

Lee says voters may punish Ma in local elections

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Former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) on Friday night criticized the government's relaxation of restrictions on US beef, saying the public may take their frustration out on President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) and the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) in local elections next month.

Describing the year-end elections as a possible turning point where the KMT could go from prosperity into decline, Lee said many people frustrated over the performance of Ma and his administration were likely to use the elections as a tool to teach Ma a lesson.

"Public displeasure with President Ma did not go away following the Cabinet reshuffle," he said at a fund raising event organized by the Taiwan Solidarity Union in Taipei on Friday night. "The year-end elections present an opportunity for those unhappy with him to voice their anger. The Chinese Nationalist Party might go downhill from that point on."

Lee said the public gave the Ma administration "a good slap on the face" at the Yunlin by-election and the referendum on opening casinos in Penghu, and that the KMT's defeats in the two polls showed that people were losing faith in Ma and his party.

"It is a sign that the pendulum of public opinion is swinging," he said.

Commenting on the controversy caused by the import of US bone-in beef, Lee said he did not dare to eat US beef and that the government's decision to drop the ban on 30-month bone-in beef was "wrong" and that it amounted to feeding the public contaminated meat.

"Ten years down the line, we don't know what will happen to our children and grandchildren after they eat beef tainted with mad cow disease," Lee said. "Health is an important issue, but I don't see the government taking good care of us."

As a former president, Lee said he was reluctant to criticize the sitting one, but he felt obliged to speak up when he saw so many Taiwanese suffer.

Apart from the controversy caused by US beef, Lee said he felt regret when he saw the government's incompetence in dealing with the flooding caused by Typhoon Morakot in August.

While many lives could have been saved, Lee said fatalities reached several hundred, adding that it was insufficient for high-ranking officials just to cry over the loss of life.

Lee also denounced Ma's China-friendly policies, saying Ma did not dare to meet with the Dalai Lama during his visit to Taiwan in September and had rejected exiled Uighur leader Rebiya Kadeer's application for a visa to visit Taiwan.

Lee said Ma also firmly believed that it was "not a bad thing" to rely on China economically

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and that he had promised to sign an economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) with Beijing as soon as possible.

“It seems he is determined to interlock Taiwan’s economy with China’s and lay the groundwork for the so-called ‘ultimate unification’ scheme,” Lee said.

On the diplomatic front, Lee said the Ma administration had not only offered up Taiwan’s sovereignty to China’s “evil clutches,” but it had also reinstated the fabricated “1992 consensus.”

Under such a framework, the administration continues to denigrate itself in exchange for China’s sugar-coated poison, he said.

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