

The effectiveness of the government's policy of cross-strait detente was thrown into doubt again yesterday after a Chinese delegate to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Copenhagen on Thursday opposed Taiwan's bid for entry to the group.

A Central News Agency report said that after nine of Taiwan's allies, including Kiribati, Palau, Gambia, Swaziland, Sao Tome and Principe, Burkina Faso, St Lucia, St Christopher and Nevis and Nicaragua, had spoken in favor of Taiwan's bid for inclusion in the global response to climate change, a member of the Chinese delegation cited the "one China" principle and said the initiatives in favor of Taiwan's bid to join as an observer had "hurt the feelings of the 1.3 billion Chinese people."

In response, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) yesterday protested China's actions and said Beijing should stop oppressing -Taiwan's bid for involvement in non-political global bodies, but declined to mark the Thursday incident as a failure of President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) "diplomatic truce."

"We have always urged China to stop sabotaging Taiwan's efforts to enter international organizations. The UNFCCC is a key event in which the world comes together to discuss the problem of global warming. It is essential that Taiwan participate in this effort because it pertains to the livelihoods of the Taiwanese people as well as the global population in general," MOFA Deputy Spokesman James Chang (詹文隆) said.

Chang, however, refused to equate China's opposition as a sign that "diplomatic truce" — a declaration made unilaterally by Taiwan that it would not lure away China's allies as long as China agreed to do the same — was a failed policy.

"There have been other examples where the truce has proven to be effective, such as Taiwan's accession to the World Health Assembly (WHA) this May as an observer," Chang said.

Speaking yesterday in Taipei in what was interpreted as his response to the rejection, Ma called on China to respect Taiwanese non-governmental organizations' (NGO) participation in the international community to stabilize cross-strait relations. The two sides have been seeking peaceful cross-strait relations since he assumed office last May, Ma said. However some Chinese groups continued to suppress Taiwanese NGOs' participation in the international community.

"We should not engage in vicious competition, and Chinese NGOs should stop suppressing our NGOs in participating in international society. Otherwise Taiwanese will have a bad impression of mainland China," Ma said yesterday when speaking at an NGO event at a Taipei County Government office.

Ma later reiterated the importance of NGOs in Taiwan seeking more participation in international society as he met with top government officials, but he promised to continue government efforts to stabilize cross-strait relations.

"We expect stabilized cross-strait relations will let us have a stabilized environment in Taiwan," Ma said when meeting with heads from the Executive Yuan, Legislative Yuan, Control Yuan, Examination Yuan and Judicial Yuan at the Presidential Office.

Ma said the government would sign four agreements on fishing industry cooperation, quality checks for agricultural products, cross-strait cooperation in inspection and certification and avoiding double taxation, and expected the negotiations would promote cross-strait relations.

The pan-green camp yesterday said that Thursday's incident demonstrated Ma's "diplomatic truce" with Beijing was a big flop, while the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) said the issue of increasing Taiwan's international space would be resolved in time through cross-strait dialogue.

DPP Legislator William Lai (賴幸雄) scoffed at MOFA's argument while urging the ministry to stop "justifying its failings" and start finding viable solutions to Taiwan's diplomatic quagmire without depending on China's "goodwill."

"It is obvious that Taiwan is the only one obeying this so-called truce while Beijing continues to wreck Taiwan's chances for more international participation. The truce is completely counterproductive and hurtful to Taiwan's diplomacy," Lai said.

Tsai Huang-liang (蔡煌良), a DPP lawmaker who sits on the Foreign and National Defense Committee, said Ma needed to "wake up" and face the reality that China has no friendly intentions toward Taiwan.

KMT Legislator Chang Hsien-yao (張顯耀), however, said he was not surprised by China's move and believed the issue would be resolved as both sides strive to foster more mutual trust in each other.

Chang said he was confident that Ma would safeguard Taiwan's sovereignty and the interests of Taiwanese people.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) said the Taiwanese delegation to Copenhagen, including EPA Deputy Minister Chiu Wen-yen (邱文彦), was barred from entering the Bella Center after it was unable to renew entry passes yesterday.

Highlighting the difficulties the delegation has experienced because of a lack of official recognition by the organizers, they were unable to enter the conference because of restrictions placed on non-governmental organizations (NGO) despite holding valid entry passes that had previously allowed them to enter the venue.

The delegation — comprised of government officials from the EPA and other government

agencies — had attended the conference as part of the non-governmental Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI, 工研院) after the government was refused attendance to the conference on the grounds that it was not a UN member.

Conference organizers said the restrictions were because of “security concerns” over increasing numbers of high-level government dignitaries that had been arriving in the city in an attempt to hammer out a breakthrough deal in the final day of the conference yesterday.

Analysts said world governments were expected to cover key topics such as trade and other economic initiatives for curbing harmful carbon dioxide emissions. EPA officials said the delegates would have to instead wait outside the conference venue for allies and trade partners to relay information from the proceedings inside.

Sources in Copenhagen said the delegation already ran into problems upon arrival in the city after being told that they must renew their passes to gain entry to the venue.

The source said that only 15 entry passes were eventually renewed for the entire ITRI delegation, which numbered more than 50 people — some of whom waited at the entrance for hours, despite all of them holding valid credentials and invitations. Members of the group had to later take turns entering the venue.

However, the entire delegation only found out that it could not enter yesterday after being stopped at the entrance by conference organizers who refused to renew their passes a second time, EPA officials said.

MOFA officials said they believed the ban covered all NGOs at the conference and did not single out Taiwan.

MOFA's Chang said he believed the comprehensive ban was issued over security concerns rather than for political reasons.

This was supported in a press briefing by Chiu conducted over the telephone with reporters yesterday at the EPA.

He said that “all NGOs were barred from the leader's conference [yesterday] due to measures taken in the name of security ... as a result most people were unable to gain entry and lots of them have left the city already.”

However, Wang Chin-shou (王欽山), who attended the conference at Copenhagen as a representative from the UK-based International National Trusts Organization (INTO), told the Taipei Times that he believed major NGOs had their passes successfully renewed for yesterday's conference.

“This ban was not instituted towards Taiwan in particular ... but a few major NGOs, including Greenpeace, had their entry passes renewed for today's session,” Wang said. “First the [Taiwanese] media, and now the delegation ... It's a bleak disappointment to have everyone

‘Detente’ disarray after Chinese snub

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from Taiwan barred during the final day of the conference.”

Wang is a professor at National Tsinghua University and heads the Taiwan Environmental Protection Union (TEPU).

He attended the conference as a member of INTO because of concerns that his own organization would be labeled part of China.

Wang said that since the start of the conference, NGOs had faced problems including the limited amount of passes handed out.

“They gave us such limited amounts of passes that most organizations had to trim down their attendees by [80 to 90 percent] ... which we only found out we had to do after we arrived,” Wang said.

Despite the official response by conference organizers that the bans were because of security concerns, analysts in Copenhagen said the restrictions could have been implemented because the Bella Center — the main venue of the conference — was far too small to hold the scores of journalists, NGOs and government officials gathered.

In a press statement, Amy Ridenour from the US-based National Center for Public Policy Research, said: “To give credentials to 45,000 people while choosing a building that holds 15,000 people is insane, although the UN, to be fair, has never been known for competence.”

Source: [Taipei Times 2009/12/19](#)