

Ma bears responsibility for Taiwan's security

Written by Taiwan News Editorial
Monday, 22 February 2010 09:16

Controversial National Security Council Secretary-General Su Chi clearly aimed to defuse an inevitable political storm by resigning two days before the annual lunar new year holiday, but this act cannot cover up either Su's own incompetence or President Ma Ying-jeou's political responsibility for the damage caused to Taiwan's security during the first 20 months of his term.

Former Taiwan representative to Singapore Hu Wei-jen, the son of the late ultraconservative Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) general Hu Tsung-jen, will take over as Ma's national security advisor tomorrow.

Despite denials by the Office of the President, the trigger for Su's lightning resignation was undoubtedly related to his inept handling of the negotiation of a protocol signed with the United States in October that promised to reopen Taiwan's market to imports of U.S. bone-in-beef, beef organs and ground beef despite concerns over possible contagion from bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), commonly known as mad-cow disease.

The lack of transparency in the decision-making process, as well as the Ma administration's failure to communicate with concerned consumer and health groups and the public before the shift in policy, sparked a nation-wide uproar and reignited public health concerns over about mad cow disease.

This political storm contributed considerably to the KMT's poor performance in last December's three-in-one local elections and the sweep of three legislative by-elections by the opposition Democratic Progressive Party in January.

Forced to respond to the public outcry, the KMT-dominated Legislative Yuan revised the Food Sanitation Act to continue the ban on beef organs and ground beef from countries, including the U.S., which have had cases of BSE within the previous 10 years.

The U.S. Trade Representative Office and the Department of Agriculture promptly accused the Ma government of unilaterally breaking the agreement while numerous heavyweights in Congress warned and undermining Taiwan's international credibility, a chorus joined by numerous heavyweight senators and representatives.

Ma bears responsibility for Taiwan's security

Written by Taiwan News Editorial
Monday, 22 February 2010 09:16

Despite damage control efforts by Ma and Su, the USTR may yet send the case to the World Trade Organization for arbitration.

Su admitted publicly that his NSC was behind the decision-making, but it is Ma himself who should bear the political responsibility for this fiasco.

In fact, the U.S. beef debacle was the only the last straw for the Taiwan body politic as the NSC under Su's management has conducted a series of similar "black box" secret negotiations and policies that have gravely jeopardized Taiwan's national interests.

Most importantly, Su has been the key policy advisor to Ma on external policy, including the "cross-strait diplomatic truce" and "mutual non-denial" with the authoritarian People's Republic of China.

Indeed, Su personally invented the so-called "Consensus of 1992" referring to the "agreement to disagree" on the definition of "one China" during talks between non-official delegations between then KMT regime and the Chinese Communist Party - ruled PRC in Hong Kong in October 1992 and used this fiction as the theoretical basis for KMT's cross-strait policy, which is now widely perceived internationally as in accord with Beijing's "one China principle."

Ultimately, Su has left Taiwan with three great liabilities.

First, he and Ma created a centralized and closed decision-making process which has failed to take into account the mainstream public opinion of Taiwan society and violates the democratic principles of transparency and accountability.

Second, Su advised Ma to place all bets on Beijing and has failed to maintain a balanced foreign policy toward the U.S. and, especially, Japan.

Ma bears responsibility for Taiwan's security

Written by Taiwan News Editorial
Monday, 22 February 2010 09:16

Finally, the notion of "diplomatic truce" has provided the PRC with more leverage to propagandize its "one China principle" at the expense of Taiwan's international visibility and to bolster its substantive economic weight and even political dominance in many of the 23 nations with which Taiwan maintains formal links.

Contrary to Su's claims that his policies have achieved the "first-phase" goals for the Ma administration, his sudden departure signalled that Ma, who is also KMT chairman, cannot afford to allow the DPP to take advantage of Su's controversial presence to sweep the four legislative by-elections Feb. 27.

Unfortunately, it seems doubtful whether Su's replacement will be an improvement.

After serving as deputy director-general of the National Security Bureau in the 1990s, Hu acted as NSC deputy secretary general under former DPP president Chen Shui-bian but was forced to resign his subsequent post as Taiwan's representative in Singapore after publically slamming the DPP government's educational policies for promoting "desinization" and being "anti-Chiang."

With an undoubted "China-centric" ideology and a background as a career KMT diplomat and intelligence and security professional, the new NSC chief of staff is unlikely to be inclined to broaden the decision-making circle or improve transparency.

What Ma wants from Hu is not strategic perspectives but the latter's seniority in both the diplomatic and intelligence circles to ensure stronger discipline.

Ironically, Ma has removed a buffer and will now have to take full political responsibility for his strategies that are leading our country onto a wrong path of history.

Source: [Taiwan News Online - Editorial 2010/02/22](#)