

Appendix 99 -- President Lee Tenghui Remarks to National Unification Council

April 8, 1999

Vice-Chairmen of the Council; Members of the Council; Members of the Research Council:

After rigorous deliberations, the 14th Plenum of the National Unification Council will be closing shortly. I would like thank you again for attending the meeting today and for offering your valuable recommendations on matters concerning international affairs, mainland affairs and cross-strait relations, which will be forwarded to the relevant government agencies for their reference.

I am certain that your recommendations will be helpful to the formulation of our policies and programs toward the mainland. It is of timely significance that the plenary meeting of the NUC is being held now. Looking at the current trend of world, it continues to develop in the general directions of peace, cooperation and prosperity.

Interminable regional conflicts notwithstanding, as the tides of globalization, information and democratization continue to spread throughout the world, the depth of mutual interdependence among countries and among regions deepens every day, while the expectations of countries for political democracy, economic prosperity and world peace grow more ardent. As for Asia Pacific, this region was ravaged severely by a financial storm during the last two years. The most difficult period may be over, but the turbulence has yet to subside. All the countries in this region now fully understand the urgency of economic and financial stability and re-acknowledge the importance of regional mechanisms for dialogue.

After the end of the Cold War, all the countries in the world have strengthened dialogue and cooperation to reduce tensions and maintain safety. However, to this day the security of Taiwan Strait and the South Seas, important air and sea passageways in the West Pacific, cannot yet be ensured. The major reasons are the refusal of Peking authorities to renounce the use of force against Taiwan, the rapid expansion in their military budget year after year, the acceleration of their deployment of missiles and other offensive weapons, and their unilateral suspension of institutionalized cross-strait consultations. These actions delay the establishment of normal relations between the two sides and present a threat to the security and stability of the Asia Pacific region.

In recent years, significant internal and external changes have occurred in Mainland China. The social and economic developments since its reform and opening up have gradually affected the political sphere. Its people not only have demanded economic liberalization, but also have begun to seek political democratization. Concurrent with developing the economy, however, the Chinese communists have suppressed democracy and human rights inside the mainland to preserve their one party dictatorship rule. On the other hand, in their external relations, they have pursued outward expansion and aspired for regional hegemony. All of the above make Mainland China an important variable in the security of the Asia Pacific region. Whether the Peking authorities can respond to their domestic demands for democracy and human rights and participate in international frameworks and mechanisms of peace and cooperation will significantly affect the well being of all Chinese people and peace of the

world.

In contrast, successfully completing its "Three-in-One" elections last year, the Republic of China again has proven that democracy in the ROC has become mature and has taken root. These elections have fully manifested our democratic values, rational demands and peaceful process. Such rational and mature political environment has enabled the government and people to remain calm, think objectively, and effectuate policy measures in facing the new challenges of the new century, as well as in promoting new developments for a new era. In particular, by firmly rooting our foundation in democracy and human rights, we have received world affirmation and recognition for promoting pragmatic diplomacy and strengthening international cooperation. The ROC thereby has become a new force for world peace and development.

Concerning the development of cross-strait relations, the ROC has always acknowledged historical reality and given primary consideration to safeguarding the people's welfare. Since 1987 when the ROC government lifted the ban on family visits to the mainland, our unswerving objectives are peace, mutual benefit and joint prosperity for both sides of the Taiwan Strait. My abolishing the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion in 1991, is a concrete demonstration of our sincerity to abandon the use of force in resolving cross-strait issues. In addition, we have pragmatically faced the reality of the existence of Peking authorities, and further have begun cross-strait exchanges based on the principles of parity and reciprocity. Further developments and implementation of these policies include the first Koo-Wang talks, many rounds of institutionalized consultations between the two sides, and my "six positions" regarding the establishment of normal bilateral relations, which I first announced four years ago today at your Plenary Meeting. These six positions are: to pursue unification of China based on the reality that the two sides are governed separately by two distinct political entities; to strengthen cross-strait exchanges based on Chinese culture; to enhance trade and economic relations to develop a mutually beneficial and complementary relationship; to ensure that both sides join international organizations on an equal footing and that the leaders of both sides meet in a natural setting; to adhere to the principle of resolving all disputes by peaceful means; and to jointly safeguard prosperity and promote democracy in Hong Kong and Macau.

Regrettably, the Peking authorities have never responded reasonably to our goodwill and sincerity. They even have gone so far as to unilaterally distort reality and create tensions in the Taiwan Strait. Nevertheless, under the patient and persistent efforts of the ROC, Mr. Koo Chen-Fu led a delegation to the mainland last October. This visit is a constructive step forward for peace in the Taiwan Strait and security in the Asia Pacific region and lets the Peking authorities have some rudimentary understanding of the essence and accomplishment of our democracy.

After today, our first task in the promotion of cross-strait relations is to increase our understanding of Mainland China. We must not only look at a particular event, published statistics, or the superficial impressions of tourists to the mainland. Rather, we must fully grasp the total situation there. Without question, the ability of Mainland China to attain wealth and peace deserves applause. However, we should not be overly optimistic and create

expectations based on wishful thinking. Nor, should we be excessively pessimistic and make mistakes in judgment. What we must do is to present a clear comparison based on objective facts. Presently, there exists a high degree of uncertainty in Mainland China. If such uncertainties cannot be eliminated quickly, then the basic reforms cannot be completed. For example, some uncertainties are created from systemic ambiguities and others are produced by the delays in democratization. Still, additional uncertainties result from the rule of man rather than the rule of law. These uncertainties leave open a big question mark on the future development of Mainland China.

In recent years, all the countries around the world take into consideration the above uncertainties in formulating their policies toward Mainland China. The ROC is separated from the mainland by only a body of water and there are frequent exchanges between the two sides. Therefore, it is even more impossible for the ROC to ignore these profoundly ingrained changes. If Peking authorities reduce their hostilities toward us and concurrently diminish the uncertainties in Mainland China's development, then there may be a greater shift in this government's policies. Nonetheless, while our good intentions are currently on the rise, Peking's hostilities continue to deepen. We have been unable to achieve our win-win scenario and are forced to continue our policy of "avoid haste, be patient; walk steadily to go far."

Therefore, we must insist on the following:

The development of cross strait relations should begin from recognition of the historical fact and political reality of separate rule by two distinct but equal political entities.

While promoting cross-strait relations, we must not waver in our stance of giving top priority to national existence, as well as placing the people's safety and welfare foremost.

As we look ahead to the 21st century, creating peace based on democracy and stimulating progress through cooperation have already become unstoppable global trends. Looking to the future, the two sides of the strait should work together to create a new horizon. That is, with democracy and peace as the main pivots, they should promote the normalization of bilateral relations through constructive dialogue, and jointly seek the long-term welfare of all Chinese people on both sides of the strait. Toward this, I would like to raise the following points:

We welcome a visit to Taiwan by Mr. Wang Daohan, Chairman of the Association for Relations Across the Strait, to continue the constructive dialogue launched last year, and to facilitate a meeting between the top leaders of the two sides.

The two sides of the Strait should resume the institutionalized cross-strait consultations as quickly as possible to address the myriad functional problems that have arisen from cross-strait exchanges and gradually establish mechanisms for cross-strait peace and stability.

Expand and enhance the scope of cross-strait exchanges and cooperation to build mutual trust and seek mutual benefits.

Narrow the development gap between the two sides to bring about unification. Only when Mainland China quickly accomplishes its social diversification and political democratization, can the two sides gradually establish consensus regarding future developments on the basis of

democracy and freedom.

We call upon the Peking authorities to open their minds, cease their internal suppression of different voices, protect human rights, and create room for everyone to fully express his or her free will.

Ladies and gentlemen: in this global community where interaction among members grow closer every day, the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait and the development of cross-strait relations have already become major regional issues and widely receive the attention of the world. We must acknowledge this significant trend. Therefore, how to create future prospects for the two sides of the strait using ingenious intelligence, flexible policies, and constructive actions is something that all the people should jointly work for and contemplate. I hope the Peking authorities will also uphold good intentions and pragmatically face the tide of global development to work together with us to create a vast development horizon for all Chinese on both sides of the strait in the 21st century.

Thank you all.