

駐亞特蘭大台北經濟文化辦事處
Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Atlanta
1180 West Peachtree St., NW, Suite 800, Atlanta, GA 30309
Tel: (404) 870-9375 Fax: (404) 870-9376

December 18, 2015

The Honorable Nikki Haley
Governor
State of South Carolina
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor Haley,

Due to your ongoing interest in and kind support for Taiwan, allow me to share some recent news regarding Taiping Island. On December 12, Minister of the Interior Chen Wei-zen, Minister of the Coast Guard Administration Wang Chung-yi and numerous other officials presided over a ceremony marking the completion of the Taiping Island Transportation Infrastructure Project, which involved renovation to the island's wharf and lighthouse.

Taiping is the largest of the naturally formed islands in the Nansha Islands, a group in the South China Sea over which Taiwan enjoys all rights in accordance with international law. Other island groups which are part of the Republic of China's territory and waters are the Tungsha (Pratas) Islands, Shisha (Paracel) Islands, and Chungsha Islands (Macclesfield Bank).

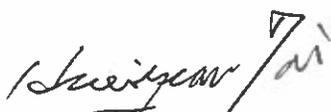
Taiping is a habitable island on which ROC troops have been stationed since 1956. It has fresh water, electricity, and essential infrastructure for agriculture, transportation and communications. A great variety of fruits and vegetables are grown there. A Guanyin Temple was built in 1959 to meet religious needs. The Nansha Hospital provides medical services to the island's troops as well as fishermen from different countries operating in neighboring waters. Over the past decade, it has offered humanitarian assistance to 21 people in 20 cases, including Philippine and Myanmar nationals.

Minister Chen noted that the ROC government aims to gradually transform Taiping Island into a peaceful, low-carbon island as well as an ecological reserve. A turtle refuge was created in 2007, and solar panel banks were set up in 2014. Improvements to the lighthouse will help Taiwan fulfill its international responsibilities by providing safe passage of ships through surrounding international waters.

The Republic of China's efforts on Taiping reflect the principles of President Ma Ying-jeou's South China Sea Peace Initiative, which emphasizes safeguarding sovereignty, shelving disputes, pursuing peace and reciprocity, and promoting joint development. The ROC wants to once again show the international community its resolve to turn the South China Sea into a "Sea of Peace and Cooperation."

As always, I appreciate your ongoing friendship to Taiwan. Happy holidays.

Best regards,


Hwei-Yuan (Steven) Tai
Director General