figures.

Session IV looked at various concentric circles of Asian security surrounding cross Taiwan Strait relations. Chin-hao Huang from SIPRI presented a broader picture of an evolving approach toward confidence-building measures in Asia while Kao-cheng Wang examined the relevance of such developments to the case of Cross-Strait relations. Mignonne Man-jung Chan addressed chances for a strengthening of confidence-building on the regional, the multilateral level and used APEC as an example. She briefly described theoretical foundations of global governance and international cooperation, detailed controversial issues of Cross-Strait participating in APEC, identified key issues of contention and called for external support: “... external support from the international community will be an indispensable blessing for mapping the roadmap for a Cross-Strait confidence-building mechanism.” Andrew N. D. Young spoke on responses of Japan, South Korea and China to North Korea’s threat and looked into possible lessons for Taiwan. Jean-Pierre Cabestan stated that diplomatically “isolated by the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC) or Taiwan is not recognised as a state by the large majority of the international community and therefore cannot hope to be formally a party in any multilateral interstate security arrangements in Asia.” He therefore propagated the need for a more comprehensive approach bringing into concerted action developments on a multitude of levels and applying various methods. Professor Cabestan concluded that the “situation in the Taiwan Strait is in many ways *sui generis*. Only *ad hoc* solutions can therefore be adopted to ease the tension and step by step favour a creeping normalization of the relations between the PRC and the ROC.”

Session V did put the focus on the role of the United States and looked into the future. Participants from the US at times gave the impression of a slightly patronizing, presumptuous attitude: we know best, President Chen Shui-bian got it all wrong and relations between Taiwan and the U.S.A. must be put back on track as quickly as possible. Szue-chin Philip Hsu examined the merits and flaws of the practice of U. S. strategic ambiguity/clarity in Cross-Strait relations while Alexander Chieh-cheng Huang looked at possible scenarios in the years ahead (2008-2012).

In his luncheon talk professor Szu-yin Ho informed about Cross-Strait economic interdependence and bargaining power. His presentation was impressively substantiated and illustrated by sound empirical data. A roundtable discussion on “roadmap for CBMs across the Taiwan Strait” concluded the conference. Lin

Chong-pin, former deputy minister of defence and now president, Foundation on International and Cross-Strait Studies in a precise comparison identified Cross-Strait blind spots on both sides in areas of conception and behaviour. This led him to formulate suggestions for both sides invoking age-old Chinese wisdom from Laozi and Wuqi. He concluded with the optimistic assessment: "Let the interests of the people reign supreme. Governments are temporary. People are forever. Time is on the side of the peoples across the Taiwan Strait."

In addition to the official programme, foreign participants were invited to dinners hosted by Vincent C Siew (in March 2008 elected Vice-President) and Dr. Chi Su. Both voiced the expectation that Cross-Strait relations could be improved considerably and quickly. They stressed common interests, especially the benefits of closer economic interaction. In their view issues for talks with China should include: a comprehensive economic agreement, peace agreement (termination of hostilities), Taiwan's international representation, (Taiwan should be given more space in the international arena, allowing for more flexible diplomacy) and talks on peaceful coexistence.

The conference was superbly organized and efforts are already under way to edit the revised papers. The wide range of topics and backgrounds of participants offered both, a detailed look at the position and problems of the Republic of China and a broader view on problems and positive experiences with confidence-building. While due attention was given to developments in Europe and Asia, the relevance of such developments to Cross-Strait relations was always a main focus.

Werner Pfennig

The 2nd Confucius Institute Conference

Beijing, 11.-15. Dezember 2007

Seit der erstmaligen Einrichtung eines Konfuzius-Instituts in Seoul sind innerhalb von drei Jahren weltweit mehr Konfuzius-Institute gegründet worden, als dies von den vergleichbaren Goethe-Instituten im Laufe ihrer 50-jährigen Geschichte bezeugt werden kann.

Diese rasante Verbreitung der von der chinesischen Regierung ins Leben gerufenen Konfuzius-Institute gab Anlass zur zweiten „Confucius Institute Conference“ im Dezember 2007. Hierzu lud das dem chinesischen Bildungsministerium unterstehende Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) mit dem ihm angegliederten Headquarter of Confucius Institutes ein.

An den ersten zwei Tagen nahmen Vertreter der bereits gegründeten bzw. in Gründung befindlichen Konfuzius-Institute sowie ihrer in- und ausländischen Gründungsinstitutionen (überwiegend Universitätspräsidenten und -vizepräsidenten) weltweit teil. Darüber hinaus waren zahlreiche Vertreter des diplomatischen Korps, akademischer Einrichtungen u.ä. geladen. Zum Zeichen der hohen (kul-