

# MAC Lunar New Year Press Conference

## Remarks by Minister Chen

January 22, 2019

Friends from the Media, Good Morning!

With the blink of an eye, the end of the (*lunar*) year is already upon us. This past year, Taiwan has faced changes both at home and in the wider world. Nevertheless, under President Tsai's steady leadership, our cross-Strait policy has maintained a firm strategic resilience, namely to safeguard national sovereignty and dignity, and to protect Taiwan's best interests. To our media friends, I thank you for your long-term critical input and advice to the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC). I now would like to brief you on what we have done and our work ahead.

### **I. Important Policies Implemented over the Past Year**

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues to exert extreme military, political, and diplomatic pressure on Taiwan. It also tried to attract Taiwanese people to the Mainland through introducing incentives, such as the 31 measures and the residence permit cards. The MAC has duly studied and prudently responded to all of these developments. Furthermore, to maintain the order of cross-Strait exchanges and contact, the government drafted amendments to Article 93-1 of the *Act Governing Relations between the People of the Taiwan Area and the Mainland Area*, which will increase fines for illegal Chinese investment in Taiwan. The draft amendments were then submitted to the Legislative Yuan. On the other hand, we continue to care for and protect the rights of Mainland spouses and make life in Taiwan more convenient for Mainland students. In order to create a more friendly exchange environment and enhance interaction and understanding, we have also studied measures to ease proof of financial ability requirements for Mainlanders visiting Taiwan.

### **II. Four Key Tasks for the Future**

**1. Assess CCP's Moves towards Taiwan, and firmly defend national security:** The CCP will continue to intensify efforts to integrate and unify Taiwan, along with exerting political pressure. It will also seek to expand interaction with all sectors in Taiwan to achieve its goal for unification and the "two systems" formula. This having been said, the MAC's work will focus on accurately assessing and duly responding to mainland China's potential actions following "Xi's five points" and their impact on Taiwan,.

**2. Implement a "democratic safety net," and establish a comprehensive security defense mechanism:** Relevant government agencies have started work to implement President Tsai's "three-part security network." Regarding the democratic safety net, the MAC will deliberate, from policy and legal perspectives, the supervisory mechanisms for political consultations and negotiations in cross-Strait interaction that may affect sovereignty, and strengthen legal measures to ensure national security and constitutional order.

**3. Strengthen cooperation between the central and local governments, and maintain Taiwan's overall interests:** We welcome cross-Strait exchanges that adhere to norms and without preconditions. My three deputy ministers and I recently visited a number of county and municipal governors to listen to their views, explain our policy, and provide relevant consultation and assistance. We support the development of local economies and industries. We also look forward to working with local governments to promote healthy and orderly cross-Strait exchanges, and most importantly, to ensure such exchanges uphold "Taiwan's overall interests," rather than individual interests.

**4. Monitor the effects of the US-China trade war, and help Taiwanese businesspeople to shift investment back to Taiwan:** In face of US-China trade war, which has restructured regional and global industrial supply chain, the MAC will review the latest developments of cross-Strait and global economy, as well as conduct joint studies with relevant government agencies. We will also strengthen contact with Taiwanese businesspeople in the Mainland and help them to shift investment back to Taiwan.

### **III. Three appeals**

Peace and stability in cross-Strait relations is a shared responsibility for both sides. I would like to make three appeals in the coming year:

**1. Protect democracy and freedom and build a "Taiwan consensus":** We call on the ruling and opposition parties to put aside their prejudices, work together, put Taiwan's interests first, and abandon unrealistic slogans and talks. In CCP's mindset, there is only "one-China principle," "two sides belong to one China," "one country, two systems," and "peaceful unification." There is no Republic of China. Only by upholding "Taiwan consensus," which holds fast to our own country and values of democracy and freedom, then can we usher in a new era of development in cross-Strait relations.

**2. Never accept "one country, two systems" as Democracy is the Best Solution:** "One country, two systems" highlights Beijing's imperialistic attitude towards Taiwan. However, the Mainland needs to recognize that Taiwan has never been a part of the People's Republic of China and will never become a "special administrative region" under its jurisdiction. We believe that the vision for cross-Strait relations is for Mainland China to bring about true democracy. This is also the best Taiwan solution that we can offer Mainland China.

**3. Abandon unorthodox channels and restore government-authorized dialogue:** The CCP has attempted to bypass government authority and handle cross-Strait relations through its united front work and divisive tactics. Such unorthodox channels ultimately results in losing sight of the main point and clutching at straws. Beijing should promptly resume official mechanisms for cross-Strait contact and institutionalized negotiations to avoid misjudgment. Most urgently, this should begin with cooperation to prevent the spread of African swine fever. We hope that mainland China will issue notifications according to the agreement reached between both sides, and strengthen controls to prevent the disease from spreading, so that we can enjoy the (Lunar) New Year with a peace of mind.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Cross-Strait relations continue to face both challenges and opportunities in this coming year. The people of Taiwan are closely united to "fight for their livelihoods, protect their democracy, and safeguard their sovereignty." With the *Year of the Pig* soon upon us, I would like to wish

you all an early Happy New Year. I hope we can create an ever brighter future for Taiwan. I also wish you all a prosperous and successful year ahead. Thank you!