

Chair Conclusions

September 23, 2019

1. The Task Force to Respond to New Developments in Cross-Strait Relations has held 26 meetings since it was established by a directive issued at the beginning of 2019. President Tsai Ing-wen has instructed the Task Force to continuously monitor the Chinese authorities' policy toward Taiwan, provide advance warning of important developments, and formulate relevant countermeasures. It has also been tasked with keeping society informed about critical information regarding the cross-strait situation and related issues in a timely manner to facilitate the promotion and implementation of related government policies.
2. As Chair of today's meeting, I would like to point out several key items regarding the report entitled *Comprehensive Analysis: China's Escalation of Threats Against Taiwan and Interference in Taiwan Elections*, which was issued today by the National Security Council in coordination with the relevant government agencies:
 - 2.1. The continuous and longstanding threat that China poses to Taiwan has recently been underlined by wave after wave of suppression and intimidation in numerous areas including diplomacy, military affairs, politics, economics, society, and culture. Examples include China's constant military exercises aimed at Taiwan; its temporary suspension of permits for individual tourists and large-scale reduction of tourist groups permitted to travel to Taiwan; its boycott of the Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival and Awards; and the pressure it has applied to Taiwan nationals and enterprises to declare their political positions. In addition, convincing Solomon Islands and Kiribati to terminate diplomatic relations with Taiwan through monetary inducements is part of China's carefully planned strategy to suppress Taiwan's

diplomatic engagement. These threatening measures against Taiwan show that China will utilize any and all means to interfere with Taiwan's presidential and legislative elections scheduled for January 2020.

2.2. China's suppression and intimidation of Taiwan will only increase in light of the anti-extradition bill protests in Hong Kong, as well as China's escalating trade dispute with the United States, declining economic growth rates, large increases in unemployment, and internal political struggles. They will also resort to more diverse and intense tactics to interfere with the 2020 elections in Taiwan. The current state of affairs arguably constitutes the most serious challenge to Taiwan's sovereignty and democratic governance in decades.

2.3. Faced with ever growing threats emanating from China, as well as its relentless campaign to interfere with Taiwanese elections, the government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) is responsible for maintaining cross-strait and regional peace and stability, so that 23 million Taiwanese can live without fear of war or annexation by China. We must stand our ground and take a proactive, firm and steady approach to ensure that China does not interfere with the Taiwanese people's exercise of our electoral rights or impact our free and democratic way of life.

2.4. Several points must be emphasized as Taiwan deals with the growing threat from China and their interference in the 2020 elections:

First, in terms of political stance, the President has repeatedly reiterated that Taiwan is resolutely opposed to the "one country, two systems" framework, and firmly rejects any provisional arrangements that would push Taiwan toward annexation by China. I want to stress that this is not a choice between war and peace, but a choice between

maintaining the status quo—which is the sovereign independence of Republic of China (Taiwan)—and being annexed by China.

Second, in international relations, the more China suppresses Taiwan, the more united Taiwan must be, and the more we must engage with the world. At the same time, we must dispel the myth that the number of our diplomatic allies is the main indicator of our diplomatic achievements. In the future, Taiwan will endeavor to maintain the status quo of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, which is the consensus of the international community. Taiwan will also work with the United States, Japan, and other friendly nations in the Indo-Pacific to ensure that status quo remains unchanged. We must also develop a new international strategic positioning, as well as an optimal approach to advancing our foreign relations. We will enhance our contributions to the substantive development of our diplomatic allies and consolidate longstanding diplomatic partnerships, while also taking full advantage of increasingly advantageous international circumstances. By promoting more diverse, deeper, and broader substantive foreign relations, and by bolstering our visibility and constructive role in the international community, we can showcase our sovereignty and demonstrate that we are the most reliable partner in safeguarding democracy, freedom and human rights, and in advancing regional peace and development.

Third, in terms of national defense, the government must clearly convey to the public at large that we can only deter China's military encroachment, and safeguard peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, by adopting a robust and strong defense posture. Confronted with China's military threat, we do not seek war, nor do we fear war.

We will uphold our strategic military direction—resolute defense and multi-domain deterrence—and comprehensively bolster the combat preparedness of our armed forces to protect our territorial sovereignty, defend freedom and democracy, and ensure regional peace and cross-strait stability.

Fourth, from a national security perspective, we must remain ever vigilant, thwart China's rapidly expanding infiltration, and attempts to sow division and deploy United Front tactics in Taiwan society. In addition to completing tasks to establish the legal framework for our national security network, the government will adopt forceful countermeasures to prevent China from influencing certain Taiwanese media, manipulating Taiwanese public opinion, and interfering in Taiwanese elections through cyberattacks, disinformation, and other means. This will ensure that democratic processes and fairness in Taiwan are not affected.

Fifth, in the economic realm, the government must make a strong response to the US-China trade dispute and changing international economic circumstances. We should actively help enterprises move back to and invest in Taiwan and enhance their international deployment to further consolidate Taiwan's strengths and strategic position in global industry chains. Faced with China's attempts to siphon off Taiwan's economic lifeblood, and various boycotts and restrictions to influence our elections, we need to reduce our reliance on China by increasing the autonomy of our economy, and accelerating industrial transformation and upgrading. The government will not sit idly by while the Chinese authorities openly push Taiwan to accept political compromises through economic

means. Instead, we will adopt a resolute approach to strengthen Taiwan's economic resiliency, protect industry and employment, and avoid situations where people become innocent victims when they resist China's United Front tactics, or of China's measures targeting Taiwan's economy.

3. With regard to the various countermeasures proposed by the aforementioned report, national security departments and executive government agencies should work in close coordination to formulate appropriate plans and thoroughly implement them. At the same time, close attention must be paid to Beijing's Taiwan strategy and its efforts to interfere in Taiwan's elections. We will further strengthen our approach so as to protect national security and ensure the fairness of Taiwan's democratic elections.
4. China's threat to Taiwan's democracy and freedom, and their attempt to impose the "one country, two systems" model on Taiwan, must be taken seriously by all sectors of Taiwan's society, regardless of political party affiliation. The recent situation in Hong Kong has shown that the Chinese authorities are contemptuous of and ready to crush democracy, freedom, and the rule of law. The world has witnessed how China has reneged on its political promises to the Hong Kong people, and undermined Hong Kong's economic growth and social life. At this critical time, when China is trying to transplant the Hong Kong experience to Taiwan, all sectors in Taiwan must unite to deter China's threat. Only then will we be able to protect the sovereignty of the Republic of China (Taiwan), the free and democratic way of life of the 23 million Taiwanese people, and the right of every generation of Taiwanese people to determine our own future.
5. To maintain stable cross-strait relations, Taiwan continues to uphold the principle of not engaging in provocation or confrontation, despite

China's continued suppression and intimidation. Nevertheless, since we have recently achieved major breakthroughs in substantive diplomacy and national defense, and categorically rejected the imposition of the "one country, two systems" model proposed by China's leadership, the authorities in China have increased pressure on Taiwan to conceal the failure of their policy. It is regrettable that some people distort facts, place responsibility for the deterioration of cross-strait relations on the Taiwan government, and even express hope that Taiwan will submit to Chinese pressure in exchange for the illusion of cross-strait peace and short-term economic benefits. To avoid any possible misunderstanding in Taiwanese society, the National Security Council will provide the aforementioned report to the media and post it online following this meeting, so that the general public has all the necessary information at their disposal to accurately interpret and judge matters pertaining to cross-strait relations.