

## Ma Ying-jeou Recycles His Old Promises but Taiwan is None the Richer

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.  
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The world continues to turn in Taiwan, and Ma Ying-jeou is once again the official Chairman of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT). For those whose memory is short, Ma had been chairman from 2005 to 2007 when he had to step down because he was indicted for corruption.

Fortunately, Ma got his secretary to take sole and total responsibility for depositing roughly a half-million US dollars into Ma's personal bank account; as a result with his secretary in jail for putting this money in Ma's personal account, Ma has dodged the bullet. So now Ma has been re-elected chairman and is recycling his old promises. Recycling old promises, what's that?

Ma depends on Taiwanese having short memories. In this way, he does not have to worry that anyone will keep track of whether or not he ever keeps his promises. If the issue does come up, Ma's modus operandi is to simply make new promises or recycle the old. Back in 2005-2007, Ma had promised to divest the KMT of its ill-gotten assets, the assets that it had, shall we say, stolen from the people of Taiwan. He never kept that promise, but that is OK, he is now once again recycling it in the name of being anti-corruption.

Supposedly by divesting the KMT of its stolen assets, the KMT is to become less corrupt. However another distinction must be made. While the word divest means to rid oneself of responsibility for something, in the case of stolen assets or property something more is needed in accountability.

If I steal your home, bank account and car and am later confronted with this theft, I can try to excuse my crime by saying I will divest myself of your property. Is that all that is needed? Does that excuse me or does that restore your stolen property? If I sell your home and your car (the stolen property) and put all that money and the money from your bank account into my pocket am I absolved of my theft? Are you the better for it? Or have I simply profited by liquefying the assets I stole from you?

This is the issue that Taiwanese must realize and face and what they must confront Ma Ying-jeou with. This is where the hypocrisy and hollowness of Ma's promises are exposed.

There is more. When Ma had been chairman in the past, he did divest the KMT of some assets to the tune of NT\$ 13 billion (almost US\$ 400 million). Within a year that US\$400 million disappeared. Some of it was used to pay for the retirement of KMT workers, but what happened to the rest? The KMT staff of one of the richest party's in the world did not have enough cash to

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pay employees their year end bonus'a time honored tradition for all companies in Taiwan. Where did the millions go? Is there a hidden KMT slush fund that a good portion of the US\$400 million went into? Did the money find its way into the pockets of the old guard in the KMT? What we are talking about are the liquefied assets that had belonged to the people and state of Taiwan.

Return to the previous analogy. Let us say I have stolen over US\$400 million from you and your family. If I then "divest" myself of that money by using it to pay off my own debts and to pay for a comfortable retirement for my family, my uncles, aunts and cousins, can I claim that I am now no longer corrupt? Your money is still stolen; it has not been returned. My family is the richer for it. Justice has never happened. This is the true face of Ma Ying-jeou and the KMT. This is the face that Taiwan must wake up to.

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