

**THE TSAI ING-WEN ADMINISTRATION:
ITS CHINA POLICY AND
ROLE CONFLICT DILEMMA**

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Executive Summary

1. Taiwan's incoming Tsai Ing-wen administration is seemingly adopting a middle line for its China policy in its opening period.
2. It has adopted the previous Chen Shui-bian administration's stance of rejecting the "1992 consensus" and its core connotation of the one-China principle, while avoiding its radical pro-independence policies. On the other hand, it has shown some goodwill to mainland China with its self-restrained legislative moves and the appointment of a more technocratic and less pro-independence cabinet.
3. It attempts to maintain relations established by the Ma Ying-jeou administration with mainland China, while stating its preference for avoiding an economic overreliance on mainland China and inadequately supervised negotiations with Beijing. Tsai and many Taiwanese believe that these are the Ma administration's two major setbacks.
4. Tsai's personal background is significantly different from Chen's, which might suggest that she has a personal tendency towards adopting a more moderate and less provocative China policy.
5. However, being the same type of movement government as the Chen administration, the Tsai administration is not likely to give up on its pro-independence role which will complicate the administration's relations with China and upset political, economic and social stability.
6. Tsai's high popularity and the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) dominance in the Legislative Yuan are favourable to Tsai's middle line China policy.
7. However, Taiwan's economic slowdown, rising Taiwanese nationalism and objections from the mainland Chinese government are likely to pressure Tsai, a moderate but firm Taiwan-independence believer, to deviate away from the middle line towards a more radically pro-independence stance.