

## The world is waiting for Tsai's address

Written by Peng Ming-min 彭明敏

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The results of the nine-in-one elections in November 2014 and the Jan. 16 presidential election, not to mention a whole range of opinion polls, show a number of important things, and do so beyond any reasonable doubt. That is that an absolute majority of Taiwanese oppose President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) pro-China policies; believe that Taiwan is a sovereign, independent nation; have an unshakable faith in democracy, freedom and human rights — ideals they should continue to strive toward; and agree that Taiwan's future should be decided by Taiwanese, and Taiwanese alone.

President-elect Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) is under considerable pressure from China as well as the US. The former is trying to coerce her to accept something that does not exist, namely the so-called "1992 consensus"; the latter is trying to persuade her not to dig in too deeply and to be willing to compromise with Beijing. Despite this, Tsai should bear in mind that the pressure from the Taiwanese electorate, while couched in terms neither as pointed nor as loud as those from Beijing or Washington, is nevertheless vastly more important.

After all, Tsai was elected because Taiwanese believe that the government should proceed according to the four points of consensus mentioned above and fulfill its promise of "improving the fate of Taiwanese" by implementing reform and transitional justice. Should Tsai renege on the promises, her mandate would crumble and there would be little point in her continuing to lead the nation.

For years, China has intimidated Taiwan and recently a high-ranking military officer said that China would pound Taiwan to the point that it would be begging for unification. China wants to hobble Taiwan with the "1992 consensus." That is the curse of Taiwanese.

The world will be listening to Tsai's inaugural address on May 20 to see how she intends to deal with the pressure she is facing.

Here are some thoughts on how she might deal with them:

The inaugural address needs to be idealistic, progressive and inspiring. It should not be tainted by extraneous noise, such as the "1992 consensus."

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Tsai should not speak about China, either. She should keep to talking about Taiwanese and their hopes and aspirations, emphasizing their place in the world and their engagement with it, that they are not subordinate to any other nation, and that, as an equal member of the international community, they enjoy the rights and undertake the responsibilities that this entails; that they seek peaceful coexistence with all other nations, and wish to have dealings and exchanges with them based upon the concepts of freedom, democracy and human rights; and that they do this for the purpose of the peace and wellbeing of the human race, and for the benefit of their own citizenry.

If any other nation is bothered with any of these — for example, the “1992 consensus” — they can take it up with Taiwanese authorities in the interest of finding a peaceful resolution to the disagreement.

If the address is objective, rational, persuasive and inspiring, there is no reason it will not be accorded widespread approval and recognition.

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Translated by Paul Cooper

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