

Hong Kong is Taiwan's nightmare

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Friday, 29 May 2015 07:29

Anyone with an understanding of Hong Kong's politics knows that on paper the highest official of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is the territory's chief executive, but in practice the top authorities are the director of China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office and officials in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in Zhongnanhai. It is Beijing that calls the shots.

This is the reason Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying (梁振英) was unmoved throughout last year's student-led protests: He could not make a decision and Beijing does not allow political reform. The situation in Hong Kong is the future nightmare of Taiwan. Recent events have caused alarm among Taiwanese who feel the nation will follow Hong Kong.

When China's Taiwan Affairs Office Minister Zhang Zhijun (張志軍) discussed the establishment of casinos in Kinmen during a recent meeting with Mainland Affairs Council Minister Andrew Hsia (夏立言) in Kinmen County, he took the tone of a Beijing Mandarin and instructed Hsia that Kinmen should walk the straight and narrow, and refrain from developing a gambling industry lest the three small links be closed.

When Hsia said Taiwanese were suspicious of and unhappy with China's National Security Law, Zhang broke off their conversation, saying: "For the time being, [any discussion of] this case ends here."

Zhang's actions should be a warning to Taiwan. Zhang does not have moral concerns about establishing casinos — after all, gambling is a major industry in Macau. Zhang's statement about gambling in Kinmen has nothing to do with moral scruples, he has something else in mind.

However, the establishment of casinos in Kinmen is an internal matter for Taiwan that should be decided by the Kinmen County Government and the legislature in Taipei. Zhang has nothing to do with it and his actions violate the fundamental spirit of mutual respect for the separate rule of the two sides of the Taiwan Strait.

When Hsia voiced Taiwanese concerns over China's laws, it was normal behavior for an official

Hong Kong is Taiwan's nightmare

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Friday, 29 May 2015 07:29

in a democracy to convey public opinion; not doing so would be a dereliction of duty. Clearly Zhang stopped the exchange of opinions on this issue because he feels that "this is how it is, we have made the decision and you just have to learn to live with that." This is the attitude of a superior correcting a subordinate.

China feels it has done a good job compromising and offering Taiwan economic benefits in cross-strait agreements, that it has reached the public's hearts in its unification preparations and that Taiwanese therefore should support China. The reality is the exact opposite: Many Taiwanese are increasingly unhappy with Beijing and opinion polls show that Taiwanese feel distant from China.

China ignores cross-strait differences in the political, economic and social systems. It is incapable of understanding that values such as liberty, human rights, equality and the rule of law differ between the two sides.

Perhaps Zhang is a straight shooter and a man of action in Beijing official circles, but cross-strait affairs are sensitive, and he needs to be cautious and respectful.

If Chinese officials visiting Taiwan behave as if they were here on provincial tours and make irresponsible remarks about Taiwanese affairs, the nation may soon be ready for its own version of the Hong Kong nightmare.

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2015/05/29](#)