

Control Yuan is an inept dinosaur

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
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In the wake of an increasing number of controversial — or seemingly pointless, but highly politicized — decisions, a growing number of Taiwanese are wondering whether the Control Yuan should be abolished.

Some of the Control Yuan's more controversial moves include the failure to impeach Prosecutor-General Huang Shih-ming (黃世明) for allegedly leaking details of an ongoing investigation to President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九); the failure to impeach Keelung Mayor Chang Tong-rong (張通榮) after he was convicted of influence peddling and interfering with police in a drunk driving case; and the efforts of some Control Yuan members to get defector Justin Lin's (林錫山) name off the most-wanted list, even though as recently as July 2009 the watchdog body censured the Ministry of National Defense over the former army captain's defection to China more than 30 years ago.

Media reports about questionable behavior on the part of some of the members have also added to the negative impression. The latest example was Tuesday's passage of a "correction" proposed by Control Yuan member Ger Yeong-kuang (郭榮鏗) chiding the Executive Yuan for using "Taiwan" to refer to the Republic of China and "China" to refer to the People's Republic of China in government publications.

That ruling raised the question of whether the Control Yuan members had nothing better to do.

What is the point of the Control Yuan if it cannot bring itself to perform its duty and condemn such a flagrant act of influence peddling and coercion as Chang's, even if such a move would have been against the interests of a particular political party?

If Ger really wants to uphold the nation's "official" name, why did he not propose issuing a correction on the several occasions when Minister of Health and Welfare Chiu Wen-ta (邱文達) — when the ministry was still just a department — pathetically belittled both the nation and his own position by referring to himself as "Minister of Department of Health, Chinese Taipei"?

The responsibility of the Control Yuan is to monitor the government's actions, censure public officials and public agencies for illegal or inappropriate behavior, protect human rights, accept

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and act on petitions from the public and audit government spending.

Yet the nation survived fairly well when the Control Yuan was to all intents on hiatus between February 2005 and August 2008 because Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and other pan-blue lawmakers refused to approve former president Chen Shui-bian's (陳水扁) nominations after the expiration of the Control Yuan members' terms on Jan. 31, 2005.

About 32,000 cases were submitted by members of the public to the Control Yuan during that period, but otherwise the lack of a Control Yuan did not hamper government operations. Allegations of illegal acts or breaches of discipline by public officials were taken up by judicial agencies and punishments were meted out in accordance with the law.

Since the Control Yuan resumed operation in August 2008, its track record has been far from impressive. Even Control Yuan President Wang Chien-shien (王健生) said in July last year that the positions were often used as bargaining chips or rewards for political favors.

Opposition parties have long alleged that Control Yuan members tend to favor the ruling party's political agenda to boost their chances of being nominated for another term. Former department of health minister Yaung Chih-liang (楊志良) once said that the Control Yuan was a key factor in creating chaos in Taiwan.

Control Yuan members must be reminded that they are supposed to be independent and beyond party control. They serve the public, whose tax dollars pay their salaries, not a particular president or political party.

If this watchdog agency cannot fulfill its constitutional duties by being an impartial arbiter of administrative justice, it should be scrapped. Reducing government to four branches would save taxpayers more than NT\$700 million a year, money that could be put to much better use elsewhere for the public good.

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