

During a meeting with a delegation of pro-unification activists from Taiwan on Friday, Chinese President Xi Jinping (习近平) said that on major issues related to national unification and the Chinese people's long-term development, Beijing's stance is firm and there will be no compromise or wavering.

"Peaceful unification and 'one country, two systems' are our basic guidelines in solving the Taiwan issue," Xi said, adding that policy implementation would take into consideration the actual situation in Taiwan.

Beijing's stance has been clear since the Chinese Communist Party released Xi's "six points" after China's Taiwan Affairs Office Minister Zhang Zhijun's (张继军) visit to the US in August. Compared with the "six points" proposed by then-Chinese president Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) in 2008, Xi's Taiwan policy against a backdrop of growing Chinese nationalism will exert increasingly greater pressure on the nation.

Taiwan has long been restricted by the so-called "1992 consensus," that there is "one China, with each side having its own interpretation."

The situation has worsened, with Beijing recently rehashing its "one country, two systems" policy. It is also reinterpreting how its "one country, two systems" policy applies to Hong Kong, claiming that the territory is just a special administrative region governed by the Chinese government. Hence, Hong Kongers will not be allowed to exercise full "universal suffrage" in electing their chief executive and legislative council members in 2016. Beijing has also taken a harsh stance against separatist movements in Tibet and Xinjiang, and is expected to do the same with Taiwan.

Xi is grappling with the US and Japan. Domestically, he is battling government corruption: Political heavyweights such as former Politburo Standing Committee member Zhou Yongkang (周永康) and former Central Military Commission vice chairman Xu Caihou (徐才厚) have been brought down. Although China's economic growth is slowing down and it is beset by numerous social problems, China has become the world's second-largest economy, so it is able to compete with the US on equal terms through its "big-power diplomacy."

Chinese nationalism poses threat

Written by Lin Chia-cheng 林佳興

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The US announced a strategic pivot to Asia in 2011, and the premise of this shift is the redeployment of troops after the end of the Afghanistan and Iraqi wars, as well as the establishment of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and other factors. However, from the civil war in Syria to the conflicts in Libya and Iraq, and the Islamic State that is causing problems for the West, Washington is unable to accomplish its Asian strategic goals in the short term.

Fortunately, the US has the full cooperation of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration, which is seeking to reinterpret its pacifist defense policy and intends to amend Article 9 of the constitution, increase its defense budget and establish a government agency responsible for national security.

As for issues regarding the East China Sea and the Diaoyutai Islands (釣台), tensions remain high between China and Japan, but the US and Japan are still employing a "dual strategy" of cooperating and competing with China in international and Asian political and economic affairs.

We are moving into a new phase and the pressure on Taiwan is increasing. In response to Xi's remarks, the government expressed its opposition to Beijing's "one country, two systems" and reiterated its "no unification, no independence, no war" stance, while pushing for peaceful development across the Taiwan Strait on the basis of the "1992 consensus."

After causing some misunderstanding, German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle corrected its report about an interview with President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) by several European media outlets on Wednesday last week. The broadcaster mistakenly quoted Ma as saying that he is willing to learn from East Germany and West Germany's experience in moving toward eventual unification. What Ma said was that he was willing to learn from the two states' experience in handling bilateral relations.

Democratic Progressive Party Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) has also said that peaceful and stable development in cross-strait relations is a common goal for all, but the future of Taiwan should be decided by Taiwanese alone.

The ruling and opposition camps, as well as their supporters, may have different opinions on issues such as Taiwan's future and cross-strait exchanges, but no political party dares sell Taiwanese out in the face of a furious China and a changing international situation.

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It is important to respect diverse opinions in a democratic society. Chinese nationalism is becoming a threat. How should Taiwan deal with this? The government, political parties and the public must draw on collective wisdom to seek a solution together.

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