

TOP NEWS

More people realize Washington harming, not protecting Taiwan

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An increasing number of people in Taiwan have realized that the United States is harming the island, not protecting it, a Chinese mainland spokesman said on Wednesday.

Chen Binhua, spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, made the remark in response to a recent public opinion poll held in Taiwan concerning the US demand for “protection fees” from Taiwan.

US President-elect Donald Trump, in an interview during his election campaign, said that Taiwan should pay the US for its “defense”.

The survey conducted by the Taiwan Public Opinion Foundation earlier this month showed that 51 percent of the Taiwan people polled disagreed with the demand of “protection fees”, 12 percentage points higher than those who agreed.

The survey also showed that more than 57 percent of the respondents did not believe that the US would send troops to “defend Taiwan”, while less than 30 percent said they believe it would.

The issue of “protection fees” could become a variable in terms of the island’s relations with the US over the next four years and affect the development of cross-Straits relations, the foundation said in its recently published survey report.

Compared with another opinion poll conducted in February 2023, the number of Taiwan people who believe the US would send troops to “defend” the region has dropped by 13 percentage points, while the number of respondents who do not believe the same has increased by 10.7 percentage points, according to the foundation.

More people in Taiwan have broken through the information cocoon manufactured by the Democratic Progressive Party authorities, Chen said, adding that the DPP’s reliance on the US will push Taiwan to the abyss of disaster.

The spokesman said the US’ demand for “protection fees” has sparked a strong backlash on the island, especially among the youth. “Many young people in Taiwan said on social media that if the US is allowed to take whatever it wants, Taiwan’s healthcare funding will be squeezed,” he said.

Chen slammed the Taiwan authorities for seeking US support for the “Taiwan independence” agenda, saying that this would not provide an opportunity “to escape from the tragic fate of being abandoned”.

The spokesman also denounced the DPP’s claim that Taiwan leader Lai Ching-te will make “visits” to three Pacific “diplomatic allies”, for which he might “transit through” the US.

The “transit” essentially means seeking “independence” through reliance on foreign forces, Chen said, adding that any attempt to create “one China, one Taiwan” in violation of the one-China principle will be opposed by all Chinese people.

Zhong Houtao, a Taiwan affairs expert at the University of International Relations in Beijing, said that as Taiwan cannot achieve “independence” through its own strength, Lai’s administration has turned its attention outward, seeking to leverage external forces to create chaos in the Strait.

“They even fantasize that if a conflict were to occur in the Taiwan Strait, external forces such as the US would come to Taiwan’s aid. This is undoubtedly a delusion,” Zhong added.

Icy interplay



Penguins from Harbin Polarland attract visitors to take photos on Tuesday in front of the Harbin Architectural Art Gallery. Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province, embraced this winter’s first snowfall on Tuesday, igniting the ice and snow enthusiasm of its residents and tourists.

ZHANG TAO / XINHUA

Initiatives to bolster supply chains driving foreign trade

Execs say leading industrial system also helps promote digital, green transformations

By ZHONG NAN
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China’s advanced industrial system and proactive initiatives to bolster global supply chain cooperation will help drive foreign trade while enabling both domestic and foreign companies to expedite their digital and green transformations, business executives said on Wednesday.

Speaking during the ongoing second China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing, which runs through Saturday, they said that amid sluggish global economic growth and the challenges posed by protectionist measures, reinforcing global supply chain cooperation is practical to reduce business costs, enhance production efficiency and foster shared progress.

Asia Pulp and Paper Co Ltd, or APP, an Indonesian pulp and paper manufacturer, is showcasing its latest products and green technology solutions in the expo’s new exhibition area dedicated to advanced manufacturing supply chains this year.

The paper industry is distinguished by its long-supply chain characteristics. As a key player connecting industrial resources



People check out an AI-driven bartending system at the Siemens booth in the advanced manufacturing chain exhibition area of the second China International Supply Chain Expo in Beijing on Wednesday. ZHANG HAOFU / XINHUA

between China and Indonesia, APP prioritizes supply chain stability as a fundamental aspect of its development, said Zhai Jingli, deputy CEO of Sinar Mas-APP China, APP’s China branch.

“In addition to supplying paper products to the Chinese market, we also ship products manufactured in our plants in China to other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, especially to member economies of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership,” said Zhai.

Exports of foreign-invested businesses in China amounted to 5.77 trillion yuan (\$796 billion) from January to October, marking a year-on-year growth of 1.9 percent, data from the General

Administration of Customs showed.

Supported by the most comprehensive range of industrial categories and the most complete supporting systems based on the United Nations standards, China’s manufacturing industry has maintained its position as the world’s largest by scale for 14 consecutive years. The country accounts for over 30 percent of global output, according to information released at the expo by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

With China and many parts of the world entering a new era of green and innovation-led growth, Xiao Song, global executive vice-president of German conglomerate Siemens AG, stressed that building a collabo-

Political Lens

Li, Dutch PM pledge to promote ties in phone talk

Premier Li Qiang held a phone conversation with Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof on Wednesday, during which both of them pledged to promote bilateral relations.

Li noted that under the strategic guidance of the leaders of the two countries, Sino-Dutch relations have developed steadily and rapidly in recent years. Cooperation in various fields has been continuously expanding, bringing tangible benefits to the peoples of both nations, he said.

The premier expressed China’s willingness to maintain close interactions with the new Dutch government to jointly uphold the positive momentum of the countries’ relations.

Schoof reaffirmed the Dutch government’s firm adherence to the one-China policy, and expressed the Netherlands’ desire to become a gateway for cooperation between China and Europe.

CHINA DAILY

Policy: Country’s ‘fruitful diplomatic results’ hailed

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Boric presented the book to Xi and invited him to sign it.

Nadia Helmy, an associate professor of political science at Beni Suef University in Egypt and an expert on Chinese politics and Asian affairs, said, “We find that China has achieved fruitful diplomatic results, as the diplomacy of the Chinese head of state, Comrade Xi Jinping, played a strategic guiding role.”

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics “led China to achieve tangible achievements in the field of Beijing’s foreign policy and international relations, (and) brought China closer to assuming the forefront of the global

scene,” she wrote in an article published in January.

She listed some main points of China’s major country diplomacy, such as “maintaining justice while seeking to achieve common interests at the political and economic levels”, “sincere and friendly international relations with the developing countries” and “building a new type of relations between major countries”.

Regarding his expectations for China’s major country diplomacy in the next 10 years and beyond, Bennett, the London-based international relations analyst, said that China is expected to win more support and more understanding from more countries, as there is “quite a strong contrast” between “the worldview and practice of China and the worldview and practice of most other major powers”.

Efforts: Science, tech seen as key to tackling desertification

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According to the administration, 53 percent of China’s treatable desertified land has been managed. By the end of last year, the forest coverage rate exceeded 25 percent, with forest stock volume surpassing 20 billion cubic meters and annual carbon sequestration reaching more than 1.2 billion metric tons.

The Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program has been recognized in the Global 500 Roll of Honour for Environmental Achievement by the United Nations Environment Programme. The UNCCD Secretariat has also twice honored China for its “outstanding contribution to combating desertification”.

China now has the largest area of planted forests in the world and is the largest contributor to global greening, said Guan.

At the 13th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD, which was held in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, in 2017, a global goal of achieving “land degradation neutrality” by 2030 was established. China has already met the target ahead of schedule.

“After more than half a century of continuous efforts, especially since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012, under the guidance of Xi Jinping Thought on Ecological Civilization, our approach to combating desertification has become more scientific, with improved top-level design, more comprehensive working mechanisms and stronger policy support,” Guan said.

Legislative endeavor

China launched the world’s first law on sand control in 2002. Guan said the country has incorporated desertification control into its legal framework, including into laws such as the Law on Prevention and Control of Desertification, the Forest Law, the Grassland Law, the Wetland Protection Law, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Ecological Protection Law, and the Yellow River Protection Law. Thirteen key provincial-level regions affected by desertification have also enacted their own regulations or implemented measures for controlling desertification.

“Natural elements are interdependent and interconnected. In

combating desertification, the Chinese government adheres to the philosophy that ‘mountains, rivers, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands and deserts form a community of life’. This coordinated approach across various departments ensures comprehensive protection and restoration of ecosystems,” Guan said.

Under the Three-North Shelterbelt Forest Program, people have developed various methods such as straw checkerboard barriers, aerial seeding and sandy land closure for revegetation, overcoming technical challenges in the restoration of forest and grass cover in arid and semi-arid areas and significantly improving survival rates, he said.

In recent years, mechanized and intelligent technologies such as sand fixation machinery and drone seeding have been widely adopted.

“Currently, nearly half of the afforestation in the Three-North project is done mechanically. Science and technology has become a key tool in solving desertification challenges,” Guan said.

China will accelerate the development of key technologies, scientifically allocate forest and grass

vegetation, and conduct thorough surveys, monitoring and assessment of ecological protection and restoration efforts, he said.

Guan noted that during the process of sand control, China emphasizes economic effects at the same time.

“Various regions utilize unique resources in sandy areas to appropriately develop industries such as traditional Chinese medicinal herbs, high-quality forage grass, economic forests and fruits, and desert tourism, thereby aiding rural revitalization,” he said.

Some regions like the Loess Plateau and the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region have established a number of production bases for forest fruits, melons and woody oil plants, with an annual output of 48 million tons of dried and fresh fruit, accounting for 25 percent of the nation’s total production. In key areas, income from forest fruits constitutes more than half of farmers’ net income, he said.

According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification’s latest “Global Land Outlook” report, approximately 40 percent of the world’s land is experiencing desertification and degradation, and land

degradation and drought have directly affected 50 percent of the global population.

In October last year, the UNCCD Secretariat launched a Data Dashboard, compiling data from 126 countries and regions. This found that land degradation is occurring at an “alarming rate” worldwide. Between 2015 and 2019, the world on average lost at least 10 million hectares of healthy, productive land annually, with sub-Saharan Africa, West Asia, South Asia and the Latin America and Caribbean region experiencing higher than average rates of degradation.

President Xi has emphasized many times that desertification is a severe challenge faced by all of humanity.

Sharing experience

Guan said that sharing experiences with other countries has been essential to making progress.

“We have extensively engaged in international cooperation and promoted desertification control in countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative,” Guan said, adding that the Badain Jaran Desert Dunes and Lakes area in Inner Mongolia was listed as a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site in July, which is among the major achievements that China has made internationally in sand control and environmental protection.

On this front, China has established the China-Arab International Research Center on Drought, Desertification and Land Degradation in Beijing with the Arab League, and the China-Mongolia Desertification Prevention and Control Cooperation Center in Ulan Bator, the capital of Mongolia.

It has also set up demonstration bases for desertification control in Mongolia, Central Asia and Africa, providing technical support and data products for initiatives such as the Great Green Wall in Africa and Mongolia’s One Billion Trees campaign.

“China will focus on strengthening cooperation with neighboring countries, supporting desertification control in countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, and leading policy dialogues and information sharing to jointly tackle sandstorm disasters,” Guan said.

He added that the administration has been preparing and organizing activities for the China Pavilion at the upcoming 16th session of the Conference of the Parties of the UNCCD, which will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from Dec 2 to 13. At the conference, it will share experiences from the Three-North project and other desertification control efforts.