

**TAIWAN'S 2012 PRESIDENTIAL AND  
LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS**

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## **Executive Summary**

1. On 14 January 2012, the people of Taiwan went to the polls to elect their president and the Legislative Yuan. Incumbent President Ma Ying-jeou of the Kuomintang (KMT) claimed his second term of presidency when he edged out the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen by a margin of 6% (Ma's 51.6% vs. Tsai's 45.6%).
2. However, the number of KMT seats in Legislative Yuan significantly decreased to 64 from 81 in 2008, while the DPP increased its seats to 40 from 27 in 2008.
3. Ma's successful China policy is the largest contributor to his victory. His campaign was also better organized than that of Tsai. Ma created a sense of crisis during the campaign, driving many marginal voters, some young middle class and James Soong's potential voters, to support the KMT.
4. Tsai's defeat can be attributed to her dubious China policy that failed to convince the majority of Taiwanese that she could maintain improved cross-Strait relations if elected.
5. Nevertheless, Tsai's election campaign around social justice issues had made Ma work hard for his re-election. The legislative election result indicates that the DPP has maintained its reviving trend following two successful local elections in 2009 and 2010.
6. Ma's re-election will further promote peaceful and active cross-Strait relations, a situation which is line with both China's and America's interests.
7. Political and security talks between Taiwan and mainland China are not expected to occur in the near future. Ma will have to go slow on his mainland policy to allay the fears of the Americans and the suspicions of the Taiwanese.

8. The global economic slowdown is expected to seriously impact the Taiwan economy. Unemployment will rise, with youth unemployment becoming a potential flashpoint. Bleak economic prospects and declined popular and legislative support will make Ma's second term more challenging.
9. The DPP is likely to continue with Tsai's moderate policy line. While the DPP needs to thoroughly review its China policy, its acceptance of the "1992 consensus" remains slim.
10. With Tsai stepping down as the chairwoman of the DPP, her party is also facing a potential leadership struggle.