

## Ma aims to erase Taiwan citizenship

Written by Taiwan News Editorial  
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Through an apparent "slip of the tongue" last week, President Ma Ying-jeou sent a message to the world that his right-wing Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) government does not consider Taiwan to be a "state."

During a meeting last Wednesday with U.S Representative James Sensenbrenner Jr, Ma was quoted in a news release issued by the Office of the President as stating that "this year we will sign with the China mainland a 'cross-strait economic framework agreement' which we hope will institutionalize the over NT\$100 billion in trade between the two countries."

Shortly afterward, the presidential office rushed to "correct" the phrasing from "two countries" to the vague "both sides."

Attributing the flap to a staff error, presidential spokesman Wang Yu-chi later attributed the flap to a staff error and emphasized that the KMT government "does not recognize the sovereignty of the Chinese Communist authorities and defined "mainland China," and presumably Taiwan, as merely "regions" under the sovereignty of the Republic of China according to the ROC Constitution.

Besides claiming that this formulation "reflects the political reality in the Taiwan Strait," Wang claimed that this definition of the status quo was created through constitutional amendments under former president Lee Teng-hui in the 1990s and followed by the Democratic Progressive Party government under ex-president Chen Shui-bian.

Frankly speaking, the presidential office's position that the ROC government has sovereignty over the China mainland, presumably including both the PRC and Mongolia, because their interpretation of the ROC Constitution says so crosses the border between the ludicrous into the sphere of the self-delusional.

The fact that the Chinese Communist Party - ruled PRC governs the China mainland and the existence of the independent state of Mongolia are undeniable "realities" recognized by virtually all of the world community.

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Ironically, former president Lee devoted considerable efforts over his 12 years in office to gradually weaning the KMT from the myth imposed on Taiwan by the late KMT dictator Chiang Kai-shek that the KMT-ruled ROC was the "sole legitimate government" of all "China," a fiction that provided the ideological pillars for 38 years of martial law rule.

As part of the "quiet revolution" of "Taiwanization" and "democratization," Lee pushed the KMT to cease acting as an "external regime" and instead become "the KMT of the Taiwan people."

Lee proceeded through acknowledgement of the cross-strait division into two "political entities" and the achievement of direct presidential elections in "the ROC on Taiwan" in early 1996 to an open definition of "special state-to-state relations between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China on the mainland" in July 1999.

Even then Mainland Affairs Council chairman Su Chi, who just resigned from as Ma's national security advisor, stated in July 1999 that "it is an objective political reality and legal fact that the ROC and the PRC separately rule Taiwan and the mainland."

### People's sovereignty

During the eight-year DPP administration, then president Chen Shui-bian did not passively accept the notion that Taiwan and the PRC were "regions" under the ROC.

In its May 1999 "Resolution on Taiwan's Future," the DPP declared that, in the wake of the March 1996 direct presidential elections, Taiwan had become a "democratic independent state" based on the principle of "people's sovereignty" instead of being under the "sovereignty" of a fiction.

Ma undoubtedly recalls the April 2006 dialogue when Chen stated that the Taiwan government "does recognize the existence of the PRC, even though they do not recognize the existence of

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the ROC" and observed that since Taiwan's legislature and president are elected by its 23 million people and not 1.3 billion, the ROC Constitution was now a "one Taiwan" Constitution and not a "one China" constitution.

Despite differences, both Lee and Chen based their policies on the "actual existing reality" that Taiwan is a democratic constitutional state and that the PRC was also a constituted state and believed that the future character of relations between China and Taiwan should be decided by the 23 million Taiwan people.

The fact that Chen's DPP administration, which was incessantly attacked by the KMT precisely for wanting to change the Constitution to promote "Taiwan independence," did not revamp the Constitution was due primarily to the fact that the KMT controlled the Legislative Yuan and thus had veto power over any constitutional changes.

Ma's shift from "two countries" to "two sides" is not merely an ideological reprise to the authoritarian Chiang era but deliberately aims to blur the lines of distinction between Taiwan and the PRC as legally constituted states whose sovereignty does not overlap.

Besides eliminating any pretense of genuine parity, Ma's semantics threaten to erase the most vital difference between the 23 million citizens in Taiwan and the 1.3 billion people in the authoritarian PRC, namely our citizenship in a democratic state and our right of democratic self-determination to decide both the character of our own government and the nature of our ties with the PRC and other states.

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