

## 《英语新闻评论：台湾新领导人需遵循九二共识》

With the leadership election in Taiwan scheduled for Saturday, both sides of the Taiwan Straits are waiting to see whether the island's new leader would continue to abide by the historical 1992 Consensus. The consensus, which commits both sides to the one-China principle, should keep serving as the political foundation of cross-Straits relations, because it is in the best interest of compatriots on both sides of the Straits.

Since the Kuomintang, which adheres to the consensus, wrested the island's leadership from the Democratic Progressive Party in 2008, favorable progress has been made in peaceful cross-Straits exchanges despite the global financial crisis.

On its part, the Chinese mainland managed to not only secure its economic well-being, but also boost its trade and investment cooperation with Taiwan, which has benefited a lot from the increasing number of direct flights across the Straits, as well as the flow of mainland tourists, students and capital in recent years.

The Economic Cooperation framework Agreement signed in 2010 facilitated a slew of cross-Straits negotiations on investment, and trade in services and goods until two years ago, when opposition protests on the island stalled the interaction.

Since the mainland is undergoing an economic transformation and Taiwan is struggling to boost its economic performance, cross-Straits investments are indeed beginning to slow down. However, the mainland's shifting economic focus has created a variety of opportunities that Taiwan can cash in on to upgrade some of its outdated enterprises, including those manufacturing original equipment.

The mainland's cross-Straits policy has always accorded priority to the well-being of Taiwan compatriots and enterprises. Also, the mainland's transnational cooperative projects, especially the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative, can benefit compatriots across the Straits.

Despite the minor bumps, both sides are still enjoying the dividends of the enhanced economic cooperation and people-to-people exchanges of the past eight years because their ruling parties (especially the Kuomintang) adherence to the 1992 Consensus.

The mainland and Taiwan have become inseparable in many regards after years of shared peaceful development. For example, in less than eight years, the number of direct cross-Straits flights has increased from zero to 120 a week, more than 18 million mainland tourists have visited Taiwan and at least 35,000 mainland students have chosen to study there.

Although the cross-Straits trade volume and Taiwan's investment in the mainland market declined last year, in relative terms, the landmark meeting between Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou in Singapore in November has already borne fruit as a hotline was opened a month later to link the cross-Straits affairs chiefs on the two sides.

The meeting also laid out the basic guideline for deepening cross-Straits economic integration, which could get a shot in the arm from the mainland's "new (economic) normal" and the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20). In other words, Taiwan's new leadership has to abide by the 1992 Consensus and value its contributions to the island's development if it truly seeks to expand its presence in the mainland market and regional economic cooperation.

Objectively speaking, the constantly improving cross-Straits ties have everything to do with both sides upholding and deepening the consensus. The mainland is willing and has the capability to improve Taiwan compatriots' well-being, which it sees as part of its responsibility, but only on the basis of shared respect for the 1992 Consensus that lays the political foundation of cross-Strait relations.

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