

President maintains his run of strikeouts

Written by James Wang 詹姆士

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President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) is like a junior-league baseball player waving his bat around in an adult game. Although he is “out” after three strikes, he still clings to the bat, while accusing the umpire of being unfair. Such antics are not very presidential.

To be more precise, Ma has earned at least six strikes in recent innings.

First, the Chinese Nationalist Party’s (KMT) lawsuit against Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) has failed repeatedly.

Second, the KMT was trounced in the nine-in-one local elections in November last year.

Third, after prosecutors decided not to indict former Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) deputy minister Chang Hsien-yao (張顯耀) on charges of leaking confidential information to China, both council minister Wang Yu-chi (王郁琦) and National Security Council secretary-general King Pu-tsung (邱國治) tendered their resignations this month.

Fourth, former prosecutor-general Huang Shih-ming (黃世明) was found guilty of leaking classified information about the legislative speaker’s case to Ma.

Fifth, Ma has failed to clarify his role in the alleged political donation case involving Ting Hsin International Group (鼎新國際).

Sixth, his sudden dismissal of then-Presidential Office head of security Huo Li-ching (霍力興) has caused a backlash.

Ma used to be attractive to the blue camp’s supporters, but he has proven incapable of appointing the right people for the right jobs or replacing them when necessary. He has lost all his credibility, and even his reputation for clean government is very much in question.

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Senior Ting Hsin executive Wei Ying-chun (魏英春) was vice chairman of Ma's support group during last his presidential campaign. Who could believe that Wei did not get this "honorable title" and his group's business privileges in Taiwan in exchange for hefty political donations?

The public are suffering from Ma's failures, but his misdeeds are awakening a wide range of political forces that offer hope for reforms and deepening of democracy in Taiwan.

The Legislative Yuan has started to exercise its independence by reflecting public opinion and restraining the executive branch. The judiciary, prosecutors and investigators are no longer willing to be Ma's political tools, and they are starting to act more independently as they handle each case on its own merits.

These are advances for the separation of three powers of government.

Even the fourth estate — the KMT-friendly media that used to deify Ma — have now started to play their proper role of monitoring and criticizing the authorities and attempting to dig up the dirt on the Ma administration's corruption and abuses of power.

Only when the legislature, judiciary and media play their respective independent roles can democracy function effectively.

Ma is accustomed to relying on his control of the legislature, judiciary and media to rule the country, and now that he has lost his grip on these tools it is getting difficult for him to stay in the game. As his credibility wanes, even his right to play is in question.

NBC's Brian Williams has long been the most-watched network evening news anchor in the US. He told a story about a helicopter in which he was flying coming under attack during the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, but his story has been exposed as false. Consequently, the network decided to suspend him for six months without pay.

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Ma has done a lot worse than just boasting. He has lost all credibility while hurting the country and its people. If anyone should be sacked without pay, it is Ma.

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Translated by Eddy Chang

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