

Cross-Straits Search and Rescue at Sea: Past Experiences and Prospects

**Professor Michael Sheng-ti Gau, Director,
Research Institute for International Justice and Arbitration
Hainan University**

25 May 2002 China Airlines accident in Penghu, Mainland China offered to help in search and rescue, the first time of Cross-Strait technical cooperation in SAR at sea



6 October 2007, TIANJIN cargo ship lost power under Typhoon Rosa near Yilan Taiwan. Taiwan's coast guard vessel came to rescue but in vain. So Taiwan called Mainland China for help. Dong-hai-jiu 131 came to rescue, together with Dong-hai-jiu 111. Finally three rescue boats towed TIANJIN to Hua-lian port.



Cross-Straits small direct air and sea transportation link opened from 2001

as more people from both sides could travel directly through these traffic routes, more transportation accidents occurred in the sea and air

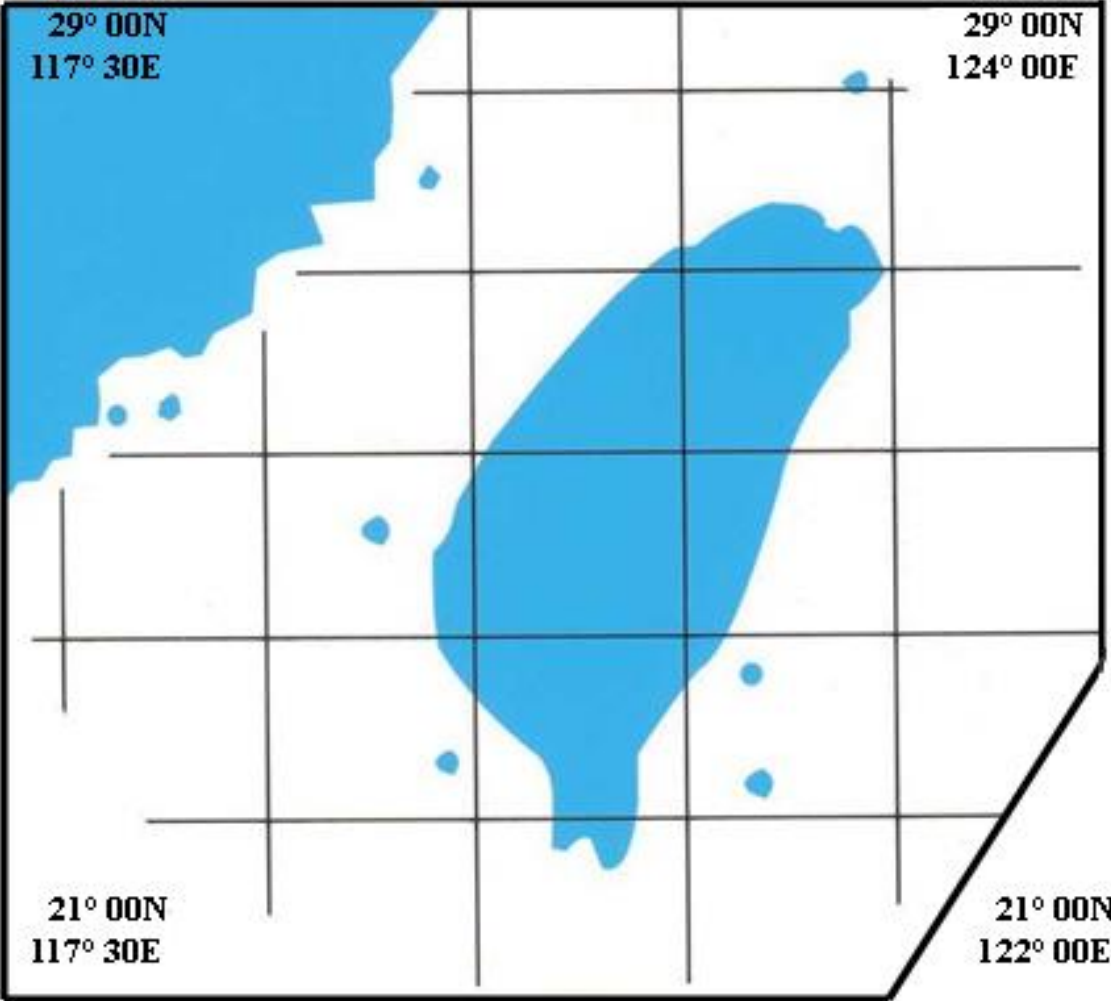
between 2003 and 2013, SAR boats from Mainland China had 416 missions in Taiwan Straits, rescued 1816 people and 105 boats

according to information released in 2013, 200,000 people are travelling across Taiwan Straits on the daily basis

with 25,000 boat trips every day...



Taipei FIR as the Responsible Area of SAR for Taiwan



Legal Basis of Cross-Strait Joint SAR Operations

- on 4 November 2008, the Cross-Straits Agreement on Sea Transportation was signed by *Straits Exchange Foundation* in Taiwan and *Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits* in Mainland China
- Such an agreement is founded on One-China Principle observed by both sides, called 1992 Consensus
- Art. 7 (Rescue at Sea) provides:
 - Both sides actively
 - promote institutional cooperation concerning search, rescue and salvage;
 - establish communicative and cooperative mechanisms for search and rescue;
 - Jointly secure the safety of sea transportation, human lives, properties, and environments;
 - in case of accidents at sea, each side shall inform the other in time and render rescue assistance according to the principles of proximity and convenience.

Increased Demand for Cross-Straits Sea and Air Transportation

- the direct sea transportation between Taiwan and Mainland China was soon established on 15 December 2008, with Taiwan's 11 ports and Mainland China's 63 ports open to each other.
- the direct air transportation between Taiwan and Mainland China was established by the Cross-Straits Agreement on Air Transportation, also signed on 4 November 2008 by *Straits Exchange Foundation* in Taiwan and *Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits* in Mainland China
- this is called Big Direct Transportation Links 大三通
- for direct air transport,
 - in the beginning, the chartered cargo has no more than 60 round trip flights per month, while passenger flights are no more than 108 flights per week.
 - one and half years later, the chartered and scheduled cargo flights increased to 112 round trip flights per month, while chartered and scheduled passenger flights increased to 270 flights per week, according to the Supplemental Agreement to the Cross-Straits Agreement on Air Transportation.

兩岸海運直航首航點

資料來源：交通部民航局、航政司

兩岸海運直航航點

台灣11個港口：基隆、高雄、台中、花蓮、麥寮、布袋、金門料羅、水頭、馬祖福澳、白沙、澎湖馬公

中國63個港口：大連、丹東、營口、唐山、錦州、秦皇島、天津、黃驊、威海、煙台、龍口、嵐山、日照、青島、連雲港、大豐、上海、寧波、舟山、台州、嘉興、溫州、福州、松下、寧德、泉州、贛厝、秀興、漳州、廈門、汕頭、潮州、惠州、蛇口、鹽田、赤灣、媽灣、虎門、廣州、珠海、茂名、湛江、北海、防城、欽州、海口、三亞、洋埔等48個海港

太倉、南通、張家港、江陰、揚州、常熟、常州、泰州、鎮江、南京、蕪湖、馬鞍山、九江、武漢、城陵磯等15個河港

首航航點

台灣：高雄港→天津 基隆港→廈門、天津、太倉 台中港→廣州

中國：天津港→基隆港（最快週二到）上海港→高雄港（最快週二到）



兩岸包機新航路及航點



資料來源／交通部

製圖／蔡惠萍

Added Airports and Routes for Cross-Straits Air Transportation

- the cross-straits direct flights and shipment increased tremendously within a short period of time since 2008
- for direct flights,
 - initially, Taiwan opened 8 airports while Mainland China opened 16 airports for chartered passenger flights.
 - One and half years later, Taiwan added 2 airports for scheduled flights, while Mainland China opened 27 airports for scheduled flights
- for air corridors in Taiwan Straits opened for direct flights
 - initially, one corridor was opened to cover the northern part of Taiwan Straits
 - one and half years later, one more corridor was opened for the northern part of Taiwan Straits, while one corridor was added for the southern part of Taiwan Straits







- as more and more people are travelling across the Taiwan Straits in the sea and air, the need is felt to enhance the capacity of SAR in the Straits to cope with the least expected but possible accidents of transportation
- meanwhile, the political atmosphere across the Taiwan Straits became friendly from 2008 to 2016 following the inauguration of Dr. Ma Ying-Jeou as the political leader in Taiwan, the joint exercise of SAR at sea by the officials from both sides of the Taiwan Straits became a reality.
- in Taiwan, it is Chinese Association for Search and Rescue that was approved and designated by the Ministry of Communications and Transportation to cooperate with its counter-part in Mainland China, the China Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Center
- based on principles of mutual trust and reciprocity, these two agencies conducted joint drills of SAR in the Taiwan Straits

Cross-Strait Joint SAR Drill 2010 (Xiamen, Kinmen)



Cross-Strait Joint SAR Drill 2012

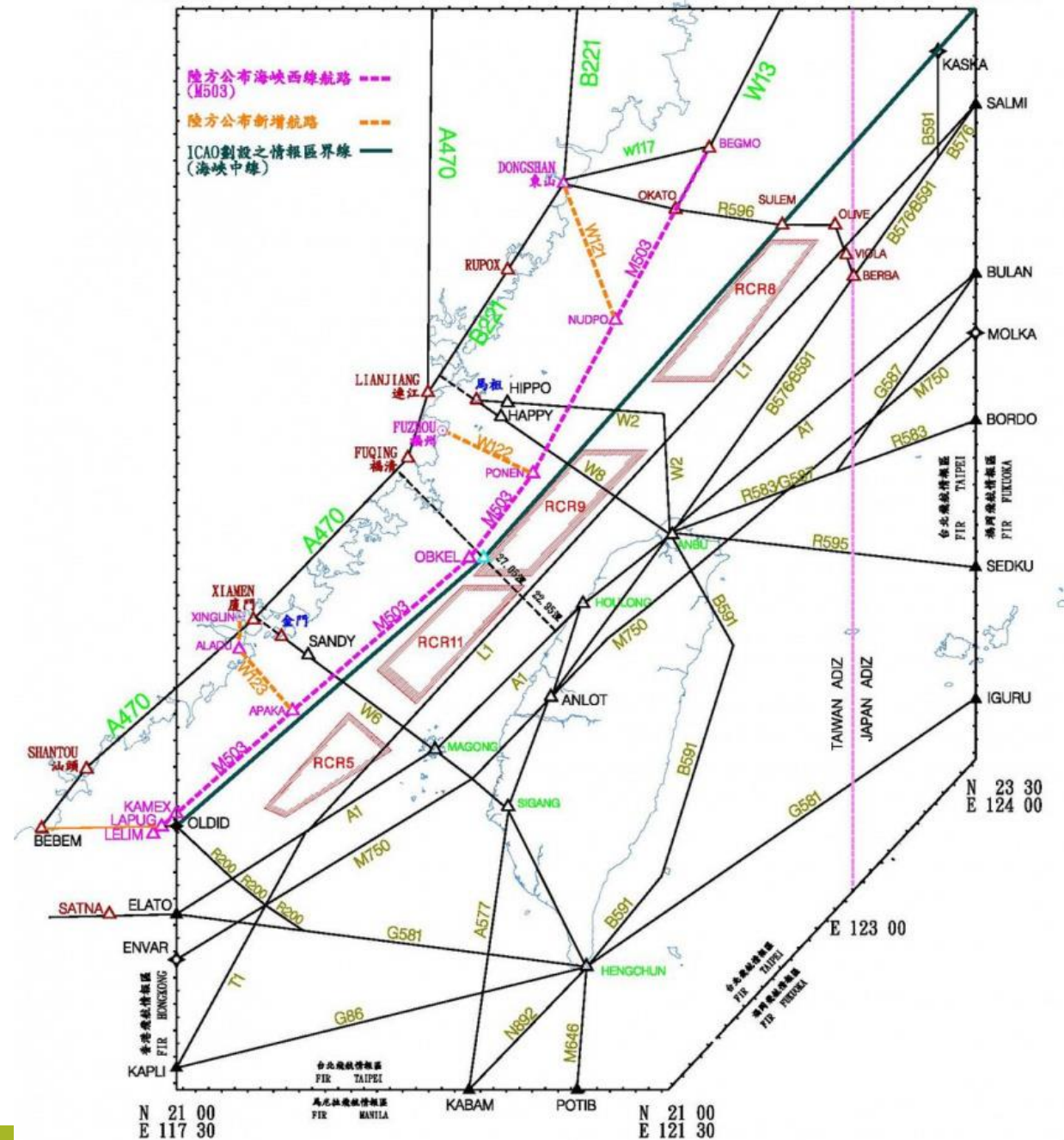


中国广播网
www.cnr.cn

Cross-Strait Joint SAR Drill 7 August 2014 (Mawei, Mazu)



- A more effective utilization of the air space above Taiwan Straits is necessitated by a demand for an increased air traffic through the skies above the coastal provinces of Mainland China
- in 2018, M503, W121, W122, & W123 routes were opened in the Taiwan Straits but near the coast of Mainland China to meet such a demand and to lessen the congestion of A470 route.
- the capacity-building of SAR at Taiwan Straits becomes even more necessary
- but this time, the political good-will across the Taiwan Straits is gone
- rejecting One-China principle, Taiwan is heading for secession after 2016
- this is why air traffic flows in different altitudes can be criticized by Taiwan as unsafe...



- **some reflections...**

- where there is traffic, there are accidents
- where there is a traffic accident, there are victims
- where there are victims in the sea, there is a need for SAR
- victims may not necessarily suffer from traffic accidents...
- they may flee sunken battleships, or war-zones
- these victims in the sea also require SAR
- traffic accidents can hardly be eradicated, war can
- maintaining peace or not, depends on wills of political leaders near and far
- taking SAR in the Taiwan Straits as an example,
- Joint SAR once were drilled thanks to a cross-Straits detente which brought about direct and ever-thriving air and sea transportation
- revival of cross-Straits confrontations by secession movement in Taiwan encouraged by foreign power might in time make SAR more necessary,
- while leaving joint cross-Straits SAR less likely this time ...