

China will further open up but not due to US pressure

东艳，中国日报，2018年4月12日版

China will take measures to further open up to the outside world, Xi said in his highly-anticipated keynote address at the Boao Forum for Asia. But amid the escalating China-US trade conflict, some people have wrongly assumed Xi made the remarks with the Trump administration's accusations in mind. But a review of China's policies shows the country will deepen reform and opening-up because of its practical development needs, not because of any other country's demand or coercion.

And more importantly, if the US insists on starting a trade war, China's further opening-up policies will not apply to any US enterprises.

To people concerned about China's development, Xi's speech must have sounded inspiring, but not surprising, as opening-up has been a development theme for China for the past 40 years.

Actually, the measures Xi mentioned can be seen as a natural extension of previous policies and efforts. For instance, the last few years have seen the introduction of pre-establishment national treatment with a negative list for foreign capital in pilot free trade zones — while its all-round implementation, as Xi said, is only a matter of time. And in terms of IPR protection, Xi underlined in his report to the 19th National Congress of the CPC in October that China should develop an innovation-friendly culture and strengthen IPR protection.

As for the expansion of imports, China shifted its focus from exports to striking the right balance between imports and exports long ago, because the increase in imports will offer more choices to Chinese consumers and help improve their living standards, aside from giving foreign companies easier access to the Chinese market.

In other words, Xi's speech is in line with China's development philosophy, and the measures introduced show the new pattern of reform and opening-up which he put forward in his report to the 19th CPC National Congress. These facts should be enough to make it clear the decisions were not taken under any external pressure.

Xi's speech not only demonstrates Chinese people's openness toward the outside world but also is a potent reply to the Trump administration's unilateral and protectionist moves. It will also strengthen globalization, and inject much-needed confidence into the international community to build an open global economy that would benefit people across the world in the long term.

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