

Typhoon Morakot, a Painful Reminder of Ma Ying-jeou and the Peter Principle

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.
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With the government's mis-handling of Typhoon Morakot, many have finally come to realize how Ma Ying-jeou exemplifies the Peter Principle--a person that rises to the level of his/her incompetence. For perceptive Ma-watchers this was already evident when Ma was mayor of Taipei. Unfortunately for Taiwan, the general public is often distracted and swayed by promises (Ma's forte) rather than performance and so it only listed to Ma and elected him to the Presidency based on his 6-3-3 promise of economic prosperity. Chang Jung-feng, the National Security Council deputy secretary-general under Lee Teng-hui recently spoke to this and gave the public a painful reminder by saying. "Now as president, he (Ma) is expanding the scope of his ineptitude from the municipal level to a national scale."

To back up his words, Chang provided a comparison/contrast between Lee Teng-hui's handling of the 921 Earthquake and Ma's handling of Typhoon Morakot. In observing the contrast of leadership, it is important to remember that for Lee the earthquake came unexpectedly, while for Ma there were several days of advance warnings.

The earthquake occurred at 1:47 am; less than 15 minutes later, at 2 am Lee had phoned and directed the military to establish a disaster command center by 8 am. Lee arrived at the center at 9:50 am and began efforts to handle the disaster. By that evening, money had been allocated and plans laid down for bridge repair, disease prevention etc.

Typhoon Morakot hit Taiwan on August 7, after reported daily warnings that a super typhoon was on its way. The day after it hit (August 8), Ma visited the Central Emergency Operation Center and confirmed that the south suffered from severe floods. He expressed his sorrow and regret.

Chang's comparison went on day by day illustrating how things were moving quickly after the earthquake but after the typhoon they still stalled. The most telling detail was his example of how five days after the typhoon when Ma was visiting the Taitung County disaster area and said to the people, "I'm here now aren't I? What do you want me to do?"

The rest is history, everyone is painfully aware of the delays, the botched messages, the blame game, the haughtiness, the deaths etc. It has been clearly evident to all that Ma is certainly no Lee Teng-hui, and certainly no real leader, but more so, it is becoming evident that Ma has had little track record except that of making promises. With two and a half years left in Ma's

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presidency, people are already beginning to count the days till it ends and hope that no future disasters fall in between.

Source: [Jerome F. Keating's writings](#)