

The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are like identical twins. They think the same way, use the same methods and say the same things.

When local civic organizations began to push for a referendum on the construction of the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant in Gongliao District (公寮), New Taipei City, among the communities in the plant's evacuation zone — Taipei, New Taipei City, Keelung, and Yilan City — the KMT tried to play down the scale of the opposition by saying that it is a national rather than a local issue, and that a referendum should be national. The hope was that regardless of how much opposition there was in the communities included in the evacuation zone, they would be outvoted at the national level.

There the issue remains, stuck between calls for a national and a local referendum.

When Tainan Mayor William Lai (賴清德) visited Shanghai recently, he said in an interview that a majority of Taiwanese supported independence. In Taiwan, this is common knowledge, as pro-independence support has surpassed 60 percent in every recent poll on the issue and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is joined by a public majority and most KMT members in saying that the nation's future should be decided by the 23 million Taiwanese.

However, this is anathema to the CCP.

Taiwan Affairs Office (TAO) spokesperson Fan Liqing (范立清) tried to derail Lai's comments by saying that any issue that involves Chinese sovereignty and territory must be decided jointly by all Chinese, including Taiwanese. With 23 million votes against 1.3 billion, Taiwan could never win, and it would never escape China's grasp.

This year was the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre, and demands for democracy are growing across the Strait. China has strengthened its control and increased its pressure on those calling for democracy and freedom.

In addition, on Tuesday, China's State Council released a white paper on the state of the "one country, two systems" arrangement in Hong Kong. The paper specified that Beijing has comprehensive jurisdiction over Hong Kong, that Hong Kong has only the right to manage local affairs and that the territory's right to autonomy depends on how much power the central government gives it.

The only thing that remains of China's promise of "one country, two systems" and a high degree of autonomy is the phrase "one country, two systems."

The white paper is aimed at the reinvigorated "Occupy Central" campaign and the scheduled June 22 referendum on three electoral reform proposals.

However, throughout the ages, the policies of highly suppressive authoritarian regimes have met with strong reactions.

For example, China's suppression of riots in Xinjiang were followed by Uighur attacks, its pressure on Tibet has caused a series of Tibetan monks to burn themselves to death and its persecution of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo (劉曉波), artist Ai Weiwei (艾未未) and human rights activist Chen Guangcheng (陳光誠) have served only to raise the dissidents' international profile and increase their influence.

In the past century, the KMT suppressed opposition in Taiwan, but in the end, the party's despotic rule failed and the nation managed to cast off its authoritarianism and walk toward democracy.

China's efforts to maintain stability by increasing pressure employ the wrong strategy. The people in Hong Kong and Taiwan know freedom and democracy; threats and pressure will not subdue them.

Neither Hong Kong nor Taiwan will go back to authoritarian rule and China's only hope in winning them over requires democracy and human rights.

KMT-CCP twins' despotism in vain

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Friday, 13 June 2014 10:08

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2014/06/13](#)