

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) yesterday accused the Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) of tampering with an impact assessment report on signing an economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) with China, saying the ministry had deflated potential job losses that could follow the trade deal's implementation.

Speaking at a DPP-hosted press conference, Taiwan Thinktank chairman Chen Po-chih, who formerly served as chairman of the Council for Economic Planning and Development (CEPD), said the ministry had fabricated the numbers in a report claiming that an ECFA would boost GDP and create jobs.

Chen said the report, which was conducted by the Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research for the ministry, based its calculations on two contradictory scenarios — full employment and serious unemployment.

The MOEA tampered with the concluding figures in the report by “adjusting” the formulas, he said.

Chen added that during a “state affairs forum” in April, he asked Minister of Economic Affairs Yiin Chii-ming about the negative effects an ECFA would have on Taiwanese industries.

Chen said the minister did not dare state that the trade pact would pose zero harm to local industries, but only said it was vital for Taiwan to sign the deal with Beijing.

Yiin probably already knew of the ECFA's adverse effects, but purposely concealed it from the public, Chen said. He urged the Control Yuan to investigate the ministry and Yiin for possible malfeasance.

DPP Spokesman Cheng Wen-tsang panned the government for lying to the public by having the MOEA tweak the analysis report.

In response, the ministry issued a statement last night saying that it had “adjusted the figures to better reflect reality in its assessment.”

At a separate setting, the DPP yesterday warned that China could sneak in unification rhetoric in the planned trade agreement, and Taiwan could end up being trapped in the “one China” framework.

The DPP made the remarks in the wake of President Ma Ying-jeou's statement on Wednesday that the ECFA would not include politically sensitive language.

Ma said his administration would expedite the signing of the agreement and promised that it would not contain terms such as “one China,” “peaceful unification” or “one country, two

Ministry distorted ECFA study: DPP

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systems.”

“We are highly doubtful of his promise. Even if these terms do not appear in the document, Beijing would find a way to sneak in its political agenda,” DPP Spokesman Cheng Wen-tsang said.

The absence of these controversial phrases is not a guarantee that the trade pact would be signed outside of Beijing's “one China” framework, Cheng said.

China has in the past few months made several demands to bring the Ma government to its knees, Cheng said, such as demanding that Taiwan open up direct flights across the median line of the Taiwan Strait.

The median line is an imaginary line of defense in the Taiwan Strait that was drawn up by the US.

Although the Ma administration has rejected the request, Beijing is unlikely to keep catering to Taipei's wishes, Cheng said, adding that the trade pact would pave the way for China to introduce political issues into the agreement.

The Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) also warned the government yesterday that inking an ECFA with China would be economic and political suicide for Taiwan.

TSU Chairman Huang Kuan-huei said signing an ECFA with China would be like putting all eggs in one basket by tying Taiwan's economy to a single market — China — instead of expanding its focus to cover the world markets.

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