

Ma afraid to speak Taiwan's name

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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Amid the recently rekindled debate over what best describes the 50-year period when Taiwan was under Japan's administration, Premier Jiang Yi-huah (江宜樺) on Monday night finalized the use of "Japanese occupation" (日據) in government documents, arguing that this concept, rather than "Japanese rule" (日治), "maintains the Republic of China's (ROC) sovereignty and the dignity of the people."

It's funny to hear the premier oh-so-righteously defend the ROC's sovereignty and dignity when his boss, President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九), appears to be belittling the ROC through his latest interpretation of the so-called "1992 consensus."

On Saturday, in response to Chinese President Xi Jinping's (習近平) congratulatory letter on his re-election as Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) chairman, Ma brought up the "1992 consensus" and wrote "both sides of the Taiwan Strait reached a consensus in 1992 to express each other's insistence on the 'one China' principle."

The statement came as a sharp departure from the interpretation that the KMT has long defended, ie, that it refers to the supposed understanding reached between Taiwan and China in 1992 that both sides acknowledge there is "one China," with each side having its own interpretation of what "one China" means.

"One China, with each side having its own interpretation" (一個中國，各自表述) harbors distinct differences from the phrase "each other's insistence on the 'one China' principle." While Ma may confuse some with these political tongue twisters, one thing is certain: His latest rendition of the so-called consensus is wrapped up in the "one China" framework (一個中國) that shows an obvious tilt to China's interpretation, which sees the "1992 consensus" as "respective expressions on the 'one China' principle" (一個中國原則).

US cables released by WikiLeaks in September 2011 have long exposed the KMT's illusion that Beijing supports the idea of "one China, with each side having its own interpretation." These cables quoted Chinese officials and Chinese academics as clearly stating that China does not recognize that each side has its own interpretation of "one China," because such an interpretation would be tantamount to acceptance of two Chinas — a situation intolerable to Beijing.

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The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has long contended that the so-called consensus does not exist, a position further cemented by former National Security Council secretary-general Su Chi's (蘇起) admission in 2006 that he made up the term in 2000, before the KMT handed over power to the DPP.

In other words, Ma has constructed his entire cross-strait policy on a fabricated "1992 consensus" and now he is further deceiving the Taiwanese public by toeing Beijing's line, which downgrades the ROC's sovereign status.

Taiwanese singer Yeh Wei-ting (葉偉庭) over the weekend on a Chinese reality television singing competition introduced herself as coming from "China Taipei Pingtung District (中國台北屏東區)." While this act of self-belittlement has drawn much criticism from netizens in Taiwan, the indignation ought to be directed at Ma and his government for setting countless bad examples for its people, by voluntarily dropping the names Taiwan or ROC and referring to itself by silly names such as "Chinese Taipei" on the international stage and even at events held on home turf.

Repeat a lie a thousand times and eventually someone may start to believe it.

While it may be despicable for Ma to try to deceive the Taiwanese public and veer the nation toward China's "one China" framework without the public's consent, why don't Taiwanese get angry at all in the face of the government's blatant deception?

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