

Government Calls on the Mainland Authorities to Embrace New Thinking and Jointly Seek a New Model for Cross-Strait Interaction

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The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) today (October 18, 2017) stated that the Republic of China (ROC) is a sovereign state. The 23 million people of Taiwan absolutely have the right to choose Taiwan's future and the development of cross-Strait relations. This is an insistence shared by all parties in Taiwan. We hope that mainland China, at this critical moment of change as it seeks to enhance its overall strength and implement institutional reforms, will commit to promoting "democratic, peaceful, fair, and just" policy measures and also constructively face cross-Strait relations with new thinking. Only then can it accomplish its expectations of "making bold innovations and avoiding rigidity" to truly become a defender of peace in the Taiwan Strait and region.

The MAC indicated that the Taiwan policy contained in the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) continued the Mainland's long-standing policy direction. It also intentionally underscored a basic posture of defensive containment in future Taiwan work. This is regrettable. The sustainability of Taiwan's democratic system and external development is a core value on which Taiwan insists. The long-term political differences between the two sides are not impossible to resolve. Furthermore, the different systems and political philosophies of the two sides have not created estrangement during the past 30 years of cross-Strait exchanges and interaction. Rather, it is mainly contrived barriers and constraints and divisive confrontation that have created the thorny issues and entanglements and magnified the impasse and unrest between the two sides. We solemnly call on the other side to face a fact: that the "one China" and "one country, two systems" principles established by one side aggressively can hardly cross the divide to win the hearts and recognition of the people, nor can they win the world's willing support or acceptance. They also make it very difficult to achieve a shared mindset. The Mainland must truly respect and understand Taiwan if the two sides are to find points of commonality within their differences and pursue reconciliation and cooperation. "Respect and communication" are the only true principles to narrow the differences between the two sides.

The 19th National Congress of the CPC decides the changes in the top leadership and internal and external governance and arrangements for the next five years. It will affect the regional political and economic situation and the development of cross-Strait relations. Taiwan is closely watching whether the other side can continue to steadily promote reforms. The MAC stressed that, over the past year or so, President Tsai Ing-wen and the government have approached cross-Strait relations rationally and pragmatically, shown restraint, and avoided provocation. There has been no change in the government's policy position to firmly defend the security and dignity of the nation and the well-being and interests of people, maintain the status quo of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, respect the historical fact of the 1992 talks between the Straits Exchange Foundation and the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits, and strengthen orderly exchanges between the two sides. This is an indication of our goodwill and patience. It is also the best guarantee for maintaining regional peace. The government will maintain close contact with the international community and actively seek broad-based understanding and support for our policies.

Maintaining benign interaction between the two sides and realizing the people's expectations for a better life are responsibilities and goals shared by the two sides. We believe that the Mainland leadership, at this moment when it seeks to establish policy reform and institutional development for a new era, needs the bearing and forward thinking to make history. It also should not forget the original intention behind the opening of cross-Strait exchanges 30 years ago and the mission to maintain peaceful development across the Taiwan Strait. It should cast off the oppressive, stagnant predicament of the past and create an invigorating new face for cross-Strait relations. The two sides need to communicate pragmatically and jointly seek a new model for cross-Strait interaction in order to steadily advance cross-Strait relations in the same direction.