AN EXAMINATION OF CHINESE AND TAIWANESE MEDIA SOURCES
IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-STRAIT FLIGHTS

By

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Abstract

Direct links between Taiwan and China have been re-established since the end of 2008. At present, regular direct flights between airports in Taiwan and China are in operation. This reality is the culmination of negotiations between China and Taiwan. A number of obstacles in ideology and politics existed throughout the negotiations. Particularly salient to these obstacles were the discourse of the one-China principle, as well as the political strategies and ideologies of the Kuomintang and Democratic Progressive Party in Taiwan. In addition, the influence of the media with regard to the resolution of ideological and political conflict was an important factor. Different news media outlets in Taiwan and China developed their own narratives of the development of cross-strait relations and negotiation of the Three Links. An analysis of news media perspectives offers insight into the complex nature of political communication in Taiwan and China.
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I. Introduction

One might assume that the democratic developments in Taiwan accompanied the growth of a free and open press. Upon closer inspection, however, one finds that the relationship between different news media outlets on each side of the Taiwan Strait mirrors the complicated political relationships that exist both within Taiwan, and between Taiwan and China. Political rhetoric in China exerts influence on the political division between pan-blue and pan-green political parties in Taiwan. Owing to the existence of important ideological precepts—Taiwanese sovereignty, the one-China principle, and the undetermined political future of Taiwan as either a part of the Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC) or an independent state, the Republic of China (ROC)—Taiwanese news sources often have difficulty separating news coverage from overarching beliefs about political ideology.

Before the end of martial law and the related press ban in 1987, Taiwan’s media climate resembled that within the PRC today: it was controlled either directly or indirectly, through investment, by the government. After 1987, as Taiwan pushed for greater democratization, media outlets proliferated at a rapid pace. In 1986, the dangwai (黨外)\(^1\) politicians banded together to form the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a political alternative to the hegemony of the Kuomintang (KMT). News media were previously economically and politically tied to the ruling KMT. After the lifting of the press ban, news media proliferated providing new sources that offered alternative views to those of the KMT and its related media. In Taiwan today, newspapers and television news report from a

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\(^1\) *Dangwai* translates to “outside the party” in English, and in the Taiwanese context means outside of the KMT.
perspective that either favours the KMT and People First Party (PFP) coalition of “pan-blue”,
or the DPP and Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) coalition of “pan-green”.

One defining difference between the pan-blue and pan-green camps is their respective interpretations of the one-China principle. In 1949, when the KMT retreated to Taiwan and Mao Zedong declared the Peoples Republic of China in Tiananmen Square, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the KMT both claimed sovereignty over all of China. Each side’s claim over all of China included the territory occupied by both the CPC and the KMT. The CPC and the KMT desired to eliminate each other, and to reclaim sovereignty over all of China. In the 1950’s, it became increasingly unlikely that either side would be able to achieve this goal. The territory occupied by the CPC and the KMT became an immutable feature of the status quo between China and Taiwan. The contemporary status quo—one aspect of which being the territorial divide—is an important facet of the one-China ideological debate as we know it today.

Following the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975, and facing increasing political isolation throughout the 1970’s, the KMT began to abandon its policy of reclaiming the mainland. This led to a new set of problems in cross-strait affairs, as Taiwan was beginning to call into question what the China in Republic of China really stood for. Previously, the PRC and the ROC both claimed sovereignty over the same territory, and both called that territory China. The PRC’s claim that China included both PRC and ROC controlled territory was legitimated by the ROC’s similar claim, and vice versa. When Taiwan began to suggest that the ROC’s “China” did not include the territory under PRC control, the PRC could no longer claim its one-China principle as universal and indisputable. There was now a disagreement between the PRC and the ROC over the territory each side’s “China” claimed
control over. It had to seek legitimacy for its claim over ROC territory elsewhere, since the ROC was no longer making the similar claim in reverse.

Taiwanese acceptance of the one-China principle is China’s precondition for any cross-strait negotiations beyond the civilian level. China demands that any governmental or semi-official dialogue be predicated on the one-China principle. Except under special circumstances, this one-China principle means the PRC’s version, which claims that Taiwan is a province of China.

In Taiwan today, there are two distinct responses to the one-China principle. The pan-green response amounts to an outright rejection of the principle. The pan-green political parties hold no illusions that the one-China principle could have any interpretations other than China’s. They are in agreement with China on the definition of the principle, but do not agree to accept it. The pan-blue response takes a different approach. By agreeing to the one-China principle, but defining “one China” as the ROC and not the PRC, the pan-blue parties are able to circumvent China’s insistence on the principle.

The pan-blue and pan-green positions both favour maintenance of the status quo as a political foundation. The pan-green parties then develop a pro-independence political ideology based upon the status quo. This pro-independence ideology does not embrace the development of bi-lateral relations between China and Taiwan except when absolutely necessary, an example of necessity being in the realm of economic development (albeit with certain reservations). The pan-blue parties’ ideology also begins with the status quo as a foundation, but develops differently. Despite the ambiguous acceptance of the one-China principle, the agreement in principle is sufficient to allow further development of bi-lateral
relations between Taiwan and China. This strategy led to the initial development of cross-strait relations in the 1990’s, and forms the basis of the China policy of President Ma Ying-jeou administration’s today. The first time that China and Taiwan reached any agreement on the one-China principle was during talks held in 1992. The “1992 consensus” is the agreement negotiated between the Chinese Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) and the Taiwanese Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF). Each of these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has a government mandate to negotiate bi-lateral arrangements between Taiwan and China. In 1992, both sides agreed to adhere to the maxim of “There is only one China in the world”, but both the PRC and ROC claimed to be that China. Thus, in China the 1992 consensus is essentially that the PRC is the only legitimate China in the world, while in Taiwan the ROC is the only legitimate China in the world.

The prolonging of this tenuous and ambiguous agreement on the one-China principle facilitated breakthrough bi-lateral negations in the form of the Koo-Wang talks of 1993. At these talks, China and Taiwan reached agreement regarding the legalizing of documents and the establishment of formal channels of communication. The talks were seen as historic, and a positive step forward in cross-strait relations. Since one-China was agreed to in principle, though not in definition, China and Taiwan were both comfortable enough with the arrangement to see the further development of bi-lateral relations under this framework.

Following the Koo-Wang talks of 1993, former president Lee Teng-hui of the KMT made efforts to slow developments in cross-strait relations. His re-election in 1996 came amid Chinese missile tests and military exercises. Despite these turns for worse in cross-strait relations, further Koo-Wang talks occurred in 1998. In 1999, however, Lee Teng-hui made comments defining Taiwan and China’s relations as “state-to-state relations”. China
saw this as a declaration of independence on Lee’s part. In 2000, the newly elected DPP president Chen Shui-bian repudiated the 1992 consensus in favour of pro-independence ideology. These events involving presidents Lee and Chen led to a new low point in cross-strait relations.

As the Koo-Wang talks based on the 1992 consensus fell apart, hopes faded for the rapid establishment of the “three links”. The three links refers to direct links for postal service, transportation, and trade.\(^2\) An important part of the transportation link was air transportation for passengers between Taiwan and mainland China. China had pursued a policy to see the three links restored beginning in the 1980’s.\(^3\) The political changes taking place in Taiwan in 1999 and 2000 and the emerging disagreement about the one-China principle greatly hampered the development of the three links. With the DPP administration in power and the 1992 consensus rejected, the successful negotiation of passenger air links between China and Taiwan faced difficulty. Negotiation of an agreement would have to account not only for the two distinct political entities of the PRC and the ROC, but also for three different political ideologies, belonging to the CPC, pan-blue and pan-green camps.

This thesis will focus on media coverage of the development of cross-strait passenger flights between 2002 and 2009. I have selected three sources from which I will construct a narrative of developments over this period. From China, I will examine coverage from the China Daily, the CPC’s English language daily newspaper. From Taiwan, I will examine coverage from two English language sources: the Taipei Times, and the China Post. The basis for the selection of these three sources is to have one source represent each of the

\(^2\) In Chinese, san tong 三通 (three links) are tong you 通邮 (postal), tong hang 通航 (transportation), and tong shang 通商 (trade).
\(^3\) John F. Copper, Taiwan: Nation-State or Province? (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2009) 209.
distinct political ideologies of the pan-green, pan-blue, and CPC. This thesis takes into account the fact that these are English-language sources.

Using these three news sources, I will construct a narrative of the events that took place in order to achieve passenger air transportation links between Taiwan and China. In the construction of this narrative, I will pay special attention to the way each source uses selective reporting to reframe events within a particular political-ideological context. For the *China Daily*, as a publication tied to the CPC, this results in articles that often blatantly stress issues from the Chinese perspective. As an extension of the Chinese perspective, efforts are made through the *China Daily*’s reporting to delegitimize or discredit the Taiwanese polity. The *China Daily* often casts Taiwan in the same light as the CPC views it, as a belligerent, renegade province.

I find that Taiwanese sources offer more balanced coverage and use more discreet tactics to convey political-ideological bias than the *China Daily*. This is not surprising, since the Taiwanese media operates independently, unlike the *China Daily*. As a pan-green newspaper, the *Taipei Times* often frames its coverage within a pan-green political-ideological context. By doing so, it does not always question or emphasize the same particular issues as the *China Post*, in areas such as Chinese conciliatory remarks and the 1992 consensus. The *China Post*, on the other hand, is a pan-blue newspaper. For this reason, it often deals with issues from the pan-blue perspective, resulting in articles that do not fully address all of the pan-green security concerns and the perception of collusion between the CPC and the KMT.
The news media on both sides of the Taiwan Strait play a fundamental role in the public’s perception of the cross-strait flights issue. They also play a significant role in each side’s ability to employ consistent political rhetoric in order to arrive at an acceptable solution to the cross-strait flights issue. As accessories to the PRC and ROC governments—wittingly or not—the media enable the governments to control the public’s response to government policy and ideology. In this role, the media exercises considerable influence, and deserves closer examination and critical analysis.

The election of Chen Shui-bian in 2000 came as a surprise to many, including Taiwanese people as well as politicians in Beijing and other international observers. Though previously deemed less likely and relatively undesirable, the possibility of Chen’s election had been considered by authorities in the PRC. China had developed a strategy to deal with Taiwan under the rule of Chen and the DPP. The strategy was to “listen to what Chen [said] and watch out for what he [did]”, while continuing to apply political pressure. At the beginning, this strategy essentially called for observation of Chen’s rhetoric and actions. Over the long term, regardless of whether Chen would choose to pursue Taiwanese independence or favour maintaining the status quo, China’s basic goals would be unchanged.

As early as the summer of 2000, Chinese authorities made overtures to Taiwan about the issue of the Three Links. Chinese official Qian Qishen suggested that the two sides should begin negotiation to see the rapid establishment of the Three Links. The Chinese proposal did not contain particularly harsh rhetoric regarding Taiwan’s political status, but it did require application of the one-China principle. Initially, China also stressed calling the

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links “domestic”, but later retreated on this point, in the form of what Su Chi called a concession, by renaming the links as “cross-strait” as early as October of 2002. Under this framework, vessels travelling between Taiwan and the Chinese mainland would not operate under the flag of either country. Although not comprehensive, the rough outline of this format presented by China was designed to circumvent sensitive political issues that still loomed large between China and Taiwan.

President Chen Shui-bian presented “5 Nos” in his 2000 inaugural address: no declaration of independence, no change of the national title, no inclusion of Lee Teng-hui’s Two-State-Theory in the constitution, no referendum on unification and no abolition of the National Unification Council (NUC) or the National Unification Guidelines. Su Chi, a Taiwanese political scholar and KMT politician, argues that hindsight demonstrates Chen also had a hidden set of “5 Nos”: no one-China policy or 1992 consensus, no positive phrasing of policy statements, no consensus building within the government and the DPP, no negotiation with the PRC and no response to “olive branches”. These “secret 5 Nos” guided his policy on cross-strait affairs, including Three Links policy. These “secret 5 Nos” would have important implications for cross-strait policy under the Chen administration. Over the course of development of cross-strait flights, each of these “secret 5 Nos” would serve as limiting factor hampering the DPP administration’s ability to engage in successful negotiations with the PRC for the establishment of the Three Links.

This research begins with John Chiang’s proposal of the first Lunar New Year direct charter flights in late 2002 and concludes with the full establishment of the Three Links in

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6 Su, 129-38.
December of 2008. For purposes of analysis, I have divided this time-frame into four stages. The first short stage spans from Chiang’s initial proposal in late October of 2002 through the successful charters in late January and early February of 2003. The second stage, from the end of the first flights in early February 2003 to the flights of 2005, details the subsequent negotiations, the failure of the 2004 flights, and the successful negotiations that led to the charters of 2005. The third and fourth stages overlap chronologically, but examine different aspects of the negotiations: the third details the evolution of the 2005 model through 2008, while the fourth stage examines the role of cross-strait flights in the context of the 2008 presidential election, and the transition from festival charter flights to normalized direct links, and eventually the realization of the Three Links.
II. Stage One

1. Events

On October 27 of 2002, KMT legislator John Chiang (formerly John Chang) submitted a petition backed by more than half of the members of the Legislative Yuan from various political parties calling for passenger charter air links between China and Taiwan over the upcoming Lunar New Year of 2003. The proposal called for Taiwanese airlines to operate direct charter flights between Taiwan and mainland China, enabling Taiwanese businessmen living or working in China the opportunity to fly home to Taiwan for the Lunar New Year celebration. Traditionally, this peak season in the lunar calendar sees high demand for flights to Taiwan from China. In the past, these flights had to travel through a third destination such as Hong Kong or Macau, and typically the capacity of these travel arrangements was insufficient to meet demand. The proposal would meet the increased demand for transportation between China and Taiwan over this period.

On October 30th, Li Weiyi, spokesperson for China’s Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council (TAO) called for an agreement based on principles of mutual benefit for Chinese carriers, and establishment direct air links that would not pass through a third country. While Li made these comments at the TAO, Pu Zhaozhou, director of the Office of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao Affairs under the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China (CAAC), announced that China would seriously consider Taiwanese airlines’ applications to fly to Chinese destinations.  From the outset, the both Taiwan and China made it clear that direct charter flights would be a good step toward establishment of the

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Three Links. China’s demand for participation of its airlines under the principle of mutual benefit was an important aspect of the early negotiations. The possibility of Chinese airlines participating in the charter arrangements would be an important measure China would use to determine the success or failure of flight arrangements. If Chinese airlines could participate, Chinese officials and media would brand the arrangements successful. If Chinese airlines could not participate, PRC officials and media would label the arrangements unsuccessful.

The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) declared that it would draw up plans for flights within two weeks, but rejected China’s call for unofficial talks. When the plans came out mid-November, unnamed officials with China’s CAAC lamented Taiwan’s rejection of direct charter flights in favour of indirect flights that would land in Hong Kong. Essentially, the only difference between the flights proposed by Taiwan and the normal travel arrangements that existed at the time would be that passengers need not deplane in Hong Kong. The Executive Yuan explained that direct charter flights and direct air links (as part of the three links policy) were practically the same thing. Both would inevitably require government negotiations.8

In a revision of the initial proposal, Taiwan addressed the logistical problem with the flights but did not back down on its original decision. The MAC extended flight dates, and allowed airlines to carry passengers on a return trip. Apart from these adjustments to earlier practice, the situation did not change. The MAC considered neither direct air links (charter or regular), nor the right for Chinese airlines to enter Taiwanese airspace. Essentially, the only real change Taiwan implemented in order to hold the charter flights was to allow

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Taiwanese airlines to apply for entry into Chinese airspace along pre-existing air routes from Hong Kong.

China and the pan-blue camp in Taiwan were not enthusiastic about the Taiwanese government’s plan because of its overwhelming similarity to existing transportation arrangements, and because Taiwan implemented charter flights unilaterally without allowing Chinese airlines to participate. The indirect model did not allow China to assert that charter flights were an internal, domestic affair, because the flights were basically the same as existing “international” travel arrangements. Following these developments, John Chiang led a KMT delegation to China to talk about direct flights without the MAC’s approval. Without government sanction, this delegation could not do much to change the situation. China continued to call for direct flights, and the MAC remained insistent on indirect flights via Hong Kong.9

China lamented Taiwan’s rejection of direct flights and continued to appeal for direct flights. The MAC continued to refuse. In early December, China sent rules for Taiwanese airlines’ application to enter Chinese airspace from Hong Kong and Macau. The rules were not comprehensive and called for further negotiations between industry representatives on technical details, thus failing to address the issue of governmental talks that the Taiwan government deemed necessary. In this way, China avoided the issue of Taiwan’s desire for government talks completely. Into mid-December, China said that it was still waiting for Taiwan to authorize the appropriate non-official negotiations. Media reports indicated that

the flights were in doubt amidst a lack of negotiations. With continuing uncertainty over whether the flights would actually take off, the flights met modest demand. Ultimately, China accepted applications from Taiwanese airlines before the end of December, and in early January both sides announced the first flights’ approval.

Six Taiwanese airlines—China Airlines, Eva Air, TransAsia Airways, Far Eastern Transport, Uni Air and Mandarin Airlines—operated a total of 16 flights scheduled to take place between January 26th and February 10th 2003 between the destinations of Taoyuan International Airport and Kaohsiung’s Hsiaokang Airport in Taiwan and Honkyu and Pudong airports in Shanghai, each flight having to stop-over in either Hong Kong or Macau. Only Taiwanese businesspeople were eligible to take the flights, which were not significantly less expensive than existing international routes and lasted 10 hours between Taoyuan and Shanghai.

In terms of logistics, it is important to note that since it was Taiwanese airlines that offered the service—a service offered primarily for the benefit of Taiwanese residing in mainland China—that the aircraft had to travel first to China from Taiwan empty in order to begin shuttling passengers across the Taiwan Strait. At the conclusion of the service, all travelers were intended to be returned to their points of origin. Taiwanese could not take the initial flights over, since the flights were open only to China-based businesspeople. China-based businesspeople could not take the last flight back to Taiwan, as they would not have charter arrangements to return to China.

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The result is that either airlines or passengers had to absorb the cost of flying these aircraft empty on two trips across the strait. Chinese airlines would have had a competitive advantage in this respect, as they would not have had to relocate their equipment in order to begin offering air service.

2. Analysis

In this first stage of development of cross-strait flights, the two most important points of contention between Taiwan and China were the direct-indirect flight model debate and the official-unofficial negotiations debate. Although the flights did eventually take off, these two major obstacles in the cross-strait flights debate remained.

Type of talks

The larger issue of cross-strait relations complicated the issue of the type of talks from the outset. The Taiwanese government early on indicated that it would prefer governmental negotiations. In 2002, the existing channels for cross-strait communication were closed, due in large part to Chen Shui-bian’s DPP administration’s repudiation of the 1992 consensus. Taiwan had an interest at that time in re-establishing cross-strait relations under different footing, without having agreed to the 1992 consensus. All previous cross-strait talks had been conducted under the one-China principle through the 1992 consensus, and altering this format would set a new paradigm of cross-strait negotiations in motion. To the best of its ability, Taiwan attempted to leverage Chinese interests in the flights against establishing some kind of governmental negotiations.

China refused to compromise on this issue throughout the first stage of development. It took the position that since governmental talks were out of the question without the one-
China principle, the best way to establish links was for business to do it itself. This position also fit well within the larger rhetoric about Taiwan’s provincial status. Why would government agencies need to negotiate trade and transport agreements between, say, Hubei and Hebei provinces? Within China’s sovereign borders, it would only make sense for industry and business representatives to undertake the negotiation of trade agreements, shouldering this burden for the government whenever possible. In order to strengthen the rhetoric that Taiwan is another province of China, the use of business and industry representatives would be a logical extension of domestic policy. China wanted to see industry and business arrange everything. From the point of view of the PRC, this would be a completely domestic affair.

Though quite far apart on the issue of the type of talks needed to settle cross-strait issues, the two sides appeared essentially justified in their demands. Using domestic models to organize trade within its sovereign borders was a completely rational course of action for the PRC based on its view of Taiwan. Requiring government authorization for transportation between itself and other countries was also a completely rational policy for Taiwan, based on its belief in the Two-State-Theory. For both sides, the issue was, and remains, one of legitimacy. Neither side made any real effort to overcome the talks issue. When Taiwan chose to implement the unilateral model for 2003, China was in a difficult position if it decided to reject the proposal, since it didn’t really deviate from existing logistical infrastructure procedures. All that really changed after all was that Taiwanese aircraft flew from Hong Kong to destinations in Chinese airspace along existing air routes. Taiwanese airlines applied to use the routes for charter flights, and nothing more. The planes touched down in Hong Kong, and that is where they originated on their way to China. The
application procedures must have existed for such flights, the same as many, only with new carriers from a place China claimed as its sovereign territory. And, ultimately, China’s refusal to allow Taiwanese applications could effectively strengthen the Taiwanese case that it was an independent country.

In the end, applying this unilateral approach delayed action on most of the issues in the first stage of cross-strait flights. Talks on the issue ended without any real effort to resolve issues. China counted on Taiwan backing down on governmental talks and authorizing Chinese airlines the next year. In the next stage, this issue would grow to become a contentious one for cross-strait flights owing to the fact that the issue continued unresolved in this first stage.

_Air routes_

The unilateral solution—having Taiwanese airlines fly with a stopover in Hong Kong on pre-existing international air routes—nullified the issue of air routes, specifically, the establishment of new air routes not currently flown by any aircraft at the time. The Taiwanese government was not prepared to establish new air routes between Taiwan and the mainland. Taiwan remained open to arranging new configurations for flights along existing routes not limited to Hong Kong and Macau. Flights from Taipei to Beijing through Okinawa or South Korea, though potentially shorter in duration than the same flights via Hong Kong, were unacceptable to China.

Establishing new air routes across the Taiwan Strait would not come until much later, with the establishment of the full Three Links in December of 2008. The unilateral flights of 2003, in their indirect form, did not challenge the boundaries of this issue, and it remained
unresolved as a result. It would not have served China’s interests in line with its overall demands for cross-strait flights. Prepared to negotiate different flight models and the participation of Chinese airlines through unofficial talks, China was in a difficult position if it wished to deny applications from Taiwanese airlines through those channels. The talks issues had the effect of blocking Chinese airlines from participating in cross-strait flights. The flight routes issue would also undergo limited change toward practical logistics concerns. These concerns included economic concern over increased fuel costs incurred by flying longer routes, and logistical concern over the additional time passengers would spend in transit and the inconvenience caused by a stopover in Hong Kong or Macau.

**Naming the routes**

The 2003 decision by Taiwanese airlines to offer unilateral flights also nullified the efforts to name cross-strait routes. The unilateral routes simply did not provide a substantial change to pre-existing infrastructure, and didn’t necessitate serious discussion about the names for the routes. Both Taiwan and China, however, could, and would, use this issue as a supporting argument whenever they could not create enough leverage in disputes over other issues. Since this issue is fundamentally tied to the one-China principle, it is one that would arise over all stages of development.

Questions about China’s calling the routes “domestic” were limited to more general types of comments along the lines of “the Taiwan issue is China’s internal affair”. This type of statement falls within the scope of statements allowed by the 1992 consensus. China appears conciliatory on the matter, and willing to use terms like “cross-strait routes”. Pan-green Taiwan definitely preferred that the routes be called international. Pan-blue Taiwan,
under the 1992 consensus, would not necessarily have to take a position on the matter, but would undoubtedly favour an agreement to leave the names in ambiguous territory. Resolution of this issue will be an important theme in later stages of development.

*Eligibility*

Eligibility refers to the types of passengers that were allowed to take advantage of the charter flights. The matter of Eligibility is related most closely to the theme of practical logistics. The first flights capacity exceeded the market, and the question of who should be eligible to fly did not figure into discussion in a prominent way.

Since the issue of eligibility initially discounted Chinese nationals, figuring only on which Taiwanese would be eligible, it would be important in relation to side talks on Chinese tourists as well. One might question why the eligibility issue was not more prominent in discussion about the participation of Chinese airlines. China argued that it had a vested interest and right to participate in the supply side of the market by offering flights on its airlines. However, the demand for the flights was coming entirely from the Taiwanese population, as Chinese nationals were not able to use the services from the beginning. Thus, China wanted to reap the benefit offered by the supply side of the market, but did not wish to contribute any of its resources (read: consumers) to increase the demand side of the market.

*Tourism*

Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan is an issue that would become more important as the development of cross-strait flights continued. China would push for passenger flights instead of cargo flights in the later stages of development. Allowing Chinese tourists to visit Taiwan,
thereby increasing demand for flights and making the arrangements more profitable, would become a major point for negotiation in the area of passenger flights.

*Cargo flights*

As with Chinese tourists, neither would cargo appear to be a priority goal for China. Cargo was not an issue in the first stage of development, but deserves mention as it is an important parallel issue to passenger charter flights.
III. Stage Two

1. Events

With the 2003 charters complete, both sides began to consider the future development of the links. Though unilateral, the 2003 flights established a precedent upon which both sides could build. Each side alleged that it was willing to talk, while continuing to disagree on whether talks needed to be official. Taiwan and China both had optimists in their ranks, however, and given the willingness of each side to talk, people hoped for more development for cross-strait flights.

The Failed Negotiations of 2004

President Chen Shui-bian ruled out direct links in February, and at this early stage, indicated that hopes need not have been too high for quick progress on cross-strait flights. With his pro-independence rhetoric, and cold reception of direct ties with China, President Chen set a tone for the second stage of development that would receive a great deal of blame from the Chinese side, and from the media.

In May, talk shifted toward negotiating cargo flights. The Taiwanese side would later push for successful cargo links as a priority, and the attention given to these flights from this point forward indicated that this was also a basic issue.

In July, election campaigning for 2004 began in Taiwan. During the course of the campaign, the China Daily ran editorials and comment pieces about Chen Shui-bian and his Three Links policy that were critical of his flip-flopping on cross-strait policy. The Chinese side argued that Chen used direct flights as a way to win votes in order to advance his pro-
independence ideology, and that he was not truly interested in establishing links. The *China Daily* even argued that Chen did not really care about the Taiwanese compatriots who desired to see links established as an extension of his indifference about the Three Links.\(^{12}\)

China brushed off calls for direct cargo flights, while issuing a call for 2004 Lunar New Year charters in September. Chinese airlines were extremely interested in taking part in the 2004 arrangements. Problems remained, and intensified, as Pu Zhaozhou of the CAAC made further statements calling the links “domestic”. This further complicated development of a model for charters that would prove agreeable to both sides.

With “domestic” routes back on the table, the MAC announced its intention to make plans for the charters. The Taiwanese government called for China to avoid politicizing the negotiations, as China did too. The MAC announced that Chinese airlines would require government authorization to enter Taiwan. The Taiwanese government was prepared to enter into appropriate negotiations to see this through. The business community demanded that the final Taiwanese proposal be on the table by November 15\(^{th}\), 2004, in order to ensure that sufficient time would remain to make necessary preparations.

On the 15\(^{th}\) of November, the *China Daily* ran two articles: one urging “fair chance” for Chinese airlines, and the other stressing the importance of direct links. The MAC announced on November 21\(^{st}\) that Taiwan would employ the 2003 charter model, adding Beijing as a final destination. In addition, the MAC proposed additional transfer points other than Hong Kong and Macau such as Okinawa and South Korea. This proposal would not exclude Chinese airlines provided China authorized appropriate negotiations with Taiwan.

addition, “direct” links, best described as “non-stop” links, were still possible, providing the Chinese would agree to appropriate (semi-official) negotiations.\textsuperscript{13} Taiwan indicated that the SEF was willing to begin discussions to make the necessary arrangements for Chinese airlines’ participation.

This proposal amounted, essentially, to categorical rejection of all of China’s demands and “olive branches”. Taiwan had implemented a unilateral scheme again, and ransomed Chinese demands with governmental talks that circumvented acceptance of the one-China principle.

China’s response was less than pleasant and accused Taiwan of acting without sincerity.\textsuperscript{14} The SEF went ahead and invited the ARATS to negotiate; China indicated that the ARATS was designating civilian airline representatives to negotiate the bi-lateral agreements. Both China and Taiwan were unwilling at this stage to reach agreement on the appropriate type of negotiations.

The \textit{China Daily} made special issue of China’s overall three links policy on December 18\textsuperscript{th}. The TAO released a document called "Actively and Realistically Promoting 'Three Direct Links' Across the Taiwan Straits by Reliance on the People and in the Interests of the People".\textsuperscript{15} The precedent cited by this document was the 2003 Lunar New Year charter flights:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Melody Chen, “MAC Announces Cross-Strait Flights Plan,” \textit{Taipei Times} 22 Nov. 2003, 31 Aug. 2009
\end{itemize}
In 2003, the mainland adopted flexible and practical measures aimed at handling special cases with special methods, to facilitate Taiwan business people's return to the island for the Spring Festival: Six Taiwan airlines were given approval to operate charter planes 16 times to carry Taiwan business people to commute between Taipei and Kaohsiung and Shanghai via Hong Kong and Macao. This was the first time in 50-plus years that Taiwan-operated planes had landed at a mainland airport by normal approach.\textsuperscript{16}

By the 19\textsuperscript{th}, Taiwanese media were already releasing reports indicating that the prolonged uncertainty over the flight arrangements led to doubts in the business community, and decreased demand for flights.\textsuperscript{17} On the 31\textsuperscript{st} of December, Pu Zhaozhou announced that China was willing to allow the Taiwanese to operate direct flights on a unilateral basis, provided Taiwan promised that Chinese carriers could participate the next year.\textsuperscript{18} In reality, other than the fact that the offer allowed Taiwan an extra year to implement procedures to accept Chinese airlines’ applications, this proposition was not different from China’s normal offer.

Due to the ongoing dispute, Taiwanese airlines were unable to organize for flights supposed to run from January 9\textsuperscript{th} to February 2\textsuperscript{nd}. China blamed Taiwanese insincerity in putting up barriers to an agreement. The Chinese official press echoed this sentiment.


Taiwan stuck to its guns on the issue of formal negotiations. Taiwanese media, however, emphasized that airlines could not operate flights amid uncertainty and at the last minute.\(^\text{19}\)

**The Successful 2005 Negotiations and the Macau Model**

Taiwan called for negotiations for 2005 Lunar New Year charter flights late in September of 2004. In October, Taiwan had already agreed to China’s plans for flights. The flights would be two-way, non-stop flights operated by airlines from both sides of the Taiwan Strait. All that remained was to hold talks to negotiate the agreement.\(^\text{20}\) In October, China apparently backtracked on the issue of the name for the cross-strait routes, calling them “domestic” again.\(^\text{21}\)

In November, MAC chairman Joseph Wu suggested that after the 2005 legislative elections, the time would be ripe for negotiations for the flights.\(^\text{22}\) In mid November, Wu called again for the two sides to engage in negotiations.\(^\text{23}\) In response, China indicated that it was not willing to operate charter flights again over the holiday period. Li Weiyi of China’s TAO blamed Chen Shui-bian’s lack of sincerity for delays in the three links talks. Li called direct shipping a domestic affair again and said that China would resume talks if President Chen accepted the 1992 consensus and gave up his pro-independence politics.\(^\text{24}\)


In December, business leaders were still hopeful that flights could take place. On January 6th, the TAA denied sending a group of delegates to China to discuss flights. Reports also indicated that the issue of Chinese airlines’ participation was the final remaining obstacle. The KMT had prepared to send a delegation to China in the following week to discuss charter flights unofficially.\(^{25}\)

Taiwan held that both sides had expressed the utmost sincerity as they engaged in negotiations for non-stop flights that would continue along the Taiwan-Hong Kong-China flight routes without landing in Hong Kong. The MAC also indicated that it would allow the precedent set by 2005’s successful flights to remain unchallenged. The KMT believed it was in the best position to negotiate given that China did not like to deal with Chen Shui-bian.\(^{26}\) The KMT wished to take credit for the success of the 2005 Lunar New Year charter flights.

John Chiang’s delegation to China played an important role in the developments of January 2005. The KMT and Chen Yunlin of the TAO announced an agreement on charter flight plans.\(^{27}\) The agreement was, on the one hand, more of a “guideline” for what China could reasonably request of the Taiwan. On the other hand, it was also a direct assault on the legitimacy of Taiwan’s government. The pan-green parties in Taiwan were, justifiably, very

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The proposal announced by the TAO and the KMT did eventually become the Chinese plan submitted to the MAC for approval. Taiwan made a final effort to push for the SEF’s official involvement in talks, but met with failure. China rebuffed this last attempt. Pu Zhaozhou responded saying that “laypeople”, such as government officials not familiar with the internal operations of the aviation industry, ought not to get involved in matters best handled by airline authorities.\footnote{Ko Shu-ling and Melody Chen, “Optimism Rising Over Cross-Strait Flight Agreement,” Taipei Times 13 Jan. 2005, 31 Aug. 2009 <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2005/01/13/2003219165>.} Ultimately, the Taiwanese government had little choice but to accept the flight scheme.

In spite of the “agreement” reached between the KMT and Chinese authorities, Taiwan sent Civil Aeronautics Administration Director General Billy Chang and TAA head Michael Lo to negotiate the final agreement with Pu Zhaozhou of the CAAC in Macau. The two sides reached the landmark deal in Macau on January 15\textsuperscript{th} 2005.\footnote{“Taiwan, Mainland Agree to Landmark Direct Air Links,” The China Daily 15 Jan. 2005, 31 Aug. 2009 <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-01/15/content_409337.htm>.} The agreement stipulated that 48 flights between the Chinese destinations Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, and the Taiwanese destinations Taoyuan and Kaohsiung, in Taiwan would operate between January 29\textsuperscript{th} and February 20\textsuperscript{th} of 2005. The six Taiwanese carriers that had operated flights in 2003—China Airlines, TransAsia Airways, Far Eastern Air Transport, EVA Air, Uni Air and Mandarin Airlines—in addition to six Chinese carriers—Air China, Hainan Airlines, China Southern, Shanghai Airlines, Xiamen Airlines and China Eastern—operated a
combined total of 48 non-stop (though not truly “direct” in the linear sense) flights, open to
businesspeople and their families.

Although Taiwan was not successful in bringing about fresh negotiations between the
ARATS and the SEF, its fundamental position, as an independent political entity or
sovereign state, did not suffer as a result of the arrangement. The agreement reached in
Macau would become a precedent and model. Hereafter the 2005 Macau model would serve
as the basis for further expansion of the air transportation component of the Three Links.

2. Analysis

Despite the success of the 2003 charters, the Taiwanese and Chinese governments
still had not agreed on major issues. China continued to push for direct links, but also
continued to argue against the government negotiations that would make flights possible for
Chinese airlines. The DPP administration in Taiwan continued to weigh the convenience of
direct links against Taiwanese sovereignty and security. The Taiwanese continued to assert
that governmental negotiations were absolutely necessary to arrange for flights that could
pose a threat to Taiwanese security. The pan-blue continued to support John Chiang’s
original model, holding practical logistics as an important feature for successful charters.
During this second stage of the cross-strait flights development, both sides would find ways
around these two major obstacles.

Having established a precedent by which future flights could be arranged, there was
hope that the expanded arrangements could be made for the 2004 Lunar New Year, and that
airlines could offer services over other festivals of the lunar calendar, i.e. Tomb Sweeping
Day, Dragon Boat Festival, and Moon Festival. These hopes were soon dispelled. The
quarrel over the nature of the talks, be they official or not, continued. During this second stage, both sides would need to face a related problem that rose to prominence. China held that the direct flight links between Taiwan and China were domestic. Taiwan held that they were international. This issue was not a major factor in the first stage, because the flights touched down in Hong Kong, and were not essentially different from the existing routes that transferred in Hong Kong. The new routes needed a name. The PRC wanted to call them domestic flights. Taiwan would not permit this. The two sides were at an impasse.

*Type of talks*

During the second stage of development, the Taiwanese government continued to push for official negotiations on matters involving Chinese airlines’ participation and establishment of direct routes. China continued to refuse all governmental negotiations that did not have the one-China principle as a basic tenet.

The conclusion of this stage saw the Taiwanese side back down on its demand for government involvement in negotiations. Although pro-independence voices within the pan-green coalition cried loudly about the security risks and potential attack on Taiwan’s sovereignty, they seemed to have been meant to scare the public and to garner support for Taiwan’s call for official involvement in negotiations.

In the DPP administration’s view, the primary function of government negotiations was to seek legitimacy for Chen Shui-bian and the DPP administrations’ application of the Two-State-Theory and creeping pro-independence policy. China had always maintained that any government-to-government talks across the Taiwan Strait needed to have the one-China principle at their foundation. If the DPP had succeeded in bringing about SEF-ARATS talks
over cross-strait flights, this could have been construed as Chinese acceptance of the DPP administration’s rejection of the one-China principle and 1992 consensus.

In the end, backing down on governmental negotiations, in practice, only amounted to abandoning the push to have cross-strait negotiations without adhering to the 1992 consensus and one-China principle. Unofficial negotiations did not undermine Taiwanese sovereignty or security, and the flights themselves do not appear to have posed any risk either.

*Air routes*

The different parties and media sources involved in cross-strait flights called the air routes used under the Macau model by different names. Most commonly, the flights using the Macau model were called direct flights by all parties, despite the fact that they were not direct in the practical sense. All flights before the daily charters of 2008 followed pre-existing flight routes, requiring travel through Hong Kong or Macau. Under the new 2005 Macau model, airplanes were not required to fly along any new air routes; aircraft continued to fly along pre-existing routes between China and Taiwan via Hong Kong and Macau. The only feature of the flights during this period was that they were not required to land in Hong Kong or Macau. This makes the flights non-stop, but it does not make them direct in the practical sense of the word, as they still had to fly along roundabout routes through Hong Kong or Macau.

The most efficient routes, which would save both time and money, were the direct routes that would require establishment of air routes that would bypass Hong Kong and Macau. The pan-blue coalition would have preferred direct flights along the most efficient routes, as would airlines and consumers. The most practical logistics, meaning direct, non-
stop links, were without question, the ultimate goal of all concerned parties. Had China been willing to engage in governmental talks, truly direct links could easily have been established.

Non-stop “direct” flights were a good compromise for both sides. Taiwan did not need to address the security issues concerning new flight routes across the Taiwan Strait, or justify new routes to a security-minded public. China was happy enough to have the flights passing through what it felt was its sovereign territory. Non-stop “direct” flights were close enough to direct flights that they satisfied the mainland’s desire to have fully internal flights it could argue involved only domestic agents. Airlines and consumers were also happy with the additional savings provided by the Macau model.

The issue of air routes is the one issue where neither side had to capitulate to the demands of the other. Both sides compromised, though Taiwan more explicitly so, in order to agree on the Macau model flight routes.

**Naming the routes**

The issue of what to name the routes had more time in the spotlight during the second stage of development. For China, this issue appeared to serve the function of an “emergency exit”. Whenever it wanted to ramp up the debate, China needed only backtrack to “domestic” routes in order to add fuel to the fire. With media reports now referring to the non-stop flights as direct flights, it became more difficult to classify the cross-strait flights as strictly international. As reports pointed out during this stage, the routes were not entirely domestic, nor were they entirely international.

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31 From the 15th of January 2005 onward, all three media sources refer to flights most often as “direct” and occasionally as “non-stop”.
Eligibility

The issue of which passengers were eligible to take cross-strait flights developed a great deal during this period. The flights began to involve more than Taiwanese business people and this development paved the way for tourism talks in the third and fourth stages of development. The 2005 festival charter flights were open to business people and their families, travelling in either direction, an expansion of the 2003 restrictions. Consumers saw the exclusion of students from eligibility for flights in 2005 as a deficiency in the Macau model, and this would be remedied in future stages of development.

Tourism

Both China and Taiwan focused on establishing an effective model that they could use to hold festival charter flights. This issue was primary, and tourism talks were limited over this stage of development.

Cargo flights

The flights of 2005 proved that it was logistically possible to have both Chinese and Taiwanese airlines travel between destinations in China and Taiwan. This proof in hand, the Taiwanese government began to pursue the issue of cross-strait cargo flights. Cargo flights, while not as important to the average citizen, represented an important interest of people in the business community. Establishing logistical infrastructure to send air freight between China and Taiwan was perhaps even more important than passenger charters. I would argue that the Taiwanese government pursued cargo flights not only to satisfy people within the business community, but also to counterbalance China’s pressure for direct passenger charters.
Cargo flights would not have the same kind of visibility in the media as passenger flights. China’s push for passenger flights seems a strategy designed to increase Chinese prestige in the minds of as many Taiwanese people as possible. Cargo flights were important to the Taiwanese economy. However, passenger flights had the potential to be an issue affecting a greater and more diverse number of Taiwanese. Pushing for passenger flights was a good strategy for China to delay improving conditions for Taiwanese economic development, while maintaining the appearance of pushing for the Three Links in the general Taiwanese public. Cargo remained, throughout all stages, an issue most important to the interests of businesspeople, businesses and airlines.
IV. Stage Three

1. Events

The *China Daily* hailed the successful 2005 charters as an important step forward for three reasons. First, both mainland and Taiwanese carriers were able to operate round-trip flights. Second, charter planes from both sides were allowed to fly through Hong Kong airspace without a stopover. Third, the charters were operated between multiple destinations on both sides, including China’s Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou and Taiwan's Taipei and Kaohsiung.  

In the *China Daily*, Chen Shui-bian’s pro-independence activities received considerable blame for the failed negotiations of 2004. Li Weiyi of the TAO also made statements declaring that the flights did not indicate an overall improvement in cross-strait relations, and that Chen’s pro-independence rhetoric was to blame for this problem.

In Taiwan, the Chen administration changed course on cross-strait flights. Having a model established under which flights would operate over the Lunar New Year, Chen and the DPP began to focus more on establishing cross-strait cargo flights. The Chinese response from Tang Yi of the TAO acknowledged the Taiwanese position, and indicated further negotiations would take place on the of cargo flights. The Chinese, more interested in

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developing passenger flights, proposed to extend the Macau model for cross-strait flights to Tomb Sweeping Day of 2005.\textsuperscript{35}

The KMT embraced China’s attempts to build on the successful Macau model, calling for flights to be held for Tomb Sweeping Day, despite a more reserved response from the Taiwanese government. On the 11\textsuperscript{th} of March, Pu Zhaozhou, in his non-governmental capacity as the Chinese Civil Aviation Association executive director and Straits Aviation Exchange Commission vice chairman, sent a request to Michael Lo of the TAA to negotiate flights for Tomb Sweeping Day. With no government mandate to negotiate, Lo had to refuse. Taiwan did not receive Pu’s overture well, given that China was days away from ratifying its Anti-Secession Law.\textsuperscript{36}

In April of 2005, Pu Zhaozhou sent another request to the TAA inviting the recently elected Tony Fan to discuss direct charter flights. This overture from China’s CAAC, inviting airlines represented by the TAA, coming in the wake of the Anti-Secession Law, was also not well received in Taiwan. MAC chairman Joseph Wu condemned the overture, and Fan pointed out that it was up to the government to decide how to proceed. Fan did not plan to respond to Pu right away. Although the TAA had negotiated the Macau model, the Taiwanese government had sanctioned that round of negotiation. With no current mandate for negotiation, the request from China, had the TAA responded directly, would have dealt a


blow to the legitimacy of the Taiwanese government, and strengthened Chinese rhetoric claiming Taiwan’s provincial status.  

Taiwan continued to push for cargo flights, while China remained focused on passenger flights. China proposed, in March, to allow Chinese nationals to visit Taiwan as tourists. To reach a deal on tourists, China proposed an unofficial model for negotiations similar to that which brought about the 2005 Lunar New Year charters. The issue of Chinese tourists visiting Taiwan sparked a new round of the debate on official talks. Joseph Wu of the MAC argued that allowing Chinese nationals to visit Taiwan for tourism was a more complicated proposition than cross-strait charters, involving the transport ministry’s Tourism Bureau, the Immigration Bureau, security forces, the MAC and the SEF.  

Having failed to leverage negotiations without the one-China principle on passenger flights, the DPP seemed by this account to be attempting the same strategy over tourism talks. The KMT, having sent a delegation to China to discuss the issue of Chinese tourists, would take credit for the Chinese proposal, perpetuating the theme of CPC-KMT cooperating in opposition to the DPP administration’s cautious stance.  

In July, the latest talks fell apart again over a dispute about China’s using “domestic” routes, and the condition that Taiwan must accept the one-China principle to engage in negotiations. Stressing cargo fights as an important step along the road to eventual direct links, the MAC’s Joseph Wu ruled out festival flights on the basis that the Taiwanese public could not make convenient use of the flights due to logistical complications. Ironically, Wu

39 Ibid.
used the opposite strategy from the PRC and KMT. Where the PRC and KMT had always used consumer interest as a reason to hold flights, Wu suggested that the lack of consumer interest was a reason to avoid holding extra festival flights. In any case, Wu stressed that negotiations on the issues must be governmental, announcing that the Taiwan External Trade Development Council would negotiate for Taiwan. Wu criticized the presence of a KMT delegation in China claiming the delegation took attention away from formal negotiations.  

Premier Frank Hsieh announced in August that Taiwanese planes could fly over Chinese airspace, pending China’s approval. Hsieh also agreed to negotiate passenger and cargo flights together, apparently as a concession. The concession is actually a kind of “you scratch our back, we’ll scratch yours” solution to the disagreement over which type of flights should take precedence, but it demonstrated Hsieh’s willingness to try to find new ways to overcome obstacles to agreement. His approach to the situation foreshadows attitudes that would become more prominent during his bid for the 2008 presidency. China welcomed Hsieh’s announcement and pledged to do its utmost to bring about negotiations. Pu Zhaozhou said that China would speed up the process of approving Taiwanese applications.

In November, Pu Zhaozhou contacted the TAA again, calling for charter flights for the Lunar New Year of 2006 based on the Macau model. The Times reported that the Chinese statement included a reference to Pu’s earlier attempts to contact the TAA to

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negotiate flights in 2005. The *China Daily* similarly reported that Pu had sent invitations to the TAA twice since the 2005 flights, calling for Taiwan to adopt "flexible, practical and effective" measures to facilitate the early opening of direct air links across the Strait.

The article reports that “the mainland side has made a lot of positive effort” in this regard. Joseph Wu also made comments that the Lunar New Year flights would not depend on the successful negotiation of regular direct charters for passengers and cargo. Airlines hoped that the government would have plans finalized by the end of November.

Later in November, China called for negotiations on technical matters. The Chinese apparently hoped that negotiations could take place as early as possible so that airlines would have plenty of time to make necessary arrangements. The *China Daily* article held up the desire of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, particularly of Taiwanese compatriots in China, as the primary concern in making charter flight arrangements. On the 18th of December, the TAO and MAC announced that 72 flights (36 each) would take place over the Lunar New Year. Anyone with appropriate travel documents could use the links, and that Xiamen would be a new Chinese destination.

By December, the Chinese had made all the necessary preparations on their side. The best aircraft and crews were set to take part in the flights, ticketing procedures established,
and details such as emergency preparations complete. Flights were scheduled to run from January 20th to February 13th, with flights being offered by six Chinese and four Taiwanese airlines. In addition, the Chinese added Xiamen as a destination, increasing the total destinations to include Taipei and Kaohsiung in Taiwan, and Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xiamen in China.49

Mid-December, Joseph Wu again raised hope that the two sides could discuss charter cargo flights following the conclusion of the Lunar New Year passenger flights.50 Just before the 2006 flights were set to begin, Wu called for negotiations on regular cross-strait flights, but did not hold out much hope that great progress on the three links would happen soon.51

The Lunar New Year flights of 2006 took place between January 20th and February 10th. After the conclusion of the flights, the KMT sent another delegation to China to discuss ways to allow Chinese tourists to enter Taiwan.52 In April, the Taiwanese government called for more tourism talks with China, and the KMT heaped praise on themselves, saying that the government’s call was the result of pressure from interested groups and the KMT’s own delegation. Joseph Wu urged China to conclude talks on opening Taiwan to Chinese tourists and direct flights within six months. According to a KMT legislator, this move by the

government was to avoid having the KMT steal the government’s thunder on tourism links, and the KMT in general, including Ma Ying-jeou, was supportive of the move.\footnote{“Opposition Welcomes Call for Talks on Tourism With Beijing,” The China Post 14 Apr. 2006, 31 Aug. 2009 <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/2006/04/14/80386/Opposition-welcomes.htm>.
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In mid-April, the governments of China and Taiwan announced that they would authorize private organizations to engage in negotiations on tourists. The Chinese side used this as a pretext to stress again the need for truly direct links, so tourists would not have to travel through the Hong Kong Flight Information Region (FIR), wasting time and money, again appealing to practical logistics and the needs of consumers and the business community.\footnote{“Private Organizations to Negotiate Opening Taiwan to China Tourists,” The China Post 19 Apr. 2006, 31 Aug. 2009 <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/2006/04/19/80685/Private-organizations.htm>.
} It is interesting to note that although China placed importance on this issue, later developments would show that the insistence is not genuine but merely a bargaining tactic.

In May 2006, Minister of Transportations and Communications, Kuo Yao-chi, claimed that the Chinese were holding up negotiations, but trying to blame Taiwan for the delay. He used as an example the fact that although China had made goodwill statements about allowing Chinese tourists to Taiwan, China had not yet listed Taiwan as an official tourist destination. The KMT opposition accused the government of attempting to shift blame onto China, when the Taiwanese government itself had not yet sent letters to the appropriate persons seeking to resolve the tourism issue.\footnote{“China Misleading Outside World: Minister Kuo,” The China Post 16 May 2006, 31 Aug. 2009 <http://www.chinapost.com.tw/taiwan/2006/05/16/82304/China-misleading.htm>.
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In June, Taiwan and China announced an unprecedented expansion of cross-strait charter flights. The two sides agreed to extend flights to all lunar calendar festivals.

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beginning with Moon Festival of 2006. In addition, regulations would be set for other special types of cross-strait flights, such as humanitarian charters, and cargo charters, although these would only be able to ship manufacturing goods and not finished products. Under the agreement, both Taiwan and China would operate 84 flights in a year, 48 of which would occur at the Lunar New Year. The other lunar calendar festivals included in the arrangement were Tomb Sweeping Day, or Qingming Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Moon Festival, or Mid-Autumn Festival.

The article in the *China Daily* carrying the announcement contained other interesting statements:

Taipei has come under tremendous pressure to launch direct air links, as an estimated 3 million Taiwanese travel to the mainland each year for business or sightseeing. Under pressure from the Taiwanese and after talks between the two sides, direct chartered passenger flights were arranged during the traditional festivals, as Spring Festival, but Taipei authorities requested such flights to fly over Hong Kong before they could arrive in the mainland or in the island. Taiwan also hopes to attract mainland tourists to the island, but the trips would not be appealing because the indirect flights add extra time and expense.56

This article also ties the issue of Taiwan’s desire to welcome Chinese tourists with the problem of the flight model that requires travel through Hong Kong airspace. Since the arrangements now had implications for citizens indisputably under PRC authority, and not just “Taiwan compatriots”, mainland China had a legitimate basis upon which to strengthen

appeals for more practical logistics regarding the air routes. A mixed reaction greeted this news in Taiwan. The pan-green TSU was satisfied with the agreement providing it did not infringe on Taiwanese sovereignty. The PFP felt that the move lacked substance, and was a “gimmick to fool the public”. The China Post also reported that resolution of outstanding issues still centred on the old dispute between “domestic” and “international” routes.

From September 29th to October 8th of 2006, during the Moon Festival China and Taiwan each had a total of twenty-four cross strait flights operated by six airlines. These were the first charter flights operating outside of the Lunar New Year festival. The flights operated between the Chinese destinations of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xiamen, and Taipei.

On December 13th, Li Weiyi announced the plan for the 2007 Lunar New Year charter flights. Based on the 2006 Macau model, six airlines from each side would operate a total of 48 flights, for a total of 96 festival flights. All travellers with appropriate credentials could participate. China left the door open on mutual agreement to increase the number of flights. Following this announcement, Joseph Wu made a similar statement about the hope that the two sides could engage in serious negotiations in early 2007 when there were no elections in Taiwan to interfere with the process. He again called on Chinese authorities to remove political barriers to negotiation of direct links. Despite Beijing’s optimism about

the demand for flights, the final number remained unchanged. The flights would take place between February 13th and 26th.  

Around the beginning of February, it became clear that the Chinese were correct about the demand for flights. With flights from China to Taiwan sold out and return flights ninety percent booked, Yang Yi of the TAO called for airlines and civil negotiators to try to add additional flights to meet demand. This would prove impossible.

Around April 5th in 2007, airlines operated 42 charter flights for Tomb Sweeping Day. In early May, the China Daily reported that Chinese officials were considering the opening of six more destinations—Chengdu, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Shenzhen, Dalian and Guilin—as well as specifying seven more cities—Tianjin, Fuzhou, Chongqing, Zhuhai, Shenyang, Qingdao and Guiyang—as emergency landing sites.

Hope for a deal on tourism remained high in Taiwan, although Taiwan continued to indicate that the ball was in China’s court on this issue. With other political issues plaguing the DPP administration, including the corruption charges against the first family and other prominent DPP politicians, public support in Taiwan appeared to be shifting toward the KMT, and China was not in a hurry to give credit to the outgoing administration for achieving much on the Three Links issue. The new premier Chang Chun-hsiung vowed to continue to promote the links and tourism. Beijing remained patient. When presidential campaigning began, both the KMT and the DPP would have to unveil their proposals for the future of the

Three Links, allowing the Taiwanese public, as well as China, greater choice in how the process would continue into the future.

Nevertheless, festival charter flights continued based on past agreements. From June 15th to 22nd, flights operated during Dragon Boat Festival. The destinations included the standard four Chinese and the standard 2 Taiwanese destinations.65

In late June, Yang Yi of the TAO called for weekend charter flights as well as the resumption of talks on permitting Chinese tourists to visit Taiwan.66 Talks on weekend charter flights, as well as tourism, fell apart again in July. In September, flights operated for the Moon Festival of 2007 through October 2nd.

The Lunar New Year of 2008 saw 94 flights from February 2nd to 6th, and 11th to 15th. The flights were complicated by inclement weather in China. Articles in the Chinese media continued to state that the mainland would spare no effort in achieving regular direct flights as soon as possible.67 With the presidential election right around the corner, the fourth stage of development for cross-strait flights was already well underway. The pan-blue and pan-green alliances had already prepared and presented their platforms on the issue to the expectant public, and these will be discussed in greater detail in the section that follows. Given that expectations were high for some fundamental progress on the Three Links, regardless of the outcome of the election, the issue of festival charter flights was largely one for the history books by this point.

2. Analysis

During the period from 2006 to 2008 several politically relevant events transpired. Although these events were technically outside the scope of this examination, a brief discussion of those most salient to the cross-strait flights issue is in order here. I have already mentioned briefly above the issues of China’s Anti-Secession Law and the DPP corruption scandals. I will offer more detailed analysis of these events and their implications.

*Anti-Secession Law*

Su Chi discusses China’s attitude toward Taiwan in cross-strait relations. He divides cross-strait relations into five aspects: military, diplomacy, politics, economy, and culture. Su then labels the diplomatic and military policies as “hard measures”, the economic and cultural as “soft measures”, and politics as somewhere in the middle. He goes on to describe China’s political attitude toward Taiwan since 2000 as, “unprecedented… [as] the ‘hard measures] became harder and the soft became softer’. The Anti-Secession Law represents the epitome of the “hardening of its hard measures”. The passage of this law in China reiterated what was already a clear message: an independent Taiwan is categorically unacceptable to the PRC.

The unfortunate reality of this development in the context of the Three Links was that “dark green” elements within the DPP had a clear example of China’s threatening posture toward Taiwan. The media often played up the presence of Chinese missiles aimed at Taiwan, but the Anti-Secession Law was a perverse windfall for Taiwanese politicians using

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68 Su, 278.
69 *The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue* (Beijing: Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council, 21 Feb. 2000) is a White Paper essentially dedicated to this belief, and is replete with references to Taiwan’s inalienable status as a part of China.
the sovereignty and security arguments to strengthen the case against negotiation with a hostile mainland China.

At the very least, the Anti-Secession Law became another obstacle to negotiation of the Three Links under Chen Shui-bian’s administration, tabling any Taiwanese concessions that may have been forthcoming following the successful Macau model charters of 2005. Any momentum provided by the Macau agreements was effectively stymied at least in part by the passage of the law.

**DPP Corruption**

With the 2004 presidential election affected by the assassination attempt on President Chen and Vice-President Lu—resulting in the declaration of a state of emergency that prevented (primarily pan-blue supporting) police and military personnel from voting, and engendering a sympathy swing vote—Chen did not begin his second term on solid ground. As his pro-independence rhetoric increased, allegations of corruption began to surface. These two factors would prove significant when examining support for the administration. The Taiwanese voting population was composed of a large number of “swing voters”, who would be influenced by one or both of these issues. The conviction of Chen’s son-in-law on corruption charges cast a shadow over the first family. When the allegations of corruption by Chen’s wife, first lady Yu Shu-jen, became known, increased scrutiny implicated Chen in the scandal. Protected by presidential immunity, Chen safely continued business as usual for a time. In Taiwan, presidential immunity, however, does not extend to the person, but is a privilege of the position. Chen was therefore subject to indictment when he no longer held

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70 Copper, 60.
the office of president. Details aside, the suggestion of impropriety in this case was enough to alienate many DPP voters who had supported the party for its “clean” image.

The KMT had been implicated in numerous corruption scandals in the past, with the issue of their stolen assets being an ongoing one. The DPP’s anti-corruption stance and clean record were advantages that likely contributed to its previous successes in elections. The allegations of corruption levelled at president Chen served to undermine his authority, and gave credence to his detractors, including mainland China. Thus, Chen’s authority in negotiating cross-strait policy was affected by the allegations of corruption and the erosion of his authority not directly perhaps, but certainly as a side-effect.

*Type of talks*

Implementation of the 2005 Macau model largely settled the issue of cross-strait talks, which found mechanisms to circumvent the necessity of official involvement in charter flights. If the DPP privately was still hoping to see official talks resume before implementation of the full Three Links, there was little cause for the party to make issue of it in relation to festival charters.

Just as the Taiwanese government had called for official talks on passenger charter flights, the DPP called for official talks in order to allow Chinese tourists to visit Taiwan. Hindsight allows us to see that there was little hope that the result of talks on tourism would be any different from the talks on flights, and little progress was made on this side issue during the third stage.
Air routes

China’s increasing appeals to practical logistics maintained the profile of the problem of air routes. With increasing fuel costs around the world during this time, these appeals were worth consideration. Had non-stop indirect flights not been implemented after 2005, this issue surely would have become a significant point of negotiation. The success of non-stop indirect charters, costing approximately as much as similar pre-existing travel arrangements, must have counteracted some of the pressure that this problem caused. If no charter flights were available at all, market forces would likely have pushed harder on this issue, due to the economic benefits of truly direct flights.

Naming the routes

The matter of naming the routes had not been effectively resolved, although like the issue of air routes themselves, the festival charters served to alleviate some of the pressure caused by this problem. Neither side was willing to compromise on the issue over this period, so the problem could be raised by either at any time in order to buttress other accusations of obstruction. Any time Taiwan or China was unhappy with the other’s position, negotiators or the media could add accusations about naming the routes to the list of grievances. Ultimately, the impossibility of resolution of this conflict meant that its handling depended on successful agreements on all other issues, or some kind of ambiguous terminology like “cross-strait routes” that would be acceptable to both sides.

Eligibility

The charter flights initially were only available to China-based Taiwanese businesspeople. After the establishment of the Macau model, and its subsequent expansion,
flights were not limited to businesspeople. Students studying abroad and Taiwanese tourists were also able to take advantage of the non-stop charters.

Tourism

The issue of tourism gained prominence in the media reports from the third stage of cross-strait flights development. As more Taiwanese could now take book pass on the cross-strait charters, gaining access to the consumer market in mainland China became an increasingly important issue. Chinese tourists could provide an additional market for flights, and increase the profitability of charters. In the next stage, this issue would become a very important one.

Cargo flights

This paper treats cargo flights as a side-issue to the negotiation of passenger flights, but in the third stage of development, it became a major stumbling block in negotiations. An important question to address is why Taiwan was so insistent on negotiating cargo flights to the point that it was willing to hold up progress on passenger flights, and why China chose to do the opposite.

One possible reason, albeit a rather uninteresting one, is that each side pursued objectives with the ultimate goal of causing further delays. China pushed passenger flights because Taiwan was interested in cargo flights, and vice versa, for the simple reason that this would create new obstacles to delay progress, while each side continued to argue on more general points like the one-China principle.
For Taiwan, cargo flights represented an issue with significant economic benefit. Taiwanese firms with production facilities in mainland China often acquired raw materials in Taiwan, sent them to China for production, and then shipped nearly finished products back to Taiwan for final assembly and export. Direct cargo flights would allow firms to cut costs, and ultimately benefit the economy. This is another reason that Taiwan showed strong interest in cargo flights.

Mainland China had a specific interest in avoiding drastic improvement in Taiwan’s economy. While the PRC did not wish to see Taiwan’s economy collapse, there was also little interest in aiding the DPP administration by allowing them to take credit for serious economic improvement. This could be one reason that China was not so interested in cargo flights. The question remains, however, as to why China favoured passenger flights over cargo flights. Ironically, passenger flights, though now open to many more people, were initially of primary benefit to businessmen in China, who would also have had interest in seeing cargo flights realized. The greater public prominence of passenger flights offers another possible reason for their importance. Moving goods across the strait, while of interest to many people who own or work in companies in China, could be overshadowed by the publicity surrounding the movement of people across the strait. Arguably, passenger flights could affect the hearts and minds of a larger portion of the public. China may have been hoping to influence Taiwanese public opinion in this way.

Another aspect of cargo flights that one must consider is that they would essentially fall outside the category of festival flights. As both cargo flight and passenger flight negotiations over this period would be a fundamental transition from negotiations for festival times only toward regular transport links under the Three Links policy, neither side was
willing to lay all of its cards on the table for fear of political loss, or worse, gain of credibility for a rival.

With the June 2006 expansion to the charter flights deal, and newly allowed cargo flights, this situation improved somewhat for Taiwan. However, business interests were not completely satisfied with the new cargo charters since they were not permitted to move finished products across the Taiwan Strait. Allowing manufacturing goods to travel air freight nonetheless represents a step forward in terms of the negotiations themselves, and this progress is not insignificant.
V. Stage Four

1. Events

The fourth stage of development of the cross-strait flights overlaps chronologically with the third stage and involves the development of plans for the final realization of the Three Links. As a result, this portion of the paper addresses the issues somewhat differently from the previous three stages. In the present study, this fourth stage concludes with the final implementation of the complete Three Links, although the selection of December 15th 2008 is somewhat arbitrary. Other useful points of conclusion could be the inaugural direct flights of July 4th 2008, or the election of Ma Ying-jeou to the KMT presidency.

In the third part of stage four, we will take a close look at the events that took place between the implementation of weekend charters on July 4, 2008 and the final establishment of the full Three Links on December 15th 2008. The second part will examine the uncertainty with which the Ma administration dealt during the period between the election and inauguration. The public, DPP, and even the KMT administration expressed doubt at certain moments about the realization of weekend charters, as media reports indicated that the deal could face difficulty in going through on schedule.71 The first part of stage four will examine the election platforms of the KMT and DPP in relation to cross-strait flights, and will also look at some of the arguments that took place between the two political factions. Since the presidential campaign platforms of the KMT’s Ma Ying-jeou and the DPP’s Frank Hsieh included substantial future plans for realization of the Three Links, some discussion of their respective ambitions is a logical place to begin.

Frank Hsieh

Frank Hsieh and Chen Shui-bian did not get along well. Hsieh was outside Chen’s inner circle, and at one time had advocated a return to the constitutional one-China framework. In 2005, when the KMT made its first visit to China since 1949, there were politicians from both the KMT and the DPP seeking to establish party-to-party contacts with the CPC. China had stated clearly that it was not opposed to contact with the DPP, provided the party was willing to renounce the pro-independence ideology enshrined in its charter. Removal of the pro-independence clauses from the DPP charter was extremely unlikely to occur. This being the case, China remained open to the establishment of contacts with individual DPP politicians China did not deem to be supporters of independence. There appeared to be some room for them to establish contacts with politicians on the mainland.

As mayor of Kaohsiung, Frank Hsieh sought to make such connections, hoping to establish city-to-city relations with Xiamen in China. Chen Shui-bian ultimately vetoed these moves by Hsieh, bringing Hsieh’s favourable attitudes toward China into check.

During his brief tenure as premier, Hsieh lifted the ban on flights using Chinese airspace, and attempted to expedite negotiations on cargo and passenger flights by combining the two issues into one joint negotiation. By this time, Hsieh’s more lenient attitude toward cross-strait policy was becoming increasingly transparent to the public. Although Hsieh didn’t oversee significant improvements to the transportation arrangements, he had effectively sown seeds with the potential of reaping their benefit should he win the presidential election.

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72 Su, 136.
73 Ibid, 131.
74 Ibid, 136.
During the presidential campaign, Hsieh favoured a gradual approach to the opening of the Three Links. Given the history of difficulty in negotiation between the DPP administration and the PRC, this was a wise course of action. Promising too much development over too short a time frame could have posed at least two problems for Hsieh as president.

First, China’s willingness to proceed in opening the links with the DPP was doubtful. However, had the DPP been re-elected, the “olive branches” extended by Hsieh as president could have improved these strained relations. Past statements from PRC officials indicated that they did not categorically condemn the DPP, and if Hsieh had been able to strengthen his “light green” support and soften the party’s pro-independence rhetoric, perhaps China might eventually come around. In the short term, however, it would have been impossible for Hsieh to promise great leaps forward on the Three Links issue.

Second, progress on the Three Links would always be questioned at least and outright opposed at worst, by the “dark green” elements in the DPP. Alienating these forces before the election would have been a serious mistake, and Hsieh was aware of this. His tact in campaigning and dealing with his relationship with Chen Shui-bian provided evidence of his awareness of the fact he could not he could not shun Chen completely. Hsieh did need to distance himself from Chen in order to avoid being drawn into the corruption scandal. Causing a rift between the light and dark green DPP forces would have ruined any chance the party still had to organize an effective campaign for the presidency. As a result, Hsieh supported a somewhat ambiguous “gradual approach” to the opening of the Three Links.
During the election campaign Hsieh supported, upon his election, the immediate opening of Taiwan to Chinese tourists and capital investment. For flights, Hsieh’s policy proposed that the current festival charter flights model be expanded to include weekends, which would be the crucial first step in gauging the Chinese attitude toward the new administration. If all went well, further expansion of the festival charter model could proceed.

As the campaign progressed, Hsieh and the DPP reiterated their commitment to direct links. The cautious approach remained a core feature of Hsieh’s Links policy, in order to avoid too rapid an opening of the Three Links and a subsequent flight of capital and investments from Taiwan to China.75 While China did represent a great opportunity to improve Taiwan’s economic performance, the risk of over-investment in the mainland and a subsequent “hi-jacking” of the Taiwanese economy remained a prevalent fear among pan-green political voices as far back as Lee Teng-hui’s “Go South” policy of the mid 1990’s.76

Tensions in the pan-green between “deep green” and “light green” placed Frank Hsieh in an extremely difficult position. If he had wanted to be clearer about his Three Links agenda, or to proceed with greater liberalization of cross-strait policy, his most prudent approach required him to remain ambiguous about future plans involving the three links.

75 It is interesting that the DPP faced the same problem and debate that the Clinton administration faced when dealing with China in the 90’s. While voices called for a rapid and complete opening up to China in order for US firms to have access to the vast Chinese market, what actually occurred was a flight of US capital in manufacturing industries to China. This experience could have guided DPP caution in order to avoid the same fate as the US economy.

76 Lee Teng-hui’s “Go South” policy of the mid 1990’s encouraged investors to consider investing in Southeast Asia in order to avoid being overly dependent on mainland China. See Copper, 211.
Ma Ying-jeou

Ma Ying-Jeou had gone before the MAC in 1992 and offered his interpretation of the “domestic-international” routes issue, saying that they should be called “cross-strait routes”. As the 1992 consensus evolved, with agreement that the ROC and PRC each have their own definition of one-China, Ma indicated that this type of concession, requiring mutual acceptance of ambiguity, would be a major theme in the KMT’s future cross-strait policy. The position Ma took in 1992 became an anchor point for his 2008 strategy of integration with the PRC, as his campaign and actions as president would not deviate from the position he took in 1992.

The KMT delegations that had visited China during the DPP’s rule played a role in Ma’s campaign platform regarding the Three Links policy. The KMT had a distinct advantage over the DPP. The contacts the KMT had made were under the pretext of “party-to-party” contacts. The DPP had not enjoyed such contacts in the past, nor was it likely to be able to engage in such contacts in the near future. Should the KMT win the presidency in 2008, the DPP would be effectively removed from the bargaining table over cross-strait links. If the reverse were to occur, the KMT would likely continue to have influence at the bargaining table headed by the PRC and a new DPP administration.

Ma had expressed his views on the liberalization of cross-strait policies as early as 1992 when he served as Vice Chairman of the MAC. Emphasizing ambiguity and perhaps with secret agreements previously negotiated between the KMT and CPC, Ma Ying-jeou presented an aggressive platform seeking the restoration of the Three Links within a year of

his assumption of the office of president. After the years of stalled negotiations, this platform must have been extremely appealing to the business community, pro-China voters, and any Taiwanese voter with an interest in regular travel across the strait.

Ma had one overwhelmingly important reason to be so confident in his plans for the Three Links. The KMT was willing to accept the one-China principle under the 1992 consensus. The KMT, and Ma, trusted that their willingness to negotiate within this framework would see all of the previously impassable stumbling blocks dissolve beneath their feet. China had indicated at every juncture that anything was possible if Taiwan accepted the one-China principle and 1992 consensus, and the Ma administration was prepared to do so. In this position, the KMT had every reason to believe that their plans for the Three Links would be successful.

The KMT victory and the final road to the Three Links

Ma Ying-jeou won the presidential election on March 22nd 2008, capturing 58.45% of the vote. After winning by such a large margin, the KMT had a strong mandate with which to proceed in implementing Ma’s campaign promises.

In April 2008, the KMT revealed its final plan for cross-strait flights, in addition to plans to invite more Chinese tourists to Taiwan and to allow exchange between Chinese and Taiwanese currency. The flights were set to begin July 4th, operating from Friday to Monday. Ma Ying-jeou proposed adding Fuzhou as a Chinese destination. Taichung and Songshan airports were to be added later on as Taiwanese destinations.78

Questions about previous unresolved issues remained. In mid-April the newly appointed head of the SEF, Chiang Pin-kung, stated that the names for the routes had yet to be decided. In late April, Chiang expressed shock at the appointment of TSU legislator Lai Shin-yuan to the position of MAC chairperson. As a member of Lee Teng-hui’s TSU, her appointment was thought to have annoyed the PRC. If Beijing needed any reason to hold up plans to begin flights in July, this appointment had the potential to fulfil this role. Nevertheless, Ma reiterated his plans to see flights begin in early July.

The day before Ma’s May 20th inauguration, Taiwan announced that the SEF’s Chiang Pin-kung would meet with the ARATS. The following month, Chen Yunlin signed the agreement on charter flights. By the time Ma officially took office, it seemed that weekend charter flights—the interim step between the previous festival charters and the ultimate goal of daily charters, and finally, regularly scheduled flights—were now certain. Despite ongoing speculation that Ma would not be able to meet his previously stated deadline of July 4th, the KMT continued to assure the public that everything was on track.  

The airline and business communities remained concerned about flights. In addition, the Ministry of National Defence still had reservations about opening Taiwan’s airports to flights from China, given that many of the airfields are located close to military installations. Agreement or arrangements to provide the military with detailed information on flights between Taiwan and the mainland would allay some of these concerns.

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Although the KMT essentially bypassed unresolved issues by accepting the 1992 consensus, in late May 2008 these issues reared their heads again in statements from the new MAC chairperson Lai Shin-yuan. Lai intoned that the primary focus of the new government would be agreement along the lines of the 1992 consensus, and that the Two-State-Theory and Taiwan’s status as a sovereign state would remain essential features of Taiwanese political discourse. Nevertheless, Lai expressed optimism that the upcoming meeting between the SEF and the ARATS would be successful. Putting politics aside in favour of increased cross-strait contacts would be the guiding ambition of both parties.  

The ARATS sent official confirmation of the June meeting on May 29th 2008, setting the date for the exchange for June 11th to 14th. The DPP’s Frank Hsieh and William Lai took the opportunity to begin criticism of the new KMT administration for pandering to China, as the meeting was set to take place in Beijing, unlike previous SEF-ARATS meetings that took place in Singapore. Hsieh advised caution and prudence in dealing too hastily with China, while Lai insisted that the meeting be between two parties “on an equal footing without dignity lost”.  

Lai additionally criticized that the meeting would take place in violation of previous statements Ma Ying-jeou made indicating that negotiations could only take place with two conditions being met; the removal of all cruise missiles targeting Taiwan and the adherence of both parties to the 1992 consensus. Additionally, the MAC announced at this time that

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cargo flights would not be on the agenda for the meeting, though they could also potentially begin July 4th, with the specifics of those negotiations set to take place at a later date.⁸³

Amid confusion over KMT statements about opening the Three Mini-Links within two weeks, the DPP in early June again criticized the absence of a deal on cargo flights for the SEF-ARATS meeting. Chen Ming-tung expressed the opinion that cargo flights were an important issue for Taiwan’s economic development, especially in any effort to prevent Taiwanese firms from relocating to China. Cargo flights would allow Taiwanese corporations to reduce their shipping costs when sending raw materials and finished products between facilities on the mainland and Taiwan. While this would provide economic benefit by itself, it would also provide incentive for Taiwanese firms not to relocate to mainland China, thus increasing the economic benefit of cargo flights. According to Chen, China and Taiwan reached an agreement on cargo flights in August of 2007, but that the deal was not finalized due to China’s fear that Taiwan would back off the issues of passenger flights and tourism if cargo flights were successful. According to Chen, Beijing at that time insisted that the two parties negotiate all three issues together.⁸⁴

Despite criticism, the deal went ahead as scheduled. On June 13th, the new chairman of the SEF, Chiang Pin-kun, and ARATS chairman, Chen Yunlin, signed the agreement for weekend charter flights and Chinese tourists. The deal called for thirty-six flights per weekend, evenly divided between Chinese and Taiwanese airlines, with the agreement to increase as demand dictates.

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The mainland will first open Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen and Nanjing to the flights, and will gradually add Chengdu, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Dalian, Guilin and Shenzhen, and possibly more if needed. Taiwan will have eight terminals: Taipei, Taoyuan, Kaohsiung, Taichung, Penghu, Hualien, Kinmen and Taitung.\textsuperscript{85}

As for the tourists, China chose roughly 600 from select tour groups, as well as journalists and various officials, to make the inaugural flights, now officially set for July 4\textsuperscript{th}, with formal tourism links set to begin on July 18\textsuperscript{th}. The two parties also agreed to resolve the cargo flights issue within three months. During his visit, Chiang extended a formal invitation for Chen Yunlin to visit Taiwan later in the year, which Chen accepted. This would make Chen the most senior Chinese official to visit Taiwan.\textsuperscript{86}

Despite the repeated calls from both the KMT and the CPC regarding the impractical logistics involved in the indirect and non-stop indirect flight models, the weekend charters would not follow straight or truly direct air routes across the Taiwan Strait. Even though both China and the KMT had often criticized the DPP for its lack of concern for business and consumer interests, the two sides did not feel it necessary to include this feature in the weekend flights package. At the end of the day, the weekend flights seemed distinctly similar to the flights that Hsieh had proposed in his campaign platform, a simple extension of the holiday charters to weekend flights.\textsuperscript{87}


On July 4th 2008, Taiwanese and Chinese airlines carried passengers including officials from Taiwan and China, Chinese journalists and tourists, as well as many Taiwanese businesspeople and their families. The inaugural weekend charters met celebration at every destination with the media celebrating this great leap forward in cross-strait relations.

Business as usual resumed for Taiwanese politicians after the excitement of the commencement of weekend charters died down. The continuing political rivalry between the DPP and KMT showed no sign of abating. After July 18th, increasing numbers of Chinese tourists visited Taiwan. Of these tourists, many claimed to be spending large amounts of money in Taiwan. A China Post article estimated that an average of 3000 Chinese visitors per day bringing an estimated annual US $2 billion to the Taiwan economy and helping to create 40000 jobs per year. These estimates are in line with Ma’s claims that cross-strait flights and tourism could offer great benefit to the Taiwanese economy. However, according to a report by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Taiwan remains an “underdeveloped” country in terms of the contribution of travel and tourism economy to its gross domestic product (GDP).

Among the 176 countries surveyed by the WTTC in 2007, Taiwan ranked 163rd, with the travel and tourism sector contributing only 4.7 percent to its GDP….

Given these numbers, it is unlikely that Chinese tourism could provide an economic cure-all for Taiwan.

In October of 2008, China and Taiwan started talking about adding new flight routes and destinations to improve the weekend charters that a Taiwanese official said had “fallen short of expectations”. In mid October, media started reporting on the details of the ARATS head Chen Yunlin’s upcoming visit. The Post reported that Ma Ying-jeou was scheduled to meet with Chen Yunlin, while the DPP stated that it would plan a rally to protest Chen’s visit. The results of a government poll released on October 23rd indicated that around 50% of respondents supported Chen’s visit, while around 31% opposed it.

As the date for Chen Yunlin’s visit drew nearer, Taiwan announced that the ARATS and the SEF would sign agreements on four issues: passenger and cargo flights, direct maritime shipping, direct mail, and cooperation in ensuring food safety. Passenger charter flights would begin daily service between China and Taiwan, and flights would no longer have to travel through the Hong Kong FIR. The flights would be truly direct. The first three of these agreements were the final “missing” aspects of the Three Links, while the food safety agreement was also related to cross-strait exchange. With the signing of these four agreements, Taiwan and China would finally set a timetable for the establishment of the full Three Links. Ma had already made statements declaring that regularly scheduled direct flights would most likely follow in six months time. The addition of cargo flights, maritime shipping and direct mail to daily charter passenger flights represented fundamentally the full opening between Taiwan and China. Amid protests, the deal was signed in Taipei on November 4th 2008.

On December 15th 2008, the Three Links were officially restored. The air services agreement also concerns an expansion of the weekend charter passenger services — which have been operating between Friday and Monday since July — to every day of the week, with the number of flights provided rising from 36 to 108 per week. The number of destinations in China will be expanded to 21, to include Chengdu, Chongqing, Hangzhou, Dalian, Guilin, Shenzhen, Wuhan, Fuzhou, Qingdao, Changsha, Haikou, Kunming, Xi’an, Shenyang, Tianjin and Zhengzhou. At present, the services are available only in five Chinese cities — Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen and Nanjing.92

Sixty chartered cargo flights would also travel across the Taiwan Strait every month, reducing shipping costs by an estimated 15 to 30 percent. With direct postal service restored, and direct maritime shipping also beginning on the 15th, the establishment of the Three Links represented a genuine step forward in cross-strait relations.

2. Analysis

The conclusion to the issue of cross-strait flights and of the other elements of the Three Links proved somewhat anti-climactic. Previously contentious issues were effectively “swept under the rug” by the new administrations acceptance of the 1992 consensus. Other issues were also ostensibly resolved by the KMT’s acceptance of the 1992 consensus, or at least by the more agreeable atmosphere that characterized cross-strait exchanges between the PRC and the new KMT administration.

Type of talks

China maintained all along that within the realm of cross-strait relations, the door was open for negotiation on any matter provided the one-China principle was a foundation. The KMT proved China’s sincerity on this issue by resuming dialogue between the SEF and the ARATS in June of 2008. I have demonstrated that the talks issue was a serious obstacle to agreement between the DPP administration and China, because the DPP were unwilling to accept the 1992 consensus, yet insisted on official negotiations. If the DPP’s goal was to hold official negotiations, acceptance of the 1992 principle would have made this possible. China could not have refused official negotiations under the 1992 consensus, even if it were not interested in resuming dialogue with the DPP. Therefore, it seems that DPP acceptance of the 1992 consensus could have resolved the talks issue all along.

Air routes

China called early, and often for direct routes. The PRC and the KMT repeatedly appealed to the interests of business, arguing that direct flights would provide the greatest economic benefit due to their efficiency, as well as saving traveller’s time.

Even though both negotiating parties were interested in establishing direct routes, the weekend charters taking place from July to December 2008 were still required to travel through Hong Kong Flight Information Region. The weekend charters were no more direct than the festival charters that preceded them. In December, with the advent of daily charter flights, Taiwan and China agreed to direct routes across the Taiwan Strait. For the first time, the flights were truly direct in every sense of the word.
Both the PRC and KMT highlighted the benefit of direct routes many times. Establishing direct routes for weekend charters, however, was not a priority. Neither the KMT nor the PRC were as sincere in their desire to have direct routes as they expressed to the public through the media. Both sides’ reluctance to put the interests of consumers first casts doubt on the sincerity of their support of practical logistics, and the interests of the business community and consumers. One would expect both parties, having stated unequivocally that they had the interests of the public at heart, to implement the most efficient and cost-effective flights possible. Therefore, we are left wondering whether the interests of the public were truly guiding the PRC and the KMT, or if perhaps the public was merely a pawn in the game of brinkmanship that unfolded.

With direct daily charters finally established in December 2008, the point is moot. The public now has the most efficient means of transportation across the strait, and the issue is therefore effectively resolved.

Naming the routes

This issue was largely solved at the conclusion of stage two, since both sides agreed to operate cross-strait flights along cross-strait routes without calling them either “domestic” or “international”. The agreeable atmosphere characterizing cross-strait exchanges between the PRC and the Ma administration reduces the likelihood that this issue will pose any serious problem in the near future.

Eligibility

This issue was largely resolved in previous stages. Previously only Taiwanese citizens had access to the flights. As Chinese tourists now could visit Taiwan, the flights in
stage four were certainly the most accessible yet. Passengers from both Taiwan and China could now make use of cross-strait air service.

*Tourism*

China and Taiwan came to terms on allowing Chinese tourists into Taiwan during this fourth stage of development. The numbers were small on the inaugural flights but increased steadily after the 18th of July through the end of the fourth stage. While the genuine economic benefits provided by cross-strait tourism have yet to be seen, the resolution of this issue assuredly provides some improvement, even if it is only to demonstrate Taiwanese good will and to pave the way for negotiations on cross-strait cargo flights.

*Cargo flights*

During the third stage of development, the issue of cargo flights became more prominent. China continued to drag its feet on implementation of cargo flights. Frank Hsieh tried to arrange for cargo flights to be negotiated jointly with passenger flights, with little success. Cargo flights were too large a bargaining chip, and China needed more in exchange than the ruling party, DPP, was willing to offer.

At first, the Ma administration did not appear to be faring any better than the DPP in the matter of cargo flights. When the first round of talks on direct flights were announced for June 2008, the SEF made it clear that cargo flights would not be on the bargaining table. The absence of discussion about cargo flights offered critics the best opportunity to lash out at the new Ma administration, because it was the only real deficiency in the new cross-strait flights policy. For a time, cargo flights appeared as though they might remain unresolved.
After the June 2008 deal for tourism and passenger flights was signed between the SEF and the ARATS, China was in a very strong position. Leaving cargo flights off the table in June was an enormous concession on Taiwan’s part, as Taiwan left itself vulnerable should China choose not to pursue cargo flights. China could easily have taken advantage of this situation. If China’s goal was ultimately to hurt the Taiwanese economy, in June it was in the perfect position to do so. Taiwanese firms could not reap the benefit of cost-effective air freight to their production facilities on the mainland, yet passengers, managers and other business representatives, could easily visit the mainland. Thus, if cargo flights were not eventually implemented, Taiwanese firms looking to maximize profit in a competitive environment could more easily move people to its facilities in China than move products. There could hardly be a better environment for encouraging firms to relocate to China.

China, however, ultimately demonstrated sincerity in its dealing with this issue. Around the time of the June meeting, the SEF announced it would handle cargo flight negotiations in three months. While the time it took to actually ink the deal was closer to five months, the result was nevertheless a successful arrangement. China also demonstrated its credibility, as it had always held that once passenger flights were in place, cargo flights would be the next step.
VI. Media Sources

The present study uses three primary sources in the reconstruction of a narrative of the development of cross-strait flights between Taiwan and China: the *China Daily*, *China Post*, and *Taipei Times*. Each source is chosen specifically because it is widely accepted as representative of a political group involved in this narrative: China, the pan-blue political faction, and the pan-green political faction.

1. The Chinese Media

As a closed political system, China’s media is therefore also closed. As a free and open democracy, Taiwan’s media is therefore free and open. One of the primary aims of this study was to challenge these two common assumptions. By examining Chinese, pan-blue and pan-green media sources’ coverage on the single issue of cross-strait passenger flights, my expectation was that one would discover that the Taiwanese media were as prone to political bias as the Chinese media.

*The China Daily*

The *China Daily* is essentially the English language voice of the CPC, similarly to the *People’s Daily* (人民日報 renmin ribao). In many cases, the English *People’s Daily* and the *China Daily* run the same articles, word for word. As an extension of the party and state, the *China Daily* is the best choice, as it is the official English language daily of the CPC.

The media culture in China is changing with the greater penetration of technological advances due to the internet. Media outside the direct control of the CPC now engage in self-censorship. Since the current research does not use independent news sources from China,
detailed discussion of censorship in China is not really necessary, as the *China Daily* is so closely related to the party and state. To accuse the *China Daily* of censorship serves no purpose, as it is a state-controlled media source. Although independent media sources in China do have some freedom to push the boundaries of accepted journalism practice, it is highly unlikely that one would see this trend in the *China Daily*. Thus this paper does not attempt to suggest that the Chinese source examined is anything but a mouthpiece for the CPC.

The most striking characteristic of the *China Daily* coverage is the presence of what Edward McDonald has called “scare quotes”. In his analysis of a broad range of cross-strait issues in the *China Daily*, Macdonald found persistent use of quotation marks in the paper’s coverage intended to establish a negative perception of Taiwanese political institutions. As examples, the *China Daily* presents Taiwan’s “president”, “legislature”, “sovereignty”, “constitution”, “lawmakers”; any formal political concept, institution and position, just as they appear above, highlighted by quotation marks. This strategy aimed to suggest to the reader the lack of legitimacy of these terms in connection with Taiwan, and that their application in Taiwan is therefore illegitimate as well. The following is McDonald’s own, apt phrasing:

> This “graphic tic” is the sign of something deeper which can provide an insight into the nature of the official Chinese media, as well as into what is really at stake in the Taiwan controversy. The real point of contention, I would claim, is a semiotic one: it

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is about calling things by their “proper” names: hence the care with which “incorrect” phraseology is marked out.\textsuperscript{94}

This use of “scare quotes” is not limited to Chinese media sources. Official CPC documents use this strategy. One such example is in the third section of the White Paper “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue”, issued by China’s Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council on February 21\textsuperscript{st}, 2000:

In matters of Taiwan’s form of government, the Taiwan authorities are seeking to transform Taiwan into an “independent political entity” through a “constitutional reform”, so as to suit the needs of creating “two Chinas”.\textsuperscript{95}

This sentence demonstrates three examples of quotations designed to carry out the functions noted by MacDonald. The use of quotations around “two Chinas” and “independent political entity”, however, do not really qualify as “scare quotes” in the delegitimizing sense. Although China’s use of quotations around “two Chinas” suggests that the idea of there being two Chinas in the world lacks legitimacy, “two Chinas” is essentially just a concept. Quotations are often employed to denote concepts, and such usage seems to fall into this category rather than the category of “scare quotes”. Similarly, “independent political entity” is another concept, and is abstract enough on its own that the use of quotation marks to highlight its abstract and conceptual nature of the phrase seems warranted.

Only the term “constitutional reform” represents real “scare quotes”. The difference between the “constitutional reform” usage and the other two is that constitutional reform is

\textsuperscript{94} McDonald, 119.
\textsuperscript{95} “The One-China Principle and the Taiwan Issue” (Beijing: Taiwan Affairs Office and the Information Office of the State Council, 21 February 2000).
neither abstract, nor a scarcely used concept. Any country with a constitution could engage in constitutional reform. The quotation marks employed around this phrase suggest it has a particularly abstract or conceptual use in Taiwan’s case, which is the basic premise of China’s views on Taiwan. The White Paper uses quotations marks in its attempt to influence the opinion of a reader into viewing Taiwan’s constitutional reform as abstract and, due to its abstract nature, illegitimate. Even Chinese political communication uses “scare quotes” with the intention of delegitimizing Taiwan’s political institutions and ideologies, and influencing the reader into thinking that Taiwan’s claims are illegitimate. This strategy is, however, more widely used in newspaper reporting, as documented by McDonald.

During the first stage of development in the cross-strait flights issue, the China Daily coverage employs this tactic as well as open criticism of the Taiwanese government. During the first stage, the China Daily articles examined refrain from directly criticizing Chen Shui-bian. After the collapse of negotiations during the second stage of development, we see that the China Daily coverage shifted toward more direct and harsher criticism of Chen’s regime, and the alleged obstruction tactics employed by the Taiwanese authorities.

Particularly striking are two editorials from the China Daily entitled “Chen’s ‘Three Links’ Plan Fails to Impress” and “‘Direct Flight’ a Political Football.” These two articles published in early September of 2003 offer scathing criticism of Chen Shui-bian specifically, accusing him of using the Three Links as a tool to score political points with Taiwanese voters. The theory presented in these articles is that Chen promised progress on the Three Links to win over voters interested in the links. In addition, Chen’s policy for

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implementation of the Links was over a longer time-frame in order to necessitate a second term for him to realize implementation of the links. Of the China Daily articles from the first stages, these two stand out as particularly critical of Taiwanese policy.

Both Chinese and Taiwanese newspapers focused attention on the lack of sincerity on either side during the dispute about cross-strait flights. Prior to establishment of the Macau model, when Taiwan was still pushing for official negotiations, Beijing often accused Taiwan of being insincere in its dealings with China. The China Daily demonstrated this trend most clearly with a headline “Taiwan Lacks Sincerity over Flight Plan”. The article criticized Taiwanese authorities for pushing the “international” routes issue as well as refusing to authorize talks under a format acceptable to China.98

The China Daily clearly expressed the PRC’s determination regarding the Three Links policy. In December of 2003, it printed Beijing’s White Paper called the “Three Links Policy”, and in addition, an accompanying article carried important clarifications about the document:

To demonstrate the main-land’s sincerity and flexibility, the document for the first time officially defines future air and shipping routes between Taiwan and the mainland as "cross-Straits routes." Beijing used to describe future sea and air routes as "domestic routes" while insisting that the three links be taken as internal affairs within one country. But the document emphasizes that Beijing resolutely opposes

anyone who attempts to define the three direct links as "state-to-state" or "quasi-
international" ones or to "internationalize" them in disguised form.\textsuperscript{99}

The concession in the "Three Links Policy" to which the article refers reads, surprisingly,
just as the article describes the Three Direct Links as "a cross-Straits affair and an internal
affair of Chinese people on both sides of the Straits."\textsuperscript{100}

The cross-Straits "Three Direct Links" has itself manifested the nature of the issue as
an internal affair of Chinese people. Cross-Straits direct air and shipping services are
air and shipping routes across the Straits. We resolutely oppose anyone who attempts
to describe "Three Direct Links" as links "between nations" or as "quasi-
international" links, or to "internationalize" them in disguised form.\textsuperscript{101}

The \textit{China Daily} highlights the fact that China put promises about "cross-strait routes” into
writing. This is one way that the Chinese media seek to present China as consistent and
sincere in its proposals and negotiations. When talks for the 2004 charters finally fell apart,
the \textit{China Daily} expressed sympathy for the Taiwanese who were adversely affected by the
ongoing dispute.\textsuperscript{102}

In addition to more explicit criticism of Chen Shui-bian, citing him as a major
obstacle to the advancement of cross-strait relations and the Three Links, articles in the
\textit{China Daily} became increasingly concerned with presenting China’s good character. Open

\texttt{<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-12/18/content_291319.htm>}.\textsuperscript{100}
\texttt{<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-12/18/content_291417.htm>}.\textsuperscript{101}
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.\textsuperscript{102} Xing Zhigang, “\textit{Charter-Flight Ban Means Long Trip Back for Taiwanese,}” \textit{The China Daily} 15 Jan. 2004,
criticism of Chen as well as increased appeals on behalf of the business community and
consumers represented the PRC and the China Daily’s two-pronged strategy for handling
cross-strait flights. It is interesting that this second stage saw increased interaction between
the CPC and the KMT, and that rhetoric in the China Daily seemed to become increasingly
like the strategy of the KMT, namely in its appeal to practical logistical concerns and the
interests of the Taiwanese people.

Chen Shui-bian’s re-election in 2004 meant that the PRC would have to deal with the
DPP for another four years. It was rather late in 2004 when the China Daily finally picked
up the cross-strait flights coverage again, reinforcing China’s sincerity on the matter and
urging Taiwan to agree to China’s proposals. When the Macau deal was finally approved by
both sides, the China Daily referred to it as historic, and a number of articles including
“Taiwanese Applaud Charter Flight Pact”,103 “Convenient Flights Applauded by
Travellers”104 and “Direct Flights a Hit with New Year Passengers”105 added to the
appearance of China’s having consumer interests at heart.

From the creation of the Macau model through the election of Ma Ying-jeou and the
initiation of weekend charters, the China Daily coverage lessened and focused more on
technical details of flights at each stage, and the perspectives of consumers and business
interests. Thus for China, as seen through the China Daily, once the Macau model was
established, the real debate was essentially over, since it was clear to Beijing that Taiwan’s

previous insincerity in dealing with festival charters was a sure indication that the DPP had no real interest in pursuing establishment of regular flights, or the Three Links.

2. Taiwanese Media

Before the end of martial law in 1987, the Taiwanese media bore great similarity to the system still in place today in China. In their chapter on media reform during the Chen Shui-bian presidency in, *What has changed? Taiwan Before and After the Change in Ruling Parties*, Gary D. Rawnsley and Ming-Yeh T. Rawnsley describe the media climate during the martial law era. Where previously the KMT government controlled the media by “insidious” means, such as using the pretext of paper rationing to control print media, under the martial law the government could suppress media content in the interest of national security, and had the power to close a daily newspaper without judicial process.\(^\text{106}\)

However, the most direct method of influence was also the most simple: ownership of media enterprises. In addition to claiming legal authority, in the early 1980’s, the KMT owned four national daily newspapers, the government owned two, and the military five. But the implied separation was deceptive because of the overlapping character of party/state/military political authority that defined the martial law era in Taiwan.

The authors continue,

In addition, the KMT government successfully managed the media through the creation of a complex patron-client network that allowed agencies representing the

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KMT, the provincial government and the state to manage media appointments. This meant that newspaper editors either were members of the KMT or were supportive of the KMT’s political agenda, thus sympathetic journalists, owners and political appointees were located in prominent and powerful “gate-keeping” positions within the media.  

While this situation was supposed to have changed with the lifting of martial law after 1987, Rawnsley and Rawnsley point out that Chen addressed further media reform in his 2004 inaugural address. The KMT maintained controlling interest in numerous media groups, while the DPP had a member of their Central Standing Committee serving as chair of Formosa Television, a national network created in 1997 to break the KMT media monopoly. To establish credibility and improve public confidence in the DPP’s push for media reform, the DPP head of Formosa Television resigned amid government and media pressure in September of 2003.

Rawnsley and Rawnsley state that “the lifting of martial law in 1987, and the social liberalisation and political democratisation that followed, allowed for the dramatic transformation of Taiwan’s media environment.” Paradoxically, the authors also point out common measures of democracy within a state use the freedom of the press as a baseline indicator. In this situation, we have Taiwan’s democratization leading to a free press, which enhances its rating on the democracy scale of organizations like Freedom House. Yet, even as Taiwan was in the consolidation phase of democracy, having undergone one peaceful transfer of power, the government was still pushing for media reform.

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107 Rawnsley and Rawnsley, 226-27.
109 Ibid, 228.
110 Ibid, 225.
The Taiwanese media is inherently complicated due to its politicization. The partisan nature of Taiwanese news sources goes without question in the writing of political scholars. Sheng Lijun refers to the *Taipei Times* as “pan-green” in its political bias,\(^{111}\) while Su Chi says the same of the *Liberty Times*, Chinese language sister-paper to the *Taipei Times*.\(^{112}\) With media having particular political affiliation, how significant is it to call them “free” in contrast to China’s “controlled” media when the net effect is often very similar?

Taiwanese politicians, who filled prominent positions in the DPP administration, were generally of the “deep-green” persuasion, interested in pursuing Taiwanese independence, and as is explained by Su Chi, worked behind the scenes to implement Lee Teng-hui’s Two-States-Theory.\(^{113}\) This resulted in a disparity between the DPP’s publicly understood mainland policy, and the internally understood mainland policy. After Chen Shui-bian’s formal declaration of “one country on each side of the strait”, the DPP’s administration’s internal acceptance and implementation of the Two-State-Theory became more apparent. In public statements about this reality, DPP politicians were notoriously ambiguous about the implications of this policy shift. Tsai Ing-wen gives us an interesting example of this in practice with her comments that “Two things [sic], in fact, exist on either side of the Strait”.\(^{114}\)

There are striking similarities between this statement and the use of “scare quotes”. Both cases demonstrate forms of manipulating reality through use of ambiguous language or special punctuation in order to call the legitimacy of the subjects into question. In Tsai’s case, the word “things” gives parity to the entities in question: Taiwan and China. Thus, it is

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\(^{111}\) Sheng, 103.
\(^{112}\) Su, 133.
\(^{113}\) Ibid, 91.
\(^{114}\) Ibid, 130.
either an attempt to delegitimize the PRC, or to suggest that Taiwan is an entity of equal standing. Such an example shows that the CPC does not enjoy a monopoly on the tactics it employs in its rhetorical attacks on Taiwan. The DPP uses the same strategy in reverse. What is unique about Taiwan is that this strategy does not appear to extend to the mass media.

If one accepts that the *China Daily* is inexorably tied to the CPC, and that the use of “scare quotes” by both is a unified strategy, then the reason that the Taiwanese government’s use of similar tactics does not filter down to Taiwanese media must be due to some separation between the government and media in Taiwan that is not present in China. However, given the partisan nature of the media in Taiwan, honest and unfiltered reporting of the utterances of government officials could potentially have the same effect. Below, we will examine some of the more blatantly partisan articles from the *Taipei Times* and the *China Post*.

*Taipei Times*

The *Taipei Times* demonstrates its pan-green bias in a number of articles about cross-strait flights. However, it does not refrain from presenting opposition arguments. During the first stage, the *Times* published editorials from DPP and KMT legislators.

While initial debate was still taking place during stage one, the *Times* published an editorial by KMT legislator John Chiang, which defended his flights proposal in an article that listed the potential benefits from cross-strait flights, and attempted to refute the primary sovereignty and security concerns. The *Times* also published articles by DPP Legislators Chang Pai-ta and Wang Tuoh, who offered detailed accounts of the numerous security issues
that concerned the DPP in the first stage. By presenting opinions from both sides of the issue, the *Times* effectively minimized the reader’s perception of political bias in its reporting.

Where the *Times* failed to minimize bias was in its stance toward China. Many articles highlighted the growing number of Chinese missiles aimed at Taiwan. When China extended any kind of “olive branch”, the *Times* coverage approached these overtures with an air of scepticism.

Not surprisingly, a pan-green media outlet would not respond positively to Chinese statements. Since the pan-green coalition is not supportive of unification with China—being divided between “light green” supporters of the status quo and “dark green” supporters of independence—one would not expect pan-green media to actively explore any discourse that would lead to unification.

This does not mean that the *Taipei Times* does not offer criticism of the DPP. It is not a “state controlled” newspaper like the *China Daily*. Taiwanese public officials from both sides of the political spectrum are held to account in the *Times*’ coverage. Overall, however, the *Times* shows a tendency to support DPP policy.

Over the whole period the *Times* criticized KMT delegations engaging in talks with Beijing. The most glaringly partisan headline from this period read “*KMT in League with Beijing over Flights*”.115 While the KMT was in opposition, other articles criticized their increased dialogue with Beijing. A related editorial “*It’s Almost Time to Pull the Plug*”116 argued vociferously that the Taiwanese government should not compromise on security,

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sovereignty and national dignity, in order to pander to a small number of KMT supporters interested in having direct flights. Articles such as these clearly demonstrate the pan-green bias of the *Taipei Times*.

The Two-States-Theory underlies fundamental aspects of Taiwanese policy on mainland China from the inauguration of the DPP administration in 2000. It rose to the surface with Chen Shui-bian’s formal declaration of “one country on each side of the strait” on August 3rd, 2002. The Two-States-Theory, “one country on either side of the strait” declaration, and pro-independence ideology in general, were all closely related to the protection of Taiwanese sovereignty and security. Articles and editorials in the *Taipei Times* over this first stage of the cross-strait flights debate tended to focus on the implications of cross-strait passenger air travel for Taiwanese sovereignty and security.

As a pro-independence news source, the *Taipei Times* gives little quarter to the PRC, particularly in its coverage of Beijing’s “olive branches”. As Su Chi has noted, this is another one of Chen’s “secret 5 Nos”. In this way, although the *Taipei Times* was not directly connected with the DPP administration in the same fashion as the *China Daily* was connected with the CPC, it appeared as if the major pan-green news outlet was towing a party line collaborating with the Taiwanese government in its mainland policy.

Taiwanese media did not focus on Three Links policy as a specific issue during the election campaigning of 2004. However, one editorial stands out as particularly critical of the pan-blue camp. It details the KMT push to have election charters to bring overseas Taiwanese businesspeople home to vote, and contains such criticisms as:

The pan-blue camp is a sponsor of thieves, thugs, criminals and collaborators. Even traitors are all right with them. Every time a Chinese spy is caught, legislators from the pan-blue camp always jump up and cry "Green terror!".

While typical news coverage does not venture into such inflammatory rhetoric, it is impossible for a reader to ignore these types of editorials when they do appear.

Though the Three Links were not at the fore in the election campaigns of 2004, in the 2008 campaign the Three Links were central to the KMT and DPP platforms. The *Taipei Times* provided balanced coverage of pan-blue and pan-green platforms, as they related to cross-strait flights. Following Ma’s election, the *Times* highlighted the difficulty the KMT would face in implementing its campaign promises. Before Ma’s inauguration, the KMT expressed some doubt about the previously stated goal of direct flights by July 4th. The *Taipei Times* quickly observed this in an article called “Ma Camp Wavers on July Flights”. In the article “Grow Up, DPP Tells KMT over Flights” the DPP were reported to have warned the KMT not to make promises it could not keep. Following Ma’s inauguration, the article “Direct Flights ‘Likely’ to Start in July” employs quotation marks; though not exactly scare quotes, as a device to highlight the uncertainty around the KMT’s promise.

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While partisan at times, the *Taipei Times* covered issues from the pan-blue and pan-green perspective. As the *Times*’ bias was toward the pan-green camp, the paper carried the pan-green tendency to distrust China’s “olive branches”, particularly in its editorials.

*The China Post*

While the *Taipei Times* coverage of cross-strait flights concentrated on pan-green concern about Taiwanese sovereignty and security, the *China Post* did not focus on this issue. The *China Post* articles generally followed issues that the KMT promoted. While the *Taipei Times* occasionally addressed the issue of business and consumer perspectives on cross-strait flights, the *China Post* paid more attention to these issues than did the *Times*. At no time did the *China Post* run articles with inflammatory headlines like those in the *Times* such as “KMT in League with Beijing over Flights”.

The *China Post*’s softer stance toward China appears early on in the development of cross-strait flights. In 2003 when Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang Zemin as chief of state and head of the military, a *China Post* article with the headline “*Beijing Transition Helps Stabilize Cross-Strait Ties*”\(^{122}\) contained a telling sentence about the newspaper’s view of China: “The PRC is surely not a democracy, neither is it the dictatorship of the past”.\(^{123}\) While this article does not address cross-strait flights specifically, it demonstrates the attitude the *China Post* takes toward China in a majority of its articles.

The *China Post* did highlight Chinese obstruction during the development of cross-strait flights. A number of articles in the *China Post* covered China’s part in delaying

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\(^{123}\) Ibid.
progress. While the China Daily sought to place blame squarely on the DPP administration in Taiwan, the China Post covered the impasses more impartially, albeit with suggestive headlines: "Beijing Pours Cold Water on Flights", "China-Taiwan Bickering over ‘Domestic’ Flight Terms", "Beijing may Reject Official Role in Talks", "China Misleading Outside World: Minister Kuo". The content of these articles does not suggest that China is the only source of trouble. However, the headlines draw the reader’s attention to China’s part, suggesting that any fault for putting obstacles in the way of resolving the cross-strait flights issue lies with China.

The article “China: Ties with Taiwan Grim Despite Flights Deal” reports on statements by Chinese officials following the establishment of the Macau model. The China Daily also covered these statements. This article reports warnings from Chinese officials that cross-strait ties had not improved, and the 2005 Macau deal did not mean resumption of official cross-strait dialogue was imminent. Instead of sensationalizing these statements, as one might expect from a Taiwanese news source, the article offers some of Chen Shui-bian’s own more radical statements: “Chen has described China as an “enemy state” which has aimed hundreds of missiles at Taiwan and called for a “holy war”.” The quotation marks in this example intend to attribute these more questionable ideas to Chen, so the China Post

130 Lim.
would not need to take responsibility for them. This again highlights the more neutral political stance of the *China Post*, as the sentence without quotation marks would read as much more supportive of Chen’s statement. If the *China Post* had chosen to publish this sentence without quotation marks around “enemy state” and “holy war”, the force of this sentence would have been much stronger, and the reader would have had a greater sense that the *Post* was supportive of Chen.

The *China Post* at other times took an almost favourable approach to the PRC. One *China Post* article even bore a headline “*Beijing Softening Stance on Taiwan, Experts Say*”.131 While Su Chi had argued much earlier that China had softened its stance on Taiwan,132 the presence of this kind of report in the *China Post* was unique. The article quotes an unnamed academic from China:

> “Before, we never said ‘status quo,’” said a Chinese academic who advises Hu’s government about Taiwan. “Now we say it all the time.”133

While it is true that the term “status quo” has become increasingly prominent in the Taiwanese and Chinese media in recent years, the reader must accept the veracity of this statement without qualification. If we trust the Chinese media to accurately report the news from the CPC, then the presence of the term “status quo” in the *China Daily* would suggest that the term is also in use within the CPC. Critics may claim that the presence of the term in the media is not proof that it is in use within the government, there would be no way to prove this without inside information. In any case, the *China Post* prints this information for its

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132 Su, 278.
133 Cody.
readership, and the suggestion here is that the *China Post* is more sympathetic to China than the *Taipei Times*.

As discussed in stage four, Frank Hsieh of the DPP favoured a more moderate approach to China. During his tenure as premier, the *China Post* highlighted his views in articles carrying his name has part of the headline. The clearest promotion of his pro-China views came in the article “*Hsieh Supports Liberalization of China Links*”\(^{134}\) where Hsieh expressed the view that he was one of the few in the cabinet supporting further liberalization of economic and trade ties with China, and that he would never change his stance on this matter.\(^{135}\) These articles suggested that the *China Post* was not specifically oriented to favour pan-blue political parties, but was more interested in supporting pan-blue policy. Hsieh, as a DPP politician and premier under Chen Shui-bian, would not be a likely candidate to receive praise from the pan-blue media, and yet, because his views fell in line with KMT policy, he was given special attention in the *China Post* in relation to cross-strait flights.

Overall, the clearest demonstration of pan-blue bias in relation to cross-strait flights came during the 2008 presidential campaign. Articles devoted to Ma’s campaign platform outnumbered those dedicated to Hsieh’s, and tended to picture Ma as an aggressor challenging Hsieh. The *China Post* does cover clearly the platforms of both candidates. However, additional articles offering criticism or praise for either candidate demonstrate a distinctly pan-blue bias. Articles devoted to sources ridiculing Hsieh’s cross-strait flights

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\(^{135}\) Ibid.
plan were present, as were reports from businesses that praised Ma’s more practical plan for the rapid opening of flights.

Conclusion

The China Daily made no attempt to cover the development of cross-strait flights from the Taiwanese perspective. The Taiwanese media fared somewhat better in addressing China’s position on various issues over the course of the debate. Nevertheless, they remained firmly on Taiwan’s side. When examining different Taiwanese news sources for partisan bias, one finds that it is present.

Many criticisms of the government lay outside the realm of cross-strait politics. Articles dealing with cross-strait flights focused more on statements, facts and figures than on inclusion of opinions and the partisan aspects of cross-strait policy. Although partiality existed, and is widely recognized, it was not pervasive enough in the Taiwanese media to genuinely characterize them as being closed in the sense that the Chinese media is closed.

Legitimacy remained one of the fundamental goals sought by the PRC, pan-blue and pan-green, as well as the China Daily, China Post and Taipei Times. In political negotiations on the cross-strait issue, each side sought to maximize the legitimacy of its claims, and to use this legitimacy to reinforce its demands. The news media on each side of the strait reflected this tendency. In the case of the China Daily, as a mouthpiece for the CPC, its legitimacy depended heavily on the party and state. Since the China Daily did not attempt to provide exceptionally objective coverage of the cross-strait flights issue, any legitimacy that it attained in its reporting came from the PRC. When China improved its credibility through legitimacy, the China Daily also improved its credibility and legitimacy with its coverage of
the issues. Conversely, if China failed to achieve legitimacy for its policies, the *China Daily* suffered a similar defeat.

Although Taiwanese media contained partisan coverage, the democratic systems in place in Taiwan meant that a media source’s legitimacy did not depend on the legitimacy of the state. For example, the *Taipei Times* could cover issues related to sovereignty and security, and thereby promote DPP policy and opinion on these issues. When the opposition refuted these DPP points as being irrelevant, it does not undermine the credibility of the *Taipei Times*, because there was a separation between the media and the government. The *Times* simply covered the issues as they presented themselves. Although the *Times* may have had an ulterior motive in covering issues in a certain way, readers more readily excuse this because of the separation between media and the government. The same principle applies to the *China Post* in its coverage.
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