

Foreign Affairs Policy Recommendation Team Scholar Biography



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Current Position

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Current Position

Research Fellow, Institute of European and American Studies,
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Government Experiences

Deputy Secretary-General, National Security Council
(2006-2008)

Deputy Representative, Taipei Economic and Cultural
Representative Office in the United States (2004-2006)



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Professor, Department of Social Science, National Chengchi
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Government Experience

Deputy Secretary-General, National Security Council
(2008-2010)



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Government Experience

Deputy Secretary-General, National Security Council
(1994-1998)

Summary: Foreign Affairs

In the next four years, the international trends Taiwan will face are:

- The power ratio between US and China keeps tilting toward the latter: American leadership is being further challenged by a more assertive China that had thrown its weight around issues like Iran's nuclear program, South China Sea, and Syria's internal strife;
- The lingering effects of War on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq will keep sapping American strength, even though the US had withdrawn its ground troops from Iraq in 2011 and will do so from Afghanistan in 2014;
- If Israel uses air strike against Iran's nuclear facilities, it will cause severe disruptions in the Middle East, distracting US attention to East Asia;
- Kim Jong-il's sudden death might have meant a softening of North Korea's position on its nuclear development program, as shown in the North Korea's recent promise to halt its uranium enrichment and nuclear tests in exchange for food aid, hence a possible resumption of the "Six-Party Talks";
- The trend in international trade toward more bi-lateral FTAs keeps growing, the newest of which is the US-Korea FTA coming into effect on March 15, 2012;
- As the non-traditional security issues become more pressing, transnational cooperation becomes more imperative and China will have more leverage in further constraining Taiwan's international space;
- The Arab Spring movement since 2011 attests to the importance in

international politics of freedom, democracy and human rights as universal values;

- The income gap between developed countries and less developed countries keeps growing, as many of Taiwan's diplomatic allies remain as the LDCs.

To the degree that foreign policy is the extension of domestic politics, the lack of domestic consensus will have a dampening effect on a country's foreign policy. We therefore suggest that Ma administration in its second term demonstrate some new thinking in Taiwan's foreign policy:

- To have a "Forward-Looking, Multi-Faceted Diplomacy," based on the principle of mutual trust and benefit, so that Taiwan can use its natural advantages in industrial development and democracy to expand its international presence in technology, information, medicine, tourism, sports, and rescue efforts;
- To form a foreign policy discourse as the common denominator between the political parties, which should help the political parties seek a common ground for problem-solving and refrain from finger-pointing;
- To make conciliation between the ruling party and the opposition a top priority in Ma administration's political agenda in the second term, so that a mechanism, by which political parties, legislators, experts can communicate with each other on major foreign policy issues, is possible;
- To refrain from incessantly criticizing former DPP administration's foreign policy conducts so as not to further alienate the DPP;

- To take a bi-partisan approach to cultivating young talent, burgeoning NGOs so that they can voice Taiwan's national interests in various international settings;
- To better use the strength of the opposition parties should an international situation call for a "Good Cop, Bad Cop" approach;
- To set up an effective system to communicate with the opposition parties regarding the specific instances of Chinese mainland's suppressing Taiwan's international space, so that the opposition won't question the administration efforts in conducting foreign policy;
- To enhance the National Security Council's role as foreign policy coordinator among relevant agencies;
- To make it widely known the essence of UN Resolution 2758: that Taiwan is not a province of the People's Republic of China, and that Taiwan deserves stronger international support for its participation in international organizations;
- To win over countries to show support for Taiwan in its negotiation with Chinese mainland over Taiwan's international space, providing the sovereignty or political status of the ROC is not touched in the negotiation;
- To expand our participation in the World Health Organization beyond the International Health Regulations—that is, participation in WHO mechanisms like the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), and the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS), among others.

With regard to foreign aid, Taiwan's foreign aid still lacks strong

planning, execution, evaluation, accountability mechanisms in the recipient country, and international coordination, all of which are crucial to the effects and effectiveness of foreign aid. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs should start building foreign-aid knowledge management capability (e.g., data bank), elaborating foreign aid SOP, building foreign aid evaluation mechanisms, and initiating contacts with various GOs and NGOs active in providing foreign aid to the LDCs.

In terms of foreign trade and investment, the main issue Taiwan faces is the opening of Taiwan's agricultural markets. When Taiwan's trade negotiator negotiates with his/her counterparts from other countries, he tends to adopt a rigid stance in not opening Taiwan's agricultural markets, as he foresees that the Legislative Yuan on behalf of agricultural interests will give the Executive Yuan a hard time. The rigidity more often than not stalemates the whole round of trade negotiation. US beef import is a case in point. A possible solution to this is for the Executive Yuan, after full consultation with the Legislative Yuan over the trade negotiation, gains some sort of authorization from the Legislative Yuan. The legislative authorization must not be one based on legislators' micro-management of the trade issues that are to be negotiated (e.g., pre-specifying various bottom-lines). The authorization needs to be general in nature. Within the general outline of the legislative authorization, the EY can start to negotiate with Taiwan's trading partners. Once a trade deal is reached, the EY should send the deal to the LY for ratification. Within certain time limit (say, three months), the LY needs to hold an up-or-down vote to accept or reject the deal as a package. The LY should not be allowed to amend any wording of the deal signed between Taiwan and its trading partners, though the LY

does have the power to reject the whole thing. The EY will have to mobilize enough legislative support during both the authorization and ratification stages. The before-negotiation authorization and post-negotiation ratification by the LY should provide some political coverage for Taiwan's trade negotiators in conducting trade talks. It should be noted that after the signing of ECFA between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland some countries have shown more willingness to hold trade talks with Taiwan. This indeed is a window of opportunity for Taiwan to expand its international trade. Only with its soft power, international credibility, and economic strength can Taiwan become a "responsible stakeholder" in international community.

Still, Taiwan has to face an international reality that is increasingly shaped by a rapidly rising China. Beijing's international influence grows with its ability to help solving the international financial crisis that started in 2008. Continued economic weakness in the United States, Euro-zone countries, and Japan only strengthens Beijing's hand. China's geopolitical position also helps Beijing to cast a long pall over East Asia. Given the circumstances, Taiwan's position in international society will be further constrained by Beijing's One-China principle, and Taiwan's maneuver room will be sharply curtailed. Mainland China has not stopped the practice of stalling Taiwan's efforts in reaching FTAs with other countries, even though the two sides of the Taiwan Strait had signed ECFA in 2010. Short of taking Taiwan's diplomatic allies away, Beijing has drastically increased its stakes in these countries, no question forming an effective diplomatic deterrent to Taiwan. On the other hand, Taiwan's rapprochement with Chinese mainland has an unintended consequence in the US—the rising voice of

“Taiwan abandonists.”

On balance, rapprochement with Chinese mainland still gives Taiwan some rare opportunities in international politics. For the next four years, the Ma administration should keep practicing “flexible diplomacy,” strengthen Taiwan’s relations with countries that do not diplomatically recognize Taiwan, and provide effective economic and technological aid to its diplomatic allies. In multi-lateral international settings, Taiwan should work with the United States and adjust to Beijing’s new diplomatic style in order to obtain at least observer status in international organizations that deal with non-traditional security issues. When it comes to heavily sensitive issues, e.g., South China Sea, Taiwan should avoid choosing sides. Regarding the United States, Taiwan need to emphasize both countries’ common democratic values, show stronger commitment to its national security through arms purchase, and keep the U.S. posted on cross-strait interactions. Rapprochement with China only makes mutual trust with the United States even more important for Taiwan. In the near term, Taiwan needs to do whatever is necessary to obtain from the United States the visa waiver program, a commitment to jump start TIFA talks after the beef issue is solved, and diplomatic assistance to pave the way for Taiwan to join the TPP.