

Taiwan Affairs Office's Repeated Finger-pointing and Verbal Assaults on Epidemic Prevention Work Only Drive the Two Sides of the Taiwan Strait Further Apart

Date: April 10, 2020

The Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) spokesperson today (April 10, 2020) made false accusations on the Republic of China (ROC) government of attacking and smearing the Mainland authorities and Taiwanese companies in the Mainland, fabricating lies, making provocative comments, and antagonizing the two sides. The above criticism was irresponsible and thoughtless. The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) sternly refuted such comments and expressed deep regret.

The MAC stated that the present moment sees a worldwide effort of curbing the spread of COVID-19 that originated from mainland China. The Mainland, however, instead of reflecting on their handling of the crisis, continues to shirk responsibility and block the ROC government's participation in international organizations. The TAO employs a double-dealing tactic where it touts sentimental slogans of "two sides of the Strait are one family" and "(the two sides) share a common destiny" on the one hand, while resorting to vile criticism, distortion, division in society, provocation, and denigration on the other hand. The MAC sternly admonished that, facing the pandemic, Beijing should think on behalf of the people's health and well-being, restrain its abusive and oppressive war of words, and stop creating cross-Strait tension. This is the true way to benefit the common people.

The MAC emphasized that the ROC government handles the pandemic through a close public-private sector collaboration, and has achieved great success that is widely approved by its people and recognized worldwide. The government has also been providing humanitarian assistance to the international community in addition to keeping Taiwan safe. Furthermore, the government had

negotiated with the Mainland to secure the safe return of Taiwanese people stranded due to the lockdown of Wuhan, Hubei Province, based on overall considerations for epidemic prevention and prioritizing those vulnerable. The whole process was conducted in a low-profile manner to avoid political interference and ensure a smooth evacuation. These efforts resulted in a total of 975 individuals evacuated from Hubei Province on multiple flights between February 3 and March 31. However, the TAO turned a blind eye to the facts on the ground. Instead, the TAO misled the public to believe that the ROC government was incapable of resolving issues related to the well-being and interests of its own people. In addition, the TAO has also distorted the truth about the Wuhan evacuations of stranded Taiwanese to discredit the ROC government. Smear campaign as such cannot resolve any issues.

The MAC stated that if the Mainland ignores the need to stop disputes in cross-Strait interactions and remains bent on its course, its attack and abuses will only deepen the gap between the two sides along the divide of the spreading pandemic, and the two sides will ultimately grow further apart. The MAC calls on the Mainland to have the people's best interest at heart while the pandemic persists. Furthermore, the Mainland should also think twice before taking any action that might impede the long-term development of cross-Strait relations.