

Appendix 59 – Taiwan’s Guidelines for National Unification (1991)

Source: Mainland Affairs Council (MAC). Guidelines for National Unification. Available at: http://www.mac.gov.tw/ct.asp?xItem=68107&ctNode=5910&mp=3&xq_xCat=1991

Adopted by the National Unification Council at its third meeting on February 23, 1991, and by the Executive Yuan Council (Cabinet) at its 2223rd meeting on March 14, 1991.

I. Forward

The unification of China is meant to bring about a strong and prosperous nation with a long-lasting, bright future for its people; it is the common wish of Chinese people at home and abroad. After an appropriate period of forthright exchange, cooperation, and consultation conducted under the principles of reason, peace, parity, and reciprocity, the two sides of the Taiwan Straits should foster a consensus of democracy, freedom and equal prosperity, and together build anew a unified China. Based on this understanding, these Guidelines have been specially formulated with the express hope that all Chinese throughout the world will work with one mind toward their fulfillment.

II. Goal

To establish a democratic, free and equitably prosperous China.

III. Principles

1. Both the mainland and Taiwan areas are parts of Chinese territory. Helping to bring about national unification should be the common responsibility of all Chinese people.

2. The unification of China should be for the welfare of its entire people and not be subject to partisan conflict.

3. China's unification should aim at promoting Chinese culture, safeguarding human dignity, guaranteeing fundamental human rights, and practicing democracy and the rule of law.

4. The timing and manner of China's unification should first respect the rights and interests of the people in the Taiwan area, and protect their security and welfare. It should be achieved in gradual phases under the principles of reason, peace, parity, and reciprocity.

IV. Process

1. Short term--A Phase of exchanges and reciprocity.

(1) To enhance understanding through exchanges between the two sides of the Straits and eliminate hostility through reciprocity; and to establish a mutually benign relationship by not endangering each other's security and stability while in the midst of exchanges and not denying the other's existence as a political entity while in the midst of effecting reciprocity.

(2) To set up an order for exchanges across the Straits, to draw up regulations for such exchanges, and to establish intermediary organizations so as to protect people's rights and interests on both sides of the Straits; to gradually ease various restrictions and expand people-to-people contacts so as to promote the social prosperity of both sides.

(3) In order to improve the people's welfare on both sides of the Straits with the ultimate objective of unifying the nation, in the mainland area economic reform should be carried out forthrightly, the expression of public opinion there should gradually be allowed, and both democracy and the rule of law should be implemented; while in the Taiwan area efforts should be made to accelerate constitutional reform and promote national development to establish a society of equitable prosperity.

(4) The two sides of the Straits should end the state of hostility and, under the principle of one China, solve all disputes through peaceful means, and furthermore respect--not reject--each other in the international community, so as to move toward a phase of mutual trust and cooperation.

2. Medium Term--A Phase of mutual trust and cooperation.

(1) Both sides of the Straits should establish official communication channels on equal footing.

(2) Direct postal, transport and commercial links should be allowed, and both sides should jointly develop the southeastern coastal area of the Chinese mainland and then gradually extend this development to other areas of the mainland in order to narrow the gap in living standards between the two sides.

(3) Both sides of the Straits should work together and assist each other in taking part in international organizations and activities.

(4) Mutual visits by high-ranking officials on both sides should be promoted to create favorable conditions for consultation and unification.

3. Long term--A phase of consultation and unification.

A consultative organization for unification should be established through which both sides, in accordance with the will of the people in both the mainland and Taiwan areas, and while adhering to the goals of democracy, economic freedom, social justice and nationalization of the armed forces, jointly discuss the grand task of unification and map out a constitutional system to establish a democratic, free, and equitably prosperous China.