

## **The 34<sup>th</sup> MAC Advisory Committee Meeting: Highlights of Discussion by Advisory Members\***

News Reference Material

Date: March 30, 2022

The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) recently held the 34<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting on the topic of "Observations on the Russia-Ukraine War and China's Response." Key statements and highlights of discussion by the advisory members are as follows:

1. The introductory report presented by the scholars indicated that the Russia-Ukraine war is part of Russia's long-running expansion of power. However, Russia has underestimated the developments of the situation, making the war more likely to end in a ceasefire negotiation. The war might usher in a "new Cold War" characterized by a new strategic triangle of the US, China, and Russia. The Beijing authorities are carefully watching the Russia-Ukraine war and learn from the combat experience of Russia, the fierce resistance of Ukraine, and the unprecedented sanctions imposed by the international community. These lessons will be used to plan for possible scenarios in a cross-Strait conflict, but "peaceful unification" is still a priority at the moment. The scholars considered it a well-advised move to establish under the National Security Council a task force dedicated to monitoring the war. They suggested that the government continue to monitor and make careful assessments of China's actions and role in the current war.

---

\*The MAC Advisory Committee Meeting is formed by experts and scholars in related fields. The views and opinions expressed in the meetings or excerpted in this article belong solely to the speakers.

2. The participating scholars pointed out that, from a historical perspective, China-Russia relations are not as friendly or close as the two nations have proclaimed in written and oral statements, but this reality will not effect any significant changes in China's position on the Russia-Ukraine war. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is certainly going to summarize lessons from this war to pre-empt countermeasures against the US-led Western sanctions in the event of a cross-strait conflict. Meanwhile, the CCP will carry out its "overall strategy for Taiwan" by further consolidating its historical mission and taking actions to steer cross-Strait relations. Given its stake in the US-China rivalry, the CCP has made the Taiwan Strait issue an integral part of achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which is central to China's strategic interests and national development. To achieve this goal, the CCP will not use any non-peaceful means rashly. The scholars suggested that the government make thorough assessments of the situation and keep the risks under control.

3. The participating scholars believed that since the CCP has not renounced the use of force against Taiwan, the Russia-Ukraine war offers profound lessons for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) especially regarding the grossly overestimated long-range precision strike capabilities of the Russian troops. In addition, Russia's combat misjudgments have also shed light on the nature of armed forces in an authoritarian regime, that military leaders are prone to pleasing the head of state with good news instead of making accurate analysis of the intelligence, and that their promotions are based on favoritism and not on merit. These characteristics are expected to affect the CCP leader's trust in the Chinese army and lead to greater caution in the potential decision to use force. Considering the CCP's insistence that the Taiwan issue is a hangover from the Chinese Civil War, the scholars suggested that the government address issues such as application of international law, the initiative of making interpretation, and advancement of self-defense capabilities. These tasks can be achieved by deliberating feasible responses, conducting scenario planning, strengthening

resilience, and paying close attention to the PLA's military exercises and research development going forward.

4. The participating scholars analyzed that the sanctions against Russia have hurt the Russian economy and intensified the extent of inflation globally. However, since China is a massive economy and has much deeper economic and trade ties with the rest of the world, the scholars suggested that the government create a composite index to assess the possible economic countermeasures by the CCP in the event of a war (such as payment systems, the support of its internal circulation, preparation of related combat supplies, etc.) They also advised the government to introduce related measures ahead of possible Chinese economic sanctions against Taiwan and make early assessment of potential legal amendments and action plans. The scholars further emphasized that the ongoing war has underscored the critical role of cognitive warfare and information warfare. Ukraine has been making effective use of the Internet to broadcast their views to gain international support, which is an approach worthy of learning. Meanwhile, Taiwan should also step up the maintenance of its information and communication infrastructure.

5. Minister Chiu Tai-san reiterated at the meeting that the Russia-Ukraine war has immense implications on geopolitics, the global economic landscape, and the cross-Strait situation. The CCP's Taiwan policy objective will not change; in response, President Tsai Ing-wen has stated that Taiwan's only option is to become stronger, more united, and more determined to defend itself. The MAC will continue to closely follow and conduct detailed assessments of the CCP's policies and actions in the wake of this war and implement preventive measures to cope with potential challenges to national security. The government also vows to prioritize national sovereignty and Taiwan's overall interests as we promote benign interaction between the two sides across the Taiwan Strait. Moreover, the

MAC called on the other side of the Taiwan Strait to relinquish its unilaterally imposed political framework, cease military intimidation, and pragmatically face the de facto existence of the Republic of China (Taiwan).