

Liberation in the name of corruption

Written by HoonTing 洪廷

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President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) claimed that the total proportion of Taiwanese exports going to China rose from 24 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2008 and, thanks to his administration's efforts to diversify exports, dropped to 39 percent last year.

While habitually belittling former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁), Ma presents too flimsy an argument to counter the strong allegation that he has been trying to barter away the nation's financial, economic — and thus — political autonomy.

It is almost a public consensus in Taiwan that Ma has been granting massive benefits to cross-strait conglomerates.

BENEFIT TRANSPORTATION

Since the outbreak of the serial food safety scandals involving Ting Hsin International Group (鼎新國際), people have come the realization that several of the government's franchise and reshuffling projects might be nothing more than large-scale benefit transportation businesses.

Among the most suspicious cases are: the launch of the Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) system; Ting Hsin's Taiwan depository receipts; the sale of China Network Systems; the merger of Taiwan Star Telecom; the acquisition of the Taipei 101 building; the potential bankruptcy and transfer of the Taiwan High Speed Rail Corp; the illegal alteration of land classification of former Shin Yen Textile Co's land; and a cross-strait monopoly of farm produce scheme for the Golden Field Holding (Cayman Islands) Corp cartel.

Except for the ETC, all these cases are related to Ting Hsin — the most successful Taiwanese business in China — without exception, Ma's Cabinet has offered munificent administrative assistance and financial support in all of them.

RISK EXPOSURE

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On top of this disastrous profit transportation, it was reported last week that national banks have hit a record-high level of risk exposure to China — 41 times higher than when Ma took office.

Strictly speaking, in view of the scale of its actions, corruption is no longer the right word to describe the misconduct carried out by Ma's government.

It obviously goes far beyond the abilities of one official and reaches out to foreign soil. It sounds more like the liberation of a whole nation — a silent liberation achieved by taking over Taiwan's finances and infrastructure.

Who are the ones pulling the strings? Who are the collaborators? Who is handling the massive flow of money outside the nation? What international financial institutions are involved?

Strangely, Ma's possible role in this conspiracy corresponds with the US' core policy of resolving the Taiwan question peacefully, which the US Department of State has reiterated for decades.

However, "raising the blue flag to sabotage the blue team" is a technique rooted in sophisticated Chinese political tradition.

It seems that it is not only being applied to domestic politics, but diplomacy as well.

An item in the US' Taiwan Relations Act states: "It is the policy of the United States ... to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic systems, of the people on Taiwan."

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The secret power might not appear in the form of outright force or coercion, but it is reaching for Taiwan's jugular.

It is quietly jeopardizing the nation's economic system and security, and if it succeeds, will surely tip the regional balance in the "Indo-Pacific" area.

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