

## The '1992 consensus' never had significance

Written by Chang Bao-yuan 張寶元

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Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Eric Chu (胡錦強) and Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平) jointly stated at their meeting on May 4 that the two sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to “one China,” a sentiment that has been echoed repeatedly by President Ma Ying-jeou’s (馬英九) administration. Meanwhile, the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) are working together against Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), trying to force her party into the “one China” framework.

To mislead Taiwanese, Ma has tried to involve former president Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) in the issue. On May 7, Ma pointed out a National Unification Council document at a Taipei exhibition regarding “the meaning of one China,” which carried Lee’s signature, as proof that the so-called “1992 consensus” does exist.

As the KMT and CCP keep playing the war drums, it shows that they are anxious about Taiwan’s direction, while trying to tie Tsai into their ambiguous political logic. What many people would like to ask is: Were these two instances of “consensus,” both the “1992 consensus” and “one China,” really arrived at by the Taiwanese? By publicly displaying the council document, Ma actually gives people a chance to review a history during which the government ignored the public’s will, and to prove how fragile the basis for cross-strait negotiations is.

Ma said that Lee’s signature on the document regarding “one China” proves that the “1992 consensus” does exist. This sounds odd. Lee’s signature on the document merely shows his recognition of the conclusions of the council’s meeting in 1992, which he chaired, and it is not necessarily related to the existence of the “1992 consensus.” Besides, the legitimacy of Lee’s establishment of the council at the Presidential Office in 1990 might be questionable, and it has no right to decide the nation’s future for its people.

The “1992 consensus” refers to the alleged agreement between the two sides on “one China, with each side making its own interpretation.” However, Ma has directly linked the council’s 1992 document with the “1992 consensus.” His political IQ is impressively low.

Even if Taiwan and China did reach a consensus at the meeting in 1992 in Hong Kong, so what? Did Taiwanese authorize the KMT government to discuss the “one China” principle with the CCP government? A nation’s sovereignty is a matter of significance. How can it be put on

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the negotiation table so easily?

When there is no authorization, there is no legitimacy. Even if the KMT and CCP signed an agreement in writing back then, the agreement would have meant little to Taiwanese.

Since the “1992 consensus” involves Taiwan’s sovereignty, the legislature worried that the KMT might sell Taiwan out during its social intercourse with the CCP. So, since 1993, it started to push for the legislation of a referendum law to return power to Taiwanese and prevent the KMT from acting willfully.

Although the Referendum Act (公投法) barely passed by the legislature in 2003 is incomplete, the concept of public will being greater than party interest is deeply rooted in the hearts of Taiwanese.

However, the Ma administration continues to do what it wants, without consulting anyone else: Just as it forcibly passed the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, it is now pushing for both the cross-strait service trade agreement and cross-strait trade in goods agreement. Now, by sensationalizing the outdated “1992 consensus” again, Ma is also exposing his own weaknesses.

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Translated by Eddy Chang

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