

Op-ed: Protectionism must be tackled to bring orderly global trade back

By Zhong Sheng, People's Daily

The US has been widely condemned by the international society because of the trade war it unilaterally initiated against China. The trade war has severely damaged the rule-based multilateral trading system.

On July 26, the country further escalated the tensions at the third meeting of the WTO General Council of 2018. A US representative deliberately tarnished China's economic model, trying to find excuses for his country's unilateral actions by such defaming. His remarks were solemnly refuted by the Chinese side.

Rather than taking introspection on its own behaviors, the US is even denying the facts and defaming China. Such ridiculous frauds will only end up being exposed.

China's endeavors speak for itself and are recognized by the international society. In the recent white paper titled "China and the World Trade Organization (WTO)", the Chinese government proves to the world that the country has fulfilled its promises made at the accession to the organization, and will do more to further open the market with accurate statistics.

China's efforts to honor commitment and courage to shoulder responsibilities have won it world-wide reputation.

"(WTO) members highlighted the importance of China's contribution to global growth over recent years," said Eloi Laourou, chairperson of the WTO's trade policy review (TPR) body at the seventh TPR on China in mid July, adding that members generally expressed appreciation for China's active role in the body. His remarks represent a fair evaluation from the international community.

The provocation of the US at the meeting of the WTO General Council aimed at nothing but hiding its true intention to infringe upon the multilateral trading system.

The so-called "fair trade" grounded on "America first" philosophy indeed goes against the rule-based multilateral trading system, and tramples on the face of the international trade rules, as its final goal is to seek preferential trade conditions through pressuring and bargains.

Facing a China that stands firm against its blackmail, the US side started resorting to international organizations. It is fantasizing that China will finally compromise as long as it makes louder voices and keeps undermining the confidence of the international society in China's development. However, such move will not place any impact on China.

China has reiterated on many occasions that it will resolutely protect the core national interests and interests of its people.

What is pathetic about some US officials is that they only stay in the comfort zone and fail to see the trend of the world.

Every country has the right to select the most appropriate way of development. The energetic path of socialism with Chinese characteristics has scored remarkable achievements and created huge opportunities for the world, which is also well recognized by the people from both China and the world. It cannot be denied just by a few ridiculous words of the US.

The facts have given a heavy blow to the US. When some Western countries are trapped in system crisis, China is having a great time seeking for high-quality development. The Chinese way of development is being more and more accepted with increasing attraction.

The conclusion reached by the US representative that “China’s economic model has proven to be particularly trade disruptive” is nothing but a joke.

WTO statistics showed that China's imports accounted for 10.2 percent of the world total merchandise import in 2017, and its exports 12.8 percent, making China a major trade partner of more than 120 countries and regions. If China’s economic model was “trade disruptive”, how did the country rise to such a vital status in today’s global trade?

A total of 74 percent of US enterprises and 55 percent of EU companies decided to expand their investment in China this year, up 5 and 4 percent respectively from a year ago. If China’s economic model was “trade disruptive”, why did the majority of 20,000-plus US companies operating in China choose to inject more capital in the country?

WTO Director-General Roberto Azevêdo recently gave his answer to who is hurting the global trade. He said the US tariff raise has further deteriorated global trade relations, which would pose serious threats to the global economic growth.

Based on incomplete figures, the White House has ordered an estimated 94 investigations into so-called “unfair trade practices” involving dozens of countries in slightly over a year, a year-on-year increase of 81 percent.

By opposing the new appointments to WTO appeals body, the US has broken the smooth operation of the dispute settlement mechanism and endangered the multilateral trading system.

It is urgent for WTO members to join hands in opposing protectionism and fight back the US protectionism such as the Section 232 and Section 301 investigations, in a bid to bring back the orders to global trade.

US political analyst Andre Vltchek once said that the more China does for the world, the less aggressively it behaves, the more it will be hated and demonized in the West. It is precisely because China is, unlike the West, trying to improve the lives of the entire planet Earth, that the plundering and bullying practices of some countries against world are contained.

Obviously, this point has been well proven by the groundless accusations of the US against China in recent days.

A clean hand wants no washing. The groundless defaming of the US to divert attention of the international society and the country's unilateral initiation of the trade war are of no justice or morality, and will only be widely objected by the international community.