

DPP accuses Ma, Wu of lying about Hong Kong trip

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The ruckus surrounding Premier Wu Den-yih's (吳登益) Hong Kong trip continued to escalate yesterday as the Democratic Progressive Party accused President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and Wu of lying about the reasons for Wu's trip, urging them to tell the truth.

"Wu's Sept. 5 trip to Hong Kong pertains not only to his allegiance to the country, but also to the honesty of the leader of our country," DPP spokesman Chao Tien-lin (趙天麟) told a news conference. "We therefore hope that Wu and President Ma will clearly explain everything to the public."

On Sept. 3 and Sept. 4, Ma talked with Wu about appointing him premier. Wu left for Hong Kong on Sept. 5 and returned the following afternoon before the Presidential Office announced Wu would take office on Sept. 7.

The DPP has accused Wu of discussing his premiership with Leung Chun-ying (梁振英) during his stay in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong media has speculated that Leung — the convener of the territory's Executive Council and a permanent member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) — is Beijing's favored candidate to become Hong Kong's next chief executive. The DPP has accused Wu of making the visit to gain approval for his premiership from China.

The Executive Yuan on Tuesday confirmed that Wu met Leung and had lunch with him at noon on Sept. 5. However, discrepancies remain between accounts of the trip offered by Ma, Wu, Wu's aide, and Executive Yuan Spokesman Su Jun-pin (蘇俊平) regarding the purpose of the trip and Wu's activities, the DPP said.

Ma told Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) lawmakers at a dinner on Friday that Wu visited Hong Kong's Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD), as per his suggestion.

However, Wu said Ma did not suggest he visit the CEDD, nor did he go there because "it was the weekend."

"Apparently, Ma and Wu collaborated to make up something to deceive the public," Chao said at the press conference. "So now it's not only Wu who has to clarify it to the people, Ma has to explain himself as well."

While Su on Tuesday made public letters between Wu and Leung to prove that Wu went to Hong Kong at Leung's invitation, Chao also cast doubt on those.

In the letter from Leung to Wu, Leung said he would respectfully await the visit of Wu and his family and brief him about protection of mountains.

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"It doesn't seem like an invitation to me — it's more like a reply to Wu's request to visit Hong Kong," Chao said.

While Wu called Leung an expert in mudslide prevention, Chao said Leung has only written articles about "one country, two systems" and the economic cooperation framework agreement.

"Clearly he isn't an expert in mudslide prevention," Chao said.

Another difference in accounts was that Su said Wu visited Hong Kong at the invitation of Leung, but Wu said it was his initiative to visit Leung.

"It's true that I took initiative to contact [Leung], but it's not correct to use the term that I 'begged' to see him. It's not a relationship between superiors and subordinates. We are friends," Wu said.

Wu said that Leung visited him on Aug. 14 after he was invited by the Lung Yintai Cultural Foundation to deliver a speech in Taiwan and shared Hong Kong's experiences in mudslide prevention with him.

"It was then that we made the appointment for me to visit him. [Leung] said then that he would wait for me in Hong Kong and have related materials [on mudslide warning and prevention] ready," Wu said.

Facing pressure to make public his Hong Kong itinerary, Wu yesterday described himself as "a free man" prior to taking up premiership because he was a KMT legislator as well as the party's vice chairman and secretary-general.

"As a free man, I don't need to tell everything down to the details. Do I have to let everyone know what time I went back to my hotel and entered the room? Do I need to tell people who don't believe me which department store I went to and which tie I bought?" Wu said.

"People who suspect that I met the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] and held secret talks: Please specify when I met the CCP," Wu said.

Wu said he was more than willing to open himself to criticism in terms of his capacity, his understanding of the government's policies, morality and integrity, but the allegations should not be "so ridiculous."

"I went to Hong Kong to learn about a successful example of mudslide prevention in my capacity as a lawmaker of the Republic of China," Wu said.

"Did I break any rules or regulations?" he asked.

When asked for comment, KMT Legislator Lo Shu-lei (鄧錫珪) said the DPP had exaggerated the nature of Wu's trip.

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“It is true that Premier Wu failed to clearly account for his trip in the first place, but the DPP has over-manipulated the matter,” Lo said. “Leung is only a possible candidate for Hong Kong governor. He is not yet a real candidate.”

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