Let Us Join Hands to Promote the Peaceful Development of Cross-Straits Relations and Strive with a

United Resolve for the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation

Speech at the Forum Marking the 30th Anniversary of
the Issuance of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan

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Comrades and Friends,

Tomorrow is New Year’s Day of the year 2009. When festive times come round, we think all the more of our loved ones. Accordingly now, on behalf of the people of all ethnic groups on the mainland of our motherland, I would like to extend our sincere greetings and heartfelt felicitations to our compatriots in Taiwan!

On New Year’s Day of 1979, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) issued the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan, in which it solemnly announced the major policies and principles for securing the peaceful reunification of our motherland. Thereupon, a new historical chapter opened in the development of cross-Straits relations. The Message to Compatriots in Taiwan expressly declared that reunification of China is consonant with popular will and the general trend of development, and that, in accomplishing the great cause of reunifying the motherland, it is imperative to take the realities into account and to respect the present situation of Taiwan and the opinions of people from all walks of life there and adopt fair and reasonable policies and measures so as to spare the people of Taiwan any adverse effects as a consequence there. The Message clearly proclaimed that we place our hopes in the people of Taiwan and also in the Taiwan authorities. It further explicitly proposed that the state of military confrontation across the Taiwan Straits be ended through consultations and negotiations, the barriers separating the people of the two sides be removed, free travel be facilitated and mail, transport and business links be established and economic and cultural exchanges be promoted. The issuance of the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan heralded the beginning of a new historical era for our theories and practice on the settlement of the Taiwan question.

Since the Taiwan question first came into being in 1949, we have always deemed it our sacred duty to resolve the question and accomplish the great cause of reunifying the motherland, and have made prolonged and unremitting efforts toward this end. In 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) reached its historic decision to shift the focus of the Party and the state’s work to economic development and to carry out reform and opening up to the outside world. China’s development thus entered into a new era. It was against this important historical backdrop that the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan was issued. Over the past thirty years, we have introduced a series of principles and policies toward Taiwan with the aim to promote the settlement of this question. Comrade Deng Xiaoping, with a view to the development and changes in the international and domestic situations and by proceeding from the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation and the development strategy for the country, and further based on the thinking of comrades...
Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai regarding striving for peaceful resolution of the Taiwan question, creatively put forward his great concept of “one country, two systems,” thus making a historic contribution to the principle of “peaceful reunification and one country, two systems.” The eight-point proposal put forward by Comrade Jiang Zemin for developing cross-Straits relations and promoting the peaceful reunification of the motherland in the current stage further enriched and developed our principles and policies toward Taiwan. Since the Sixteenth CPC National Congress, we have made major decisions on and arrangements for our work related Taiwan, and put forward a series of new propositions and new initiatives, imparting fresh meaning to our principles and policies toward Taiwan. The enactment and enforcement of the Anti-Secession Law codified into law our policies and principles for the settlement of the Taiwan question, gave expression to our consistent stance and the utter sincerity of our adherence to peaceful reunification and, at the same time, demonstrated the common will and firm resolve of people all over China to resolutely oppose “Taiwan independence” and defend our national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Since the Message to Compatriots in Taiwan was issued, cross-Straits relations have undergone significant changes thanks to the concerted efforts of our compatriots and people from all walks of life on both sides. At the end of 1987, the longstanding separation between our compatriots was lifted, our interactions became increasingly close and cross-Straits economic cooperation flourished, creating a complementary and mutually beneficial pattern. In 1992, our two sides reached the 1992 Consensus, on the basis of which we held the first Wang Daohan – Koo Chen-fu talks. In 2005, Kuomintang (KMT) and CPC leaders actualized a historic meeting and concluded the Common Vision for Cross-Straits Peaceful Development. In March of this year, the situation in Taiwan underwent a positive change and a rare historical opportunity thus presented itself in cross-Straits relations. Since May of this year, in the spirit of forging mutual trust, laying aside disputes, seeking common ground while reserving differences, and jointly creating a win-win situation, cross-Straits consultation has been able to resume and achieve significant fruits on the basis of the 1992 Consensus, and a historic step has been taken toward the two-way, comprehensive and direct three links of mail, transport and business between the two sides. Both sides have resolved a raft of issues in a proper manner. We have sustained momentum in the improvement and development of cross-Straits relations, and helped bring about further prospects for their peaceful development. Today, the comings and goings between our compatriots on the two sides are more frequent, our economic ties have become closer, our cultural exchanges are more dynamic and our common interests are of greater breadth than ever before. The Chinese people’s cause of safeguarding peace in the Taiwan Straits, promoting the development of cross-Straits relations, and realizing the peaceful reunification of our motherland is increasingly winning over the understanding and support of the international community. The situation wherein countries around the world universally acknowledge one China is being steadily strengthened and developed.

Our practice in developing cross-Straits relations over the past thirty years informs us that: to promote the development of cross-Straits relations and realize the peaceful reunification of the motherland, what is of the greatest account is adhering to the principle of “peaceful reunification and one country, two systems” and the eight-point proposal for developing cross-Straits relations and promoting the peaceful reunification of the motherland in the current stage, never swaying in adhering to the one-China principle, never giving up our efforts to achieve peaceful reunification, never changing the principle of placing our hopes on the people of Taiwan, never compromising in opposing secessionist activities aimed at “Taiwan independence”, holding steadfastly to the theme of peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, and striving sincerely to secure the blessings of fortune for our compatriots on both sides and peace in the Taiwan Straits region, while safeguarding our country’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and safeguarding the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation.

Our thirty-year practice fully demonstrates that the major policies and principles we have devised for and practiced in our Taiwan work are confluence with the current of the times and in step with the historical trend, aptly serve the fundamental interests of the nation and the core interests of the country, embody the spirit of seeking truth from facts which respects history, reality and the wishes of the people, and mirror a profound understanding of the laws governing the development of cross-Straits relations. These policies and principles have therefore helped bring about historic successes in developing cross-Straits relations. We must continue to maintain and thoroughly implement these policies and principles which have been proven so correct for long into the future and continue to propel the peaceful reunification of our motherland ever onward.

Our thirty-year practice further fully attests to the fact that the tremendous progress continuously achieved in the reform, opening up, and modernization of the mainland of our motherland is a strong foundation and reliable safeguard for promoting
the development of cross-Straits relations and realizing the peaceful reunification of the motherland, and one that determines the essential paradigm for and development orientation of cross-Straits relations.

This thirty-year practice has moreover fully proven that Chinese people on both sides of the Straits have the ability and wisdom to hold the future of cross-Straits relations in their own hands, strengthen their emotional bonds and augment their common interests through exchanges and cooperation, achieve more consensus and reduce differences through consultations and negotiations, and resolve any issues arising sequentially and at a progressive pace.

This thirty-year practice has furthermore fully manifested that the secessionist forces advocating “Taiwan independence” and their secessionist activities harm the common interests of our compatriots on both sides, undermine the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation, and run counter to the inexorable historical trend of China’s development. They constitute the most dire threat to the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and are thus fated to meet with united opposition from our compatriots on both sides. Any attempt by anyone or any force to sever Taiwan from China is doomed to failure.

Comrades and Friends,

Through reform and opening up over the past thirty years, historic changes have taken place to the look of China and our relations with the world. Having traversed stormy and rocky channels, cross-Straits relations have now reached a new starting point in history. Looking back on the nation’s journey of uphill struggle in modern times and looking ahead to the bright prospects for the nation’s development, we must gaze into the distance from a high eminence, assess the current situation, and carefully consider and practically solve major issues in the development of cross-Straits relations with an awareness of our responsibility to history and to the people, and from the perspective of development of the entire nation, while demonstrating broader vision, deeper wisdom, more stalwart courage and a more pragmatic thought process.

The key to resolving the Taiwan question is the reunification of the motherland. Its purpose is to safeguard and guarantee national sovereignty and territorial integrity, pursue happiness for all the people of the Chinese nation, including our compatriots in Taiwan, and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Reunifying the motherland by peaceful means is most consistent with the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation, including our compatriots in Taiwan. It is also in tune with the trend of the times, namely, aspiring for peace, seeking development and promoting cooperation. We must strive for the peaceful reunification of the motherland with the greatest sincerity and utmost effort. First of all, it is imperative to ensure the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations. This is conducive to our compatriots on both sides strengthening exchanges and cooperation and building greater emotional harmony; it is conducive to the two sides of the Straits increasing mutual trust and settling disputes; it is conducive to the economies on both sides developing and prospering together; and it is conducive to safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

To this end, we must firmly hold to the theme of peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and actively promote it and realize the solidarity, harmony and prosperity of the entire nation. We must take our insistence that the mainland and Taiwan belong to one China as the political foundation for promoting the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations, take deepening exchanges and cooperation and furthering consultations and negotiations as the key approaches to promoting such peaceful development, take strengthening the concerted endeavor of our compatriots on both sides as the strong impetus for promoting it, and strive to open up new vistas in the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations by joining hands to advance and pulling together with hearts united.

1. To firmly abide by the one-China principle and enhance political mutual trust. Safeguarding our national sovereignty and territorial integrity is the core interest of the nation. There is only one China in the world, China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity brooks no partition. Although the mainland and Taiwan have not yet been reunited since 1949, the circumstances per se do not denote a state of partition of Chinese territory and sovereignty. Rather, it is merely a state of political antagonism that is a legacy – albeit a lingering one – of the Chinese civil war waged in the mid- to late-1940s. Nevertheless, this does not alter the fact that both the mainland and Taiwan belong to one China. For the two sides of the Straits, to return to unity is not the recreation of sovereignty or territory, but an end to political antagonism. When both sides of
the Straits develop a common understanding and united position on safeguarding the one-China framework, which is an issue of principle, this will form the cornerstone on which to build political mutual trust and anything at all will then be open to discussion. The two sides should, with a constructive attitude, actively look to the future, undertake joint efforts, create favorable conditions, and gradually resolve the longstanding issues in cross-Strait relations and any new issues that may arise in the course of development thereof through consultation on equal footing. Continuing to oppose the secessionist activities aimed at “Taiwan independence” is a necessary condition for promoting the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and is the joint responsibility of our compatriots on both sides. Anything conducive to the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations must be energetically promoted; anything detrimental must be staunchly opposed.

2. To advance economic cooperation and promote common development. Our compatriots on both sides must engage in extensive economic cooperation, expand the three direct links across the Straits, cultivate and augment common interests, form close ties and achieve mutual benefits and a win-win situation. We will continue to welcome and support Taiwan enterprises to operate and develop their businesses on the mainland, and encourage and support qualified mainland enterprises to invest and develop their businesses in Taiwan. We look forward to the normalization of cross-Strait economic relations and will promote the institutionalization of economic cooperation, so as to lay a more solid material foundation and provide a greater economic impetus for the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. The two sides of the Straits may sign a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement to this end and establish a mechanism for economic cooperation which defers to the characteristics of both sides, so as to maximize the synergy of respective advantages and mutual benefits. Establishing a closer mechanism for cross-Strait economic cooperation is conducive to making Taiwan’s economy more competitive and expanding the arena for its development, conducive to promoting the common development of the economies on both sides, and conducive to exploring feasible approaches to the dovetailing of the common development of both economies with the economic cooperation mechanism in the Asia-Pacific region.

3. To promote Chinese culture and strengthen spiritual bonds. Chinese culture boasts a long history illuminated by glorious splendors. It is a common and precious asset of our compatriots on both sides and an important link guaranteeing the national emotional bonds between them. Chinese culture has deep roots and luxuriant foliage in Taiwan; Taiwan culture has enriched the substance of Chinese culture. The Taiwan consciousness, which shows the love of our Taiwan compatriots for their home and land, does not equal to “Taiwan independence” consciousness. Our compatriots on both sides should jointly inherit and promote the exquisite traditions of Chinese culture, conduct cultural exchanges in varied forms and enable Chinese culture to be passed down from one generation to the next and enhanced, so as to boost our national consciousness, build up a common will and generate spiritual strength for the joint endeavor toward the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is of particular necessity to strengthen youth exchanges between the two sides, so as to continuously infuse exuberant vitality into the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. We will continue to adopt active measures, including our readiness to negotiate an agreement on cross-Strait cultural and educational exchanges, in order to boost such exchanges and cooperation to a new level, where they are more extensive in scope and higher in caliber.

4. To strengthen two-way visits of people and expand exchanges in various circles. Our compatriots on both sides should expand exchanges; various communities on the two sides, and their representatives, should intensify exchanges, strengthen communication in good faith, and enhance mutual understanding. We are willing to respond positively to any constructive opinions conducive to the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. We shall continue to push forward exchanges and dialogue between the Kuomintang and the CPC to jointly implement the Common Vision for Cross-Strait Peaceful Development. Regarding the fact that some of our compatriots in Taiwan lack understanding of, or even misunderstand, the mainland of the motherland and have misgivings about developing cross-Strait relations due to various causes, we are not only willing to undo such sentiments and counsel them with the greatest tolerance and patience, but also willing to adopt even more affirmative measures so that more and more of our Taiwan compatriots may enjoy enhanced well-being in the course of promoting the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. As to those individuals who formerly advocated, engaged in, or pursued “Taiwan independence”, we shall also warmly and sincerely welcome them to return to the correct course of promoting the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. We hope the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) will realize a clear understanding of the tenor of the times, cease carrying out its “Taiwan independence” secessionist
activities and stop running counter to the common wish of the entire nation. As long as the DPP changes its “Taiwan independence” secessionist position, we are willing to make a positive response.

5. To safeguard national sovereignty and hold consultations on external affairs. We are consistently committed to safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of our Taiwan compatriots abroad. Our overseas embassies and consulates should strengthen their ties with our Taiwan compatriots and sincerely aid them in solving their practical difficulties. We understand our Taiwan compatriots’ feelings on the issue of participation in international activities and we pay particular attention to solving relevant issues. For the two sides of the Straits, to avoid unnecessary internal strife on external affairs is conducive to furthering the overall interests of the Chinese nation. Further consultations can be conducted, as needed, on the prospect of Taiwan’s people-to-people economic and cultural interactions with other countries. Regarding the issue of Taiwan’s participation in the activities of international organizations, fair and reasonable arrangements can be effected through pragmatic consultation between the two sides, provided that this does not create a situation of “two Chinas” or “one China, one Taiwan.” Settling the Taiwan question and realizing the complete reunification of the country is an internal affair of China and is not subject to interference by any foreign forces.

6. To end the state of hostility and reach a peace agreement. Chinese people on both sides of the Straits are duty-bound to jointly end the history of cross-Strait hostility and do their utmost to avoid the recurrence of a clash of arms between consanguine compatriots, so as to grant future generations the chance to join hands and create a better life. In order to facilitate their consultations and negotiations and their arrangements for their interactions, the two sides may make pragmatic explorations in their political relations under the special circumstances where the country has not yet been reunified. In the interest of stabilizing the situation in the Taiwan Straits and allaying apprehensions relating to military security, the two sides may at an opportune time engage and exchange with each other on military issues and explore mechanisms for mutual military trust. We hereby renew our appeal: On the basis of the one-China principle, we should formally end the state of hostility across the Straits through consultation, reach a peace agreement, and build a framework for the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

Our compatriots on both sides of the Straits form a community of common destiny bound by bonds of blood. China, the mainland and Taiwan included, is the common home of our compatriots on both sides, who are thus duty-bound to safeguard and build her well. It takes the joint efforts of our compatriots on both sides to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, our compatriots on both sides must jointly create a new phase in the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations, and we will jointly enjoy the fruits thereof. We must persist in putting people first, implement the principle of placing our hopes on the people of Taiwan in our various work related to Taiwan, understand, trust, and care for our compatriots in Taiwan, identify their wishes and appeals, address their concerns and help them overcome difficulties, and exert ourselves passionately to serve their needs. We must protect the legitimate rights and interests of our compatriots in Taiwan in accordance with the law, and unite with them in the broadest sense in promoting the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations. The future of Taiwan hinges upon the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and upon the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. On the journey toward these magnificent goals, the compatriots in Taiwan will, together with their compatriots on the mainland, enjoy the dignity and glory of a great country and take pride in being dignified Chinese.

Our compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and abroad have long identified with the great cause of national reunification and served as an important force opposing “Taiwan independence” and promoting national reunification. We sincerely hope that they will make fresh contributions to promoting the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and realizing the peaceful reunification of the motherland.

For many years, the international community has lent active support to the cause of the Chinese government and people of safeguarding peace in the Taiwan Straits, promoting the development of cross-Strait relations, and working toward the complete reunification of the country. For this, the Chinese government would like to express its appreciation and gratitude. China’s reunification will not impair the interests of any country; to the contrary, it will only serve to promote the prosperity and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world and help enable the Chinese people to make new, ever greater contributions to the noble cause of peace and development of mankind.
Comrades and Friends,

The two sides of the Straits are bound to be reunified in the course of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Although there will be further difficulties and obstacles on our way forward, as long as we muster our confidence, work unremittingly, and rely closely on our compatriots on both sides, we will certainly be able to create a new phase in the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and usher in a glorious future for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.