

## Stop Taiwan's traitorous Quisling

Written by Parris Chang 蕭蕭  
Saturday, 20 July 2013 07:11

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Today, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) is electing its chairman and tens of thousands of its members have been mobilized to vote for the incumbent — President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九). Pundits liken the election to a mid-summer festival political farce, as Ma is the only candidate in the ballot, while another possible rival was disqualified on “technical” grounds, ensuring that Ma would be the winner.

Nonetheless, Ma has taken a month-long leave of absence from his presidential duties to campaign all around Taiwan to solicit votes from the KMT's rank and file.

That Ma will be re-elected is a foregone conclusion, but he wants to win big, lest he lose face. Reportedly, a secret “word of mouth” campaign has been organized by Ma's detractors inside the KMT to turn the election into a vote of no confidence on Ma and instigate the disgruntled members to abstain from voting.

Why does Ma feel compelled to seek the party chairmanship again?

Reporters once reminded him of a pledge he made while campaigning for president in 2007 that he would never serve as KMT chairman if elected, because “the president should be devoted full time to government affairs.” Despite the pledge, he did seize the party chairmanship from Wu Poh-hsiung (吳伯雄) in 2009. A deceitful and hypocritical Ma would assert that his decision was not a power grab, but was “prompted by his sense of responsibility for the nation's competitiveness and government performance.”

Whereas Ma has controlled so much power from the party and state, and the KMT has also possessed a majority of seats in the law-making Legislative Yuan, pathetically he has been unable to get things done or done properly. Indeed, Ma does not know how to govern and his leadership performance is so bad that many observers, including the senior officials he appointed and veteran party leaders have branded him incompetent.

Last year, a very unpopular Ma was re-elected for another four-year term, thanks to the unceremonious intervention on his behalf by China and the US. Although he received fewer popular votes and a smaller margin of victory (51.6 percent) than in the 2008 election (58

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percent), he proudly claimed that he won the popular mandate to implement a grandiose program for a golden decade — a policy platform he announced during the election. A survey made public by Taiwan Indicators Survey Research before Ma began his second term in office showed 57.4 percent of respondents regarded the president as not trustworthy and 67.5 percent disapproved of his performance.

Since then, he has been faced with a record-low approval rating and various polls show his support in the range of 15 percent to 25 percent, as well as growing criticism within the KMT, including its lawmakers. Numerous reasons cause the growing discontent and resentment. Chief among them is Ma's failure to deliver on several major campaign promises in his first four-year term: the so-called "6-3-3" promise, namely, to increase annual economic growth to 6 percent (it is still below 3 percent), to lower the jobless rate to 3 percent (the latest data show a rate of 4.06 percent), and to increase annual per capita income to US\$30,000 (but most people's real incomes are either stagnant or in decline).

Adding to these grievances are a string of the Ma government's unwise and rash policies implemented without approval by the legislature, including fuel and electricity price hikes, which anger the general public. Likewise, a not well-thought through plan to re-impose a capital gains tax on stock transactions has badly alienated the middle class and business community.

Ma's personality and leadership style also contribute to his predicament. Even though the legislature has been controlled by the KMT with a working majority, Ma as the president and chairman wields little influence on the lawmaking body. This is due to lack of regular contacts and consultations between Ma and the KMT legislators.

Some of them are seasoned and knowledgeable, but they complain that Ma does not respect them and often treats them as simple rubber stamps. Hence they have grown wary of Ma. He has been widely criticized for his arrogance in power — he trusts and deals with only some of his cohorts; consequently, he has isolated himself, is out of touch with reality and has no knowledge of what the people need and want.

Foreign journalists who write about Taiwan are apt to dwell on Ma's accomplishments in cross-strait ties. Thus far, Taiwan has signed a landmark trade pact — the cross-strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) — with Beijing, including 17 agreements to lift cross-strait tariffs on goods and investment barriers. A service trade agreement has been initialed, but not yet reviewed and ratified by the legislature. Both the

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opposition and KMT legislators have serious reservations about the agreement, which would allow China's capital and huge service industry to enter Taiwan's market and could adversely affect thousands of Taiwan's small and medium-sized enterprises.

If Ma believes that close economic ties with China can invigorate Taiwan's struggling economy, then he has been proven wrong, as Taiwan's economy has hardly improved.

The ECFA and the liberalization of cross-strait trade and investment have undoubtedly benefited a small number of fat cats and owners of China-based Taiwanese companies, but overall, ordinary people have suffered from the rapid, huge flight of Taiwanese capital to China, as their real wages have decreased and more than 1 million blue-collar and white-collar workers have lost their jobs.

Moreover, Taiwan is paying a heavy political price for China's imagined economic concessions. The ECFA is modeled on the economic agreement between China and Hong Kong — the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement — and is based on the “one China” principle. This principle will erode and weaken Taiwan's sovereign status, and will eventually transform Taiwan into a special economic zone of China.

Since Ma came into office in 2008, Taiwan has progressively tilted toward China, as he has been conscientiously pursuing a policy unification with Beijing in close and active collaboration with Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) and Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao (胡錦濤). His recent acceptance of a “one China” framework is the latest indication of the KMT policy to move toward unification. This would further explain the rationale behind his efforts to retain the KMT chairmanship. As the position extends until 2017, Ma would be in a position to set and direct the cross-strait agenda after he steps down from the Presidential Office in 2016. Regardless of which party is in power after 2016, Chairman Ma would be able to visit China and hold formal meetings with Xi to forge a new cross-strait relationship.

Does Ma aspire to become a Taiwanese Quisling? The Taiwanese who cherish freedom, democracy, independence and do not wish to live under Communist rule must do what they can to deter the would-be Quisling from selling out Taiwan to China.

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Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2013/07/20](#)