

Bullying and cheap tricks to trap Tsai

Written by James Wang 王健
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President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) has said that when he was a reserve officer for the Republic of China (ROC) armed forces, he was selected as a military trainer because of a series of lectures he gave on crushing the Communist United Front plot to unify Taiwan and China.

Had Ma actually remained committed to this cause over the past seven years in which he has been in office, then his popularity rating might never have plummeted to 9 percent, as it has.

However, he seems to have forgotten himself since those heady days as a military trainer. Now, as president, not only has he forgotten about crushing the Chinese communist “bandits” united front, he has actually been working with these bandits against the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Taiwan’s own united front, and has tried to force Taiwanese to accept the non-existent, so-called “1992 consensus.”

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Chairman Eric Chu (吳敦義) has joined Ma and the Chinese communists in demanding that DPP Chairperson and presidential nominee Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) clarify exactly what she means when she speaks of “maintaining the status quo” within the Taiwan Strait.

Ma has also said, with an equal measure of intimidation in his tone to that of Chinese President Xi Jinping (習近平), that a failure to accept the “1992 consensus” would certainly result in chaos and calamity in the Taiwan Strait.

His insistence on this is a throwback to an era when there was no brooking of dissenting views, crying foul that Tsai has somehow transgressed the rules by failing to bring up the “1992 consensus” during her recent visit to the US.

Over the past six decades the language used by the US on the issue of the “status quo” in the Taiwan Strait has been quite clear: That the two sides of the Strait are currently separate, that they are not unified and that they do not have political relations.

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The general consensus among Taiwanese, too, is that Taiwan and China are not the same country. The citizens of each country have their own ID cards and passports, and Chinese tourists entering Taiwan, just like tourists from the US, do so with non-citizen status.

Clearly, the “status quo” does not refer to the future. The KMT and the Chinese Communist Party are denying reality and rejecting democratic principles, and want to wrest from Taiwanese the right to freedom of choice, thereby locking Taiwan’s destiny to being annexed by China and identifying the “future” with the current “status quo.” The DPP does not have to accept such a preposterous stance and neither does it have a duty to do so.

For Chu and Ma to insist that Tsai clarifies exactly what she means by the “status quo” is little more than political sophistry and a cheap trick. They are attempting to get Tsai to fall into their trap by refusing to pay heed to their demand and thereby allowing them to claim that she is not clear on the issue. They are trying to get her on the defensive, by forcing her to have to account for herself.

The two men have tried belittling Tsai, saying that her trip to the US was “a test” and wanting her to accept the “1992 consensus.” Chinese Ambassador to the US Cui Tiankai (崔天凯) took this and ran with it, saying that Tsai should first pass the test of 1.3 billion Chinese and ask the opinion of “compatriots” on the other side of the Taiwan Strait.

To this, Tsai retorted that she followed democratic values, and that, according to the “status quo,” she is only answerable to the 23 million Taiwanese. Nice.

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Translated by Paul Cooper

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