

Date of Statement: January 16, 2004

President Chen's Televised Statement of the Peace Referendum on March 20

My dear fellow countrymen: Good evening!

On May 20, 2000, when I took office as the 10th President of the Republic of China, I stated very clearly in my inauguration speech that:

"I shall abide by the Constitution, safeguard the sovereignty, dignity and security of our country, and ensure the well-being of all citizens. Therefore, as long as there is no intention on the part of the CCP regime to use military force against Taiwan, my pledge is that, during my term in office, there will be no declaration of independence, no change in the national title; and, we will not advocate for the inclusion of the so-called "State-to-State" description in the Constitution, nor will we promote a referendum to change the status quo with regard to the question of independence or unification. Furthermore, the abolition of the National Reunification Council or the National Reunification Guidelines will not be an issue."

Over the past three and a half years, I have fully honored my "Four No's plus One" pledge. However, China, during the same period, has been continuously increasing the deployment of missiles targeted at Taiwan and has been intensifying its military preparations for attack on Taiwan. China's purpose is unquestionably obvious, that is, they aim to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait through undemocratic and unpeaceful means rather than working with us to maintain stability in the region. Nonetheless, for the sake of regional peace and stability, I am still willing to put forth my every effort in safeguarding peace in the Taiwan Strait and I remain resolute in this endeavor to the very end.

In order to prevent China from using force against Taiwan and therefore, unilaterally changing the status quo, I have proposed a referendum for peace to be held on March 20. Confronted with overwhelming military intimidation from China, which poses the greatest threat to our national sovereignty, a peace referendum represents an effective preventive measure, as it will help increase people's awareness of and readiness for such threats, while actively seeking to maintain the status quo.

I would like to hereby announce the questions that will be put to the people of Taiwan for the peace referendum on March 20:

1. The People of Taiwan demand that the Taiwan Strait issue be resolved through peaceful means. Should Mainland China refuse to withdraw the missiles it has targeted at Taiwan and to openly renounce the use of force against us, would you agree that the Government should acquire more advanced anti-missile weapons to strengthen Taiwan's self-defense capabilities?

2. Would you agree that our Government should engage in negotiation with Mainland China on the establishment of a "peace and stability" framework for cross-strait interactions in order to build consensus and for the welfare of the peoples on both sides?

Let me reiterate that, after I assume this office as the 11th President of the Republic of China, I will continue to strive to the fullest to maintain the status quo and ensure the sovereignty, dignity and security of our country. Furthermore, on the basis of maintaining the status quo, I will continue the proposed reengineering of our constitution. We seek to, within the shortest timeframe, invite China to appoint a representative to meet with our appointed envoy--mindful of the democratic choice that has been made by the people of Taiwan--to commence negotiation on the establishment of a "peace and stability" framework for cross-strait interactions. This would include, among others, such substantive issues as direct transportation, the protection of the rights and interests of Taiwanese business people in China, and other topics, with the goal being to reach a consensus based on mutual respect and reciprocity, through dialogue and consultation. As such, together we can establish a new era of long-term stability and peace across the Taiwan Strait

In a few days, we will be celebrating the Lunar New Year. I would like to take this opportunity to wish my fellow compatriots at home and abroad, much success and happiness. May heavenly winds and the new spring rains bring peace and prosperity to all across the Taiwan Strait.

Thank you.