

Chiang's memory is not worth dwelling on

Written by Lin Shiou-jeng 林錫榮
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Many members of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) have commemorated the 30th anniversary of former president Chiang Ching-kuo's (蔣經國) death, and they want to use Chiang to promote unity within the KMT and raise public support for the party.

However, Chiang is an important reason for the sad lives of the KMT and all Taiwanese.

In 1949, Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) used his planned counterattack on China as an excuse to establish martial law and prepare Chiang Ching-kuo to be his successor.

Beginning the same year, then-US president Harry Truman sent the Seventh Fleet to assist in the defense of Taiwan, simultaneously protecting it and showing that Taiwan did not have the power required to strike back at China.

The following Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty restricted the KMT's military deployments to the islands of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, and the 1958 artillery war at Kinmen forced the KMT to give up any plans of a counterattack against China. All these showed that any talk of striking back at China was nothing but blatant lies.

Unable to strike back at China, the system established under martial law allowed dictator Chiang Kai-shek to prepare Chiang Ching-kuo. After all, what chance would he ever have had of getting his hands on power if not for Chiang Kai-shek?

The wrongful cases against former commander-in-chief of the Republic of China Army Sun Li-jen (孫立人), then-Taiwan governor K.C. Wu (吳國楨) and Free China magazine publisher Lei Chen (雷震) were attacks on pro-US and pro-democracy forces and the corruption case against then-minister of economics Yin Chung-jung (蔣經國) was an attack on the economic power of former Taiwan governor Chen Cheng (陳誠).

These cases were all attacks on political enemies to promote personal interests that had a massive effect on the political situation, and Chiang Ching-kuo's fingerprints were all over

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them.

Some people might think that without Chiang Ching-kuo, Taiwan would not have remained peaceful and Taiwanese would never have experienced the following prosperity. Most people think that KMT corruption, not communist spies, was the main reason that communism succeeded in China

Chiang Ching-kuo was in charge of the secret police, anti-spy work and preventing infiltration by communist spies, but it was later proven that many of the resulting cases were miscarriages of justice.

If there had been no Chiang Ching-kuo and Taiwan had simply copied the KMT's Chinese system of government, Sun, Wu and Lei could have survived.

Taiwan used to be more developed than China, and it was less affected by war, which allowed it to develop faster than China.

Furthermore, no one has ever claimed that martial law is a guarantee for positive economic development. Conversely, the economic system under the KMT's Martial Law era allowed the party to monopolize economic resources, which is not good for development.

There is no example in world history of economic development showing that martial law is a guarantee for successful development, which is evidenced by the backward economic development of communist countries.

Had it not been for the lie about striking back at China and the Martial Law era, Taiwan would have become a democracy a long time ago.

When people wax nostalgic about Chiang Ching-kuo, what is it that they remember? His dictatorial ways? His White Terror? The advantages they enjoyed due to his consolidating the

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KMT's monopoly on political power?

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