

MAC Warns: The CCP's Repeated Attempts at Election Interference will Ultimately Backfire

MAC Press Release No. 049

The Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) issued a statement regarding a report recently released by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities on the "Final Conclusions of the Trade Barriers Investigation of Taiwan's Restrictive Trade Measures against the Mainland." The MAC stated that, the series of actions the CCP has taken since April severely violate normal international trade procedures and practices. Moreover, in its so-called investigation process and announcement of conclusions, there have been nothing but irrational remarks that distort the reality of cross-strait interactions. The MAC warned the CCP authorities against any more politically motivated operations to prevent further unilateral harm to the good economic and trade relations established over the years between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

During its trade barrier investigation, the CCP failed to disclose the application, comments, and non-confidential data and also deliberately bypassed the government of Taiwan. These practices are inconsistent with not only the World Trade Organization (WTO) norms but also mechanisms under the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). Mainland China accused Taiwan of widening the scope of trade restrictions during its investigation, whereas the truth is, Taiwan had only adjusted customs import tariff classification of goods without making any changes to the products actually prohibited from import. Moreover, despite that both the WTO and ECFA have established dispute settlement rules, the CCP authorities chose to avoid these mediation mechanisms in blatant contravention of the current regulations.

The MAC solemnly indicated that, over the past few years, the CCP has abruptly halted agricultural and fishery imports from specific counties and cities in

Taiwan under a variety of pretexts, shutting most of these products from its market and causing grave losses to Taiwanese farmers, fishermen, and traders as a result. These measures are completely irrelevant to normal trade relations. Moreover, the CCP is accustomed to allowing import of agricultural and fishery products from relevant countries, only to abruptly suspend it later as a way of economic coercion against these countries. Such tactics have been internationally seen as routine provocations.

Taiwan is scheduled to hold its presidential and legislative elections on January 13 next year. The MAC again strongly condemned the CCP for its repeated attempts to interfere in Taiwan's elections and influence the ballot choice of Taiwan's voters. It also advises the CCP to realize promptly that it should refrain from these futile and ineffective tactics and avoid further damage to cross-Strait relations. These actions are simply detrimental and will not serve the CCP authorities any good.

The MAC indicated that election intervention is only the CCP's short-term political goal, meaning that its economic coercion against Taiwan will not end even after the elections but will persist over the long term. The political agenda that the CCP is pursuing in the long run is to first promote integration and unification with Taiwan, weaken Taiwan's economy to the point that it is bound to mainland China, and eventually accomplish a red supply chain. The MAC called on Taiwanese citizens to staunchly defend and prevent disruption to the free and democratic system built by all Taiwanese people through decades of hard work. Regarding the CCP's economic coercion against Taiwan, the MAC also reminded the public that these aggressive actions are aimed at political extortion. Therefore, these tactics will be used both before and after the election. The people of Taiwan should remain vigilant.

The MAC also called on the CCP authorities to return to the existing dispute settlement mechanisms as we seek resolution of trade-related issues between the two sides. The two sides should communicate and negotiate based on the fundamental principles of the WTO without any political preconditions or

restrictions on the form of such discussion. The MAC hopes that both sides will meet halfway to jointly preserve the benign atmosphere for overall cross-Strait economic and trade exchanges.