

COMMENT

Editorials

Two-faced US behavior betrays its commitment to sound relations

The United States insists that it still adheres to the one-China principle. Yet belying that claim, it is colluding with “pro-independence” forces on the island, stoking cross-Straits confrontation and undermining peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits.

It is not surprising then that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, which US President Joe Biden has signed into law, not only contains irresponsible remarks on the Taiwan question but also includes provisions for military financing and arms sales to the Chinese island.

By hyping up the outdated “China threat” theory, the \$858 billion US military spending package, which authorizes up to \$10 billion in security assistance to the island, \$2 billion as military loans within five years, as well as accelerated arms sales to Taipei, is nothing but a blatant interference in China’s internal affairs as well as a serious political provocation against China, as China’s Foreign Ministry said in a strongly worded statement condemning the hyping up of the “China threat” narrative and the blatant interference in China’s internal affairs.

Obviously, the US views the Chinese island as an important piece in its zero-sum game, thanks to which high-stake tensions and exacerbated confrontation have plagued the Taiwan Straits over the past year. The new US defense spending bill provides further evidence — should any be needed — that it is the US that is sabotaging peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits.

As State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi

pointed out in his telephone conversation with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Friday, the US engages in dialogue and containment at the same time, and talks cooperation while stabbing China in the back.

This two-faced US behavior is not reasonable competition, but irrational suppression. It is not meant to properly manage disputes, but to intensify conflicts. In fact, it is still the old practice of unilateral bullying, Wang said.

In the cordial meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Biden in Bali, Indonesia, last month, the two leaders agreed bilateral ties needed to be turned around and put back on the track of sound and stable development. But since then, Washington, while sending teams for a series of engagements with China, has continued making efforts to contain and suppress China’s development, especially by constantly challenging China’s redlines in “salami-slicing” ways.

Washington should know the zero-sum mentality it is embracing and peddling in the world will only lead to more frictions and push the two countries to mutual attrition and ultimately head-on collision. Such a scenario would be disastrous. For the US included.

Washington should fully honor its commitment to the one-China principle and work with Beijing to advance relations on the course charted by the two leaders so as to stabilize and improve China-US relations, which is in the interests of both countries and the world.

Modernization of agriculture crucial task

Prompted by the increasing uncertainties arising from the country’s external development environment, the country needs to pay particular attention to protecting its arable land and core seed resources and building high-quality farmland to ensure the nation always holds the initiative to guarantee its food security.

The Central Rural Work Conference held in Beijing on Friday and Saturday has served to form a to-do list for the formation of the top-level design to advance rural vitalization in an all-round way and to accelerate the construction of a strong country in agriculture.

The conference not only highlighted the great significance the Communist Party of China Central Committee attaches to these objectives but also the urgency it tried to convey to authorities at various levels to act as real doers of these daunting tasks.

That calls for remarkable pragmatism to face and overcome the institutional and practical obstacles that have prevented modern agriculture from taking root in one of the oldest agricultural civilizations in the world.

Policy makers must formulate scientific plans to accelerate the modernization of agriculture and do more to lay the foundation for its long-term benefits. In the process, governments at various levels should take into account local conditions, adopt a result-oriented approach, and address the pressing problems in agricultural and rural development that farmers complain of most, strictly avoiding vanity projects that are divorced from reality.

What is imperative is that manpower, material resources and the necessary financial inputs must be provided to support long-overdue systematic reforms and agricultural science and technology research and development.

A key criterion for progress in this work, as well as a crucial factor deciding whether it can be sustainable, is to see whether farmers become the primary beneficiaries of the cause, and whether the urban-rural development gap is effectively bridged by it.

Neither rural vitalization nor the adoption of modern agriculture are easy goals to achieve, as they mean disrupting the existing distribution pattern of interests that generally see villages as appendages to cities, and rural dwellers in an inferior position to urban residents.

That entails the nation doubling down on endeavors to repay the historical debts in this regard through pressing ahead with painful reforms and realizing historical breakthroughs in core know-how.

It’s necessary to remove the institutional barriers that prevent the equal exchanges and two-way flows of production factors between urban and rural areas, and facilitate the flow of development factors as well as various services into rural areas.

The arduousness of the tasks speaks volumes of their potential for paradigm-shifting changes. The conference reinforced that the country must press ahead with the work related to agriculture and rural revitalization at full steam and vigorously promote agricultural and rural modernization.

Country requires all able hands on deck

The National Health Commission stopped disclosing the daily COVID-19 pandemic data on Sunday.

That move marks the fight with the virus has entered a new stage, for the data has been widely taken as a foundation for policymaking and adjustment. It signals that more must be done to address the challenges posed by the continuous resurgence of infections nationwide.

That the public health system in Beijing, which has the most medical care resources in the country, has been under great strain because of the sharp rise of severe cases caused by the virus should serve to make the dire situations elsewhere in the country imaginable, particularly the rural areas where the gap between people’s demands and the supplies of medical resources is much bigger.

Although most of those infected with the novel coronavirus recover after several days of home quarantine, the virus still poses a risk to senior residents, especially those with underlying health conditions.

China has about 270 million people aged 60 and above, and 36 million aged 80 and above, more than the total of that of all developed economies combined. While the overall capacity of China’s intensive care units is much smaller in comparison with those countries. Not to mention the uneven distribution of health care resources nationwide.

That’s why the COVID-19 prevention and control task force of the State Council, China’s Cabinet, recently urged all local governments to prioritize treatment for the aged population, and all major hospitals to serve as the key defensive line for saving lives.

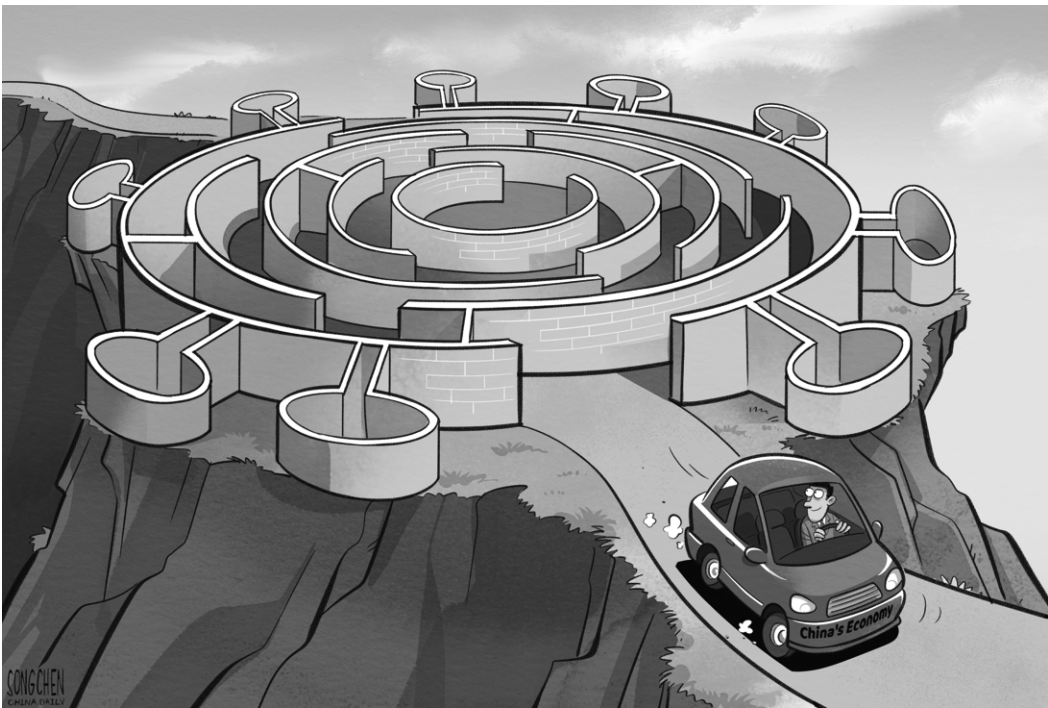
The NHC has demanded these major hospitals to double the number of intensive care unit sickbeds by the end of this month from the current 4 percent of their total number of sickbeds to at least 8 percent.

Meanwhile, local governments now need to divert their focus and inputs from nucleic acid testing and building collective quarantine stations to increasing the production and supplies of anti-fever and anti-inflammatory medicines to meet the surging demand. Local authorities should also pay attention to the scientific advice and keep the public informed of the pandemic situation.

The current wave of infections will peak and people have no reason not to remain confident in the country’s fight with the virus, which continues to put saving people’s lives and protecting people’s health first.

Following the basic protocol of good hygiene habits, isolating at home, if one does become infected, and doing one’s job well are all important contributions that individuals can make to ensure the country passes this test as quickly as possible.

Song Chen



Opinion Line

Zero tolerance shown toward interference in internal affairs

In response to the sanctions the United States imposed on two Chinese officials on the grounds of so-called human rights issues in Tibet, the Chinese Foreign Ministry announced on Friday that it had imposed counter sanctions on two US individuals in accordance with China’s Anti-Foreign Sanctions Law.

Miles Maochun Yu served as the principal China policy and planning adviser to former US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, and Todd Stein was the deputy staff director of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. Both of them have long acted egregiously on Tibet and other China-related issues.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Todd Stein and Miles Yu Maochun, along with their close family members, would be banned from entering China, any assets they had in China would be

frozen and they would be barred from contact with people or organizations within China.

Of the two, Yu has got the more attention from Chinese media and public because of his identity: He was born in China in the 1960s, went to study in the US and worked there, making it to the decision-making advisory group. However, instead of trying to maintain a good relationship between his old and new homelands, Yu participated in all his boss’ major plots against China: He was behind the conspiracy theory that claimed the COVID-19 virus originated in a Chinese lab, fanned the flames of public disorder in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and reportedly accompanied Pompeo during his trip to the Taiwan island in March.

It remains a mystery why Yu hates the nation where he was born

so much. But he will never be able to get rid of his “Chinese” identity no matter what position he gets in the US.

And one more thing is certain: The more Yu hates the country where he was born, the more frustrated he will be upon seeing the progress China is making. It is the only major economy of the world that has kept both stable economic growth and largely controlled the pandemic for the past three years, and now with its anti-pandemic measures freshly optimized, its prospects look even brighter for the year ahead.

As a spokeswoman for the Foreign Ministry said, affairs related to Tibet are China’s internal affairs, and the US has no right to interfere in them. Any interference in China’s internal affairs will be met with resolute countermeasures.

— ZHANG ZHOUXIANG, CHINA DAILY

Firing up consumption on all cylinders

At the Central Economic Work Conference held on Dec 15 and 16, it was pointed out that the Chinese economy faces quite high pressure, but with its strong potential and vitality, the economy is expected to generally recover in the coming year.

Domestic consumption has suffered as a result of the pandemic in 2022. Data show that sales of construction and decoration materials dropped by 10 percent, while sales of home appliances declined by 17.3 percent, both of which are typical examples of consumption affected by the pandemic.

But it is equally true that implies there is huge pent-up potential for consumption growth in 2023. For 11 successive years, consumption has accounted for over 50 percent of the GDP, and it has been an essential engine of

economic development.

On Dec 14, the central leadership published a guiding document on boosting personalized, diversified, high-quality consumption demand. And the Central Economic Work Conference, which opened one day later, also prioritized the recovery and enlargement of consumption as a priority task.

That should include fast recovery of the sectors heavily hit by the pandemic, such as entertainment, hospitality, tourism, catering, aviation and sport, all of which have suffered heavily during the pandemic. It is advisable to set up special funds and issue low-interest loans to help enterprises in these sectors recover.

Other consumption sectors also need special attention. For example, property consumption is an

essential pivot of the domestic demand expansion strategy, and bank loans plus financing support are needed to help revive the market. Added together with the optimization of real estate policies, people’s desire to buy housing will reemerge.

Regions can also tailor their policies to boost consumption. International consumption centers can be cultivated, while a group of regional consumption centers can be supported, too, so as to help cities upgrade their consumption. Consumption habits can also be cultivated in rural regions so as boost the potential of the farming population.

In one word, consumption is an essential engine of the economy and it is time to get that engine running well.

— 21ST CENTURY BUSINESS HERALD

What They Say

TCM has proved its worth during epidemic

In the process of fighting against the epidemic in the past three years, traditional Chinese medicine has played a very important role.

For example in the cabin hospitals, both on-site-made and pre-prepared TCM medicines have been used to help the patients recover, which enabled them to get well in a quicker manner and enjoy a lower rate of getting infected again in the future.

That applies not only to the Chinese mainland, but also to Taiwan. When the Omicron variant of the virus hit the island in April and May, a locally made TCM drug brand Qingguan No 1 made a buzz and was subsequently sold to Europe and the United States. Actually, domestic TCM practitioners often hold seminars with their global counterparts to share experience and research so as to formulate more effective prescriptions.

When using traditional Chinese medicine clinically, the method is as follows: There will be a main prescription for the more common symptoms of COVID-19 as a base, and then others to target the different symptoms that will appear in individuals during the course of the infection — for example, for some people, the body will be particularly painful, some people will have a very sore throat, and some people will have a high fever. The prescription is adjusted according to such symptoms and some auxiliary prescriptions are provided tailored to each individual case.

But different people react in different ways to the medicines. For instance, some patients have weak digestive systems, which makes them more sensitive to certain TCM ingredients. They might even vomit upon taking such ingredients. That’s

why it is advisable for everybody to make a record of ingredients that they know they are sensitive to, and tell the TCM doctor upon asking for a prescription, so that the latter can help tailor a prescription that avoids the use of the sensitive ingredients. That’s in accordance with TCM’s philosophy, namely to provide tailored services for every patient, instead of treating everyone the same.

Such a mode also has its unique advantages in comforting patients. TCM doctors diagnose patients mainly via face-to-face interactions, which gives patients a sense of closeness to the doctor. If some patients are unfortunate enough to suffer from COVID-19 twice in the pandemic, the comforts from TCM doctors will grant them more confidence in defeating the virus twice.

— LIN JUNSHENG, A TCM DOCTOR ON GUANCHANG