

Minister Chen Ming-tong Presents Speech Emphasizing that Taiwan's Cross-Strait Policy of Maintaining the Status Quo is in Line with the Interests of all Parties

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Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Minister Chen Ming-tong delivered a keynote speech on "Democracy and Freedom: The Cornerstones for Developing Cross-Strait Relations" on July 18, 2018 (US Eastern Standard Time) in Washington, D.C. He emphasized that Taiwan's importance in geopolitics and economic development is rooted in the nation's democratic system and values. This is the root of Taiwan's survival. Democracy and freedom are the dynamism and vitality linking Taiwan with the world. They also enable Taiwan to speak with a different voice than Beijing's and forge majority support for maintaining good and peaceful relations with mainland China.

Minister Chen indicated that the past several years have witnessed rapid changes in Asia and posed unprecedented challenges for cross-Strait relations. In this complex and changing situation, the government of the Republic of China (ROC) has remained a force of responsible stabilization through its commitment to maintaining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait, corresponding the interests of regional parties. However, the Mainland has repeatedly sought to coerce Taiwan by military and diplomatic means or further "policies to integrate Taiwan," undermining the status quo across the Taiwan Strait with ever greater speed in an attempt to lead to an irreversible outcome. Minister Chen emphasized that the ROC government will never waver from its position of defending national sovereignty and Taiwan's dignity, nor will it relinquish sovereignty and democracy. The 23 million people of democratic Taiwan will never allow their destiny to be decided under the non-democratic system of the other side.

Minister Chen spoke about the direction of the ROC government's efforts in future cross-Strait relations facing new developments. The government is willing to consider future interactions between the two sides with a more open attitude and a more flexible policy, while ensuring national sovereignty and dignity; the two sides should mutually respect each other

and work out rules for an orderly interaction; mainland China should stop hurting the feelings of the people of Taiwan through words and actions, and should promote cross-Strait dialogue and communication in any form, at any place without political preconditions. Minister Chen also reiterated appreciation to the US for its long-standing firm support for Taiwan. He expressed hope that the US and international community would continue to pay attention to Beijing's hard-line pressuring of Taiwan and support Taiwan's cross-Strait policy. Taiwan also hopes that the US can urge the Mainland to be rational, show goodwill, and stop affecting security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region by unilaterally undermining the cross-Strait status quo.

The MAC stated that Minister Chen was invited by the Heritage Foundation to attend the international conference on "The Opportunities and Challenges of Cross-Strait Relations" co-hosted by the Heritage Foundation and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy. The conference was joined by more than 100 participants from the government and academic sectors in Taiwan and the US Chairman of the US House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Theodore S. Yoho and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Asia Pacific Security Affairs Randall G. Schriver presented speeches supportive of Taiwan at the conference. Minister Chen is scheduled to visit officials and scholars at prominent think tanks in Washington, D.C. and New York to elaborate the ROC government's cross-Strait policy and promote attention to and understanding of developments in Taiwan Strait issues.